

## Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



### SOC2433 Political sociology

[30h] 3 credits

**Teacher(s):** Benoît Rihoux  
**Language:** French  
**Level:** Second cycle

#### Aims

The course has a dual objective:

- to enable students to acquire a level of technical skills, and in particular to understand and apply a series of formalised tools currently used in electoral studies;
- to enable students to develop an ability to analyse political phenomena, and therefore a capacity for personal reflection supported by theoretical and conceptual equipment (i.e. that goes beyond a superficial or descriptive analysis).

By the end of the course, students should be able to use this dual technical and reflective skill appropriately.

#### Main themes

This course is an extension of the first preparatory course in "Political Science", and is closely associated with the courses on "Political culture" and "Comparative politics" - and also "The Belgian political and administrative system" - and will show how sociological theory understands and explains certain political phenomena.

#### Content and teaching methods

##### Content

1. Analysis of political parties:
  - definition of the parties;
  - origins of the parties and typologies;
  - the main contributions (Ostrogorski, Michels, Duverger, Eldersveld and Panebianco);
  - the change in the political parties (various contributions from Kitschelt, Harmel and Janda, and Panebianco among others) and the "life cycle" (Harmel and Svasand, Pedersen and Rihoux).
2. Analysis of elections and of electoral behaviour:
  - electoral change;
  - electoral surveys;
  - explanatory models of electoral behaviour;
  - electoral systems.

##### Methodology

Professorial sessions will alternate with interactive sessions (three or four sessions at which attendance is mandatory). For the latter sessions, students will have to prepare brief contributions in small groups of about five students: at these sessions, some contributions will be introduced with a view to stimulating open debate.

#### Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

- Written end-of-the-year examination consisting of a number of closed, open and semi-open questions ("enriched multiple choice"), and a short dissertation requiring "transversal" exploitation of the subject.
  - Some of the final mark will also be awarded for participation (including the quality of contributions) to interactive sessions.
- A syllabus containing extracts from texts of the authors studied.

**Other credits in programs**

<b>POL21/AP</b>	Première licence en sciences politiques (Affaires publiques)		Mandatory
<b>POL21/RI</b>	Première licence en sciences politiques (Relations internationales)	(3 credits)	Mandatory
<b>SOC21</b>	Première licence en sociologie	(3 credits)	
<b>SOC22</b>	Deuxième licence en sociologie	(3 credits)	