

## Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



### SPOL2110 Political culture

[30h] 3 credits

**Teacher(s):** Lieven De Winter, Françoise Piérard  
**Language:** French  
**Level:** Second cycle

#### Aims

The ability to understand the symbolic and non material dimensions of political endeavour, and to use indicators (e.g. (attitudes, behaviour, values, beliefs, symbols, rites, memory loci, representations and institutions) that identify political cultures, determine specific features, trace their genesis, and highlight their effect on the political system; acquisition of a critical spirit for selecting and evaluating the analytical tools and theoretical approaches that are appropriate for case studies, and for addressing them transversally and comparing particular political cultures, and the power to go beyond a form of ethnocentrism that has emerged from its own political culture.

#### Main themes

Political structures wallow in a cultural setting. Each culture constructs its power in a unique way, and each institution explains itself by reference to a particular kind of cultural history. Political interaction occurs with culturally conditioned actors. This course therefore aims to study the formation, transmission and evolution of values, attitudes, behaviour and ways of acting of actors and populations in the framework of the political system that they make up. It will also provide the tools for analysing the way that real political societies operate, and for interpreting concrete political systems.

#### Content and teaching methods

##### Content

##### Fr Piérard section

A comparison of various conceptions of, approaches to, and instruments for analysing, political culture. An examination of the mechanisms that operate it (i.e. political socialisation, the collective memory, the regulation of behaviour, and acculturation). A presentation of the indicators that detect it. An examination of some of the dynamics of change.

##### L De Winter section

I. Dimensions and empirical operationalisations of political culture.

- A. Relevance of the empirical approach.
- B. Empirical dimensions and operationalisations.
- C. Criticisms.

II Political culture as an explanation of other political phenomena.

- A. The emergence and stability of democratic governments.
- B. Institutional performance.
- C. Political culture, social capital and democracy.

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

A written examination consisting of about 15 open and semi open questions in all.

Syllabus and a file containing extracts of key writers, empirical data on political cultures in Europe, and a list of subjects which, for the examination, require the use of an approach linking culture and politics. Two teachers sharing responsibility.

**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)		Mandatory
<b>POLS2M1/AP</b>	Master en sciences politiques, orientation générale (option affaires publiques)	(3 credits)	Mandatory
<b>POLS2M1/RI</b>	Master en sciences politiques, orientation générale (option relations internationales)	(3 credits)	Mandatory