

## Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



### SPOL3850 Seminar on theories and methodology in political science and comparative policy

[90h] 22 credits

This course is taught in the 1st and 2nd semester

**Teacher(s):** Lieven De Winter, André-Paul Frogner, Jacques Herman  
**Language:** French  
**Level:** Third cycle

#### Aims

Students will be presented with recent approaches to political science and comparative policy that include a challenge to methodological sections.

They will be invited to carry out exercises in this framework with teachers and by themselves, with a view to being able to use these approaches fluently, and in their research work, either as part of their PhD or in another professional setting.

#### Main themes

- The relevance of the explanation/understanding controversy for political science.
- A detailed methodological understanding of the design of comparative research.
- A critical analysis of the comparative approach of a leading writer.

#### Content and teaching methods

- The position occupied by political science in human sciences, and a comparison with historicist, logicist and empirical approaches. The key reference book will be Karl-Otto Appel, 2000, "La controverse expliquer-comprendre", Paris, Cerf, 374 pp. It will be accompanied by reading portfolio.
- Critical analysis of approaches "by variables" and "by cases" in comparative policy (A. Przkowski and H. Teune, 1970, "The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry", New-York, Wiley, New-York; and C.C. Ragin, 1987, "The Comparative Method. Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategy", Berkeley, University of California Press, Berkeley).
- A study of the methodological problems of comparative policy based on Paul Pennings, Hans Keman and Jan Kleinnijenhuis, 1999, "Doing Research in Political Science", London, Sage; and Hans Keman (ed.), 1993, "Comparative Politics. New directions in theory and method", Amsterdam, VU University Press. Alternative approaches will also be applied to a relevant database.
- Some of this course will be delivered as part of an intensive multi-university third-cycle Socrates programme in multi-national groups.

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

To follow basic courses in political science methodology, including comparative method.

Based on participation in the seminar and on work for it, together with participation in colloquia and in seminars organised or selected by teachers.

Portfolio of reading and databases.

An intensive Socrates programme provides students with supervision from an international research team.

#### Programmes in which this activity is taught

**POLS3DA/PO** Diplôme d'études approfondies en sciences politiques et sociales (sciences politiques)

**Other credits in programs**

<b>POLS3DA/PO</b>	Diplôme d'études approfondies en sciences politiques et sociales (sciences politiques)	(22 credits)	Mandatory
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