

Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



SPOL2104 Comparative politics

[30h] 4 credits

This course is taught in the 2nd semester

Teacher(s): Lieven De Winter, André-Paul Frogner
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

Students will acquire a good understanding of a comparative approach both in the epistemological sense (the kind of specific explanation it embraces) and in a purely methodological sense. They will also be able to design an empirical comparative analysis.

Additionally, they will be introduced to the principal comparative theories of political systems, including, in particular, a comparison of institutional structures, electoral systems and party systems.

Main themes

An introduction to the system of comparative political analysis on the basis of theoretical and methodological approaches. A demonstration of its essential importance to political science, in which comparison acts as a substitute for experimentation on the level of both analysis and institutional engineering.

A comparative analysis, in western societies particularly, of electoral and party systems, political parties as such, pressure groups, parliaments and governments.

Content and teaching methods

Part I - A.-P. Frogner:

1. Political comparison as an intellectual device and as institutional engineering.
2. The methodology of comparative politics:
 - a. comparison in kinds of scientific explanation;
 - b. the strategies of comparative politics;
 - c. the logic of comparative politics;
 - d. time and comparison;
 - e. problems associated to quantification in comparative politics.

Part II - L De Winter:

- a. electoral systems (characteristics - effects).
- b. party systems;
- c. political parties;
- d. pressure groups;
- e. legislative assemblies;
- f. the formation and functioning of governments.

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

A written examination.

Students will be provided with a syllabus.