PO233-30 Core Issues in Comparative Politics

23/24

Department
> Politics & International Studies

Level
> Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader
> Renske Doorenspleet

Credit value
> 30

Module duration
> 20 weeks

Assessment
> 100% coursework

Study location
> University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

In this module, students will first learn how to develop their own research project, focusing on one of the core issues of comparative politics, namely 'democracy' (term 1). Students will learn the essential elements of the research project, and how to apply them in practice, while investigating democracy. As a next step, students will apply their knowledge by developing and carrying out their own research while investigating one of the other core issues as discussed in the PO233 module (e.g. civil war, nationalism, political parties, electoral systems, populism and public opinion, democracy and political participation, poverty and corruption, political institutions in divided societies etc.). The research project needs to show methodological awareness and a justification of the case selection (e.g. case study or comparative study; countries, or regions, or parties etc). This module combines theoretical knowledge with the actual practice of doing research, thereby comparing countries (exploring the key differences and similarities) in order to find answers to some timely, relevant and urgent political questions. The module covers past and current developments in different political systems around the world. It takes a comparative approach; as a consequence,
the module does not only focus on European countries, BRICS countries, and the USA, but also on Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Module aims

- to introduce students to the theoretical and conceptual foundations of comparative approaches to political science;
- to deepen their (theoretical, conceptual, methodological and empirical) knowledge in a number of relevant areas of comparative political research;
- to analyze and compare some of the current political developments in different countries around the world;
- to think like comparativists, and –eventually- to get students to DO research in comparative politics, gaining practical, empirical and methodological skills;
- to combine theory and practice, and integrating big themes and country case studies.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The module will cover the following topics:

- Week 1: Introduction to the Module
- Week 2: Conceptualising Democracy
- Week 3: Measuring Democracy
- Week 4: How to Compare Countries
- Week 5: How to Explain Democracy
- Week 6: Reading Week
- Week 7: Academic Research Projects in Comparative Politics (i)
- Week 8: Academic Research Projects in Comparative Politics (ii)
- Week 9: Your Research Projects in Comparative Politics
- Week 10: States and Nations, Identity and Nationalism
- Week 11: Civil War
- Week 12: Poverty and Corruption
- Week 13: Political Institutions in Divided Societies
- Week 14: Political Institutions: Executive Power and Legislatures
- Week 15: Political Institutions: Electoral Systems
- Week 16: Reading Week
- Week 17: Political Institutions: Political Parties and Party Systems
- Week 18: Public Opinion and Survey Studies
- Week 19: Dissemination of Findings (part 1)

Political Participation: challenges of socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, gender inequalities (part 2)

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Week 20: Dissemination of Findings (part 1)
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New Directions of Comparative Politics & Essay Writing (part 2)

- Week 21: Revision of Material & Exam Preparation

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- At the end of the module a student should be able to:· Understand the core concepts, theories and methodologies in comparative politics
- Describe national political systems and their essential elements
- Make critical evaluations of differences between national political systems
- Critically apply the theoretical literature to practical examples
- Gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of secondary and some primary sources
- Identify, investigate, analyse, formulate and advocate solutions to relevant problems
- Evaluate research material in a critical way
- Develop and present his or her own research projects within the discipline of comparative politics
- Written and oral presentations of knowledge, critique and analyses
- Disseminate the research findings in at least one of the following ways: 1) Present the findings of research project in the setting of an academic conference 2) Make a short film related to 'democracy', which is a core concept in the discipline of comparative politics 3) Write a research essay
- Develop and present own final research projects within the discipline of comparative politics

Indicative reading list

- Caramani, Daniele (2020). Introduction to Comparative Politics, Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Chabal, Patrick (2005). "Area Studies and Comparative Politics: Africa in Context." Africa Spectrum 40, no. 3 : 471–84.
- Croissant, P and A. Lorenz (2018). Comparative Politics of Southeast Asia, Springer
- Doorenspleet, R, (2018), Rethinking the Value of Democracy; a comparative perspective, London: Palgrave MacMillan
- Hague and Harrop and McCormick (2016). Comparative Government and Politics, An Introduction, London: Palgrave
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. (2021). Backsliding: Democratic Regress in the Contemporary World (Elements in Political Economy). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hellinger, DC (2021), Comparative Politics of Latin America Democracy at Last?, Routledge
- Lijphart, Arend (2012). Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in 36 Countries, New Haven: Yale University Press
- Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart (2019). Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism Paperback. Oxford University Press

- Treisman (2000). The causes of corruption: A cross-national study. Journal of Public Economics 76 (3):399-457
- Walliman, N. (2011). Your Research Project. London: Sage

Research element

Assessments (both formative and summative) are done in form of a research project.

Interdisciplinary

No

International

The module covers past and current developments in different political systems around the world. It takes a comparative approach; as a consequence, the module does not only focus on European countries, BRICS countries, and the USA, but also on Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Moreover, the module does not just pay attention to 'Western' scholars, but also includes the work of scholars from other parts of the world.

Subject specific skills

- knowledge and understanding of: the theoretical and conceptual foundations of comparative approaches to political science;
- knowledge and understanding of: empirical material in a number of relevant areas of comparative political research, while describing national political systems and their essential elements;
- analyses of: current political developments in different countries around the world;
- analyses and applications: with the aim to think like comparativists, and –eventually- to get students to DO research in comparative politics, gaining practical, empirical and methodological skills;
- analyses and applications: by combining theory and practice, and integrating big themes and country case studies.
- critique: make critical evaluations of differences between national political systems
- critique: critically apply the theoretical literature to practical examples

Transferable skills

- The ability to conduct independent, comparative research
- Gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of secondary and some primary
  sources
- Identify, investigate, analyse, formulate and advocate solutions to relevant problems
- Evaluate research material in a critical way
- Develop and present his or her own research projects
- The transferable skills necessary for employment related to Politics and International Studies: independent study, research and writing, interpretation of sources, detailed critical analyses, application and problem solving, group work, oral and written presentations, developing of own personal perspectives.
- The transferable skills necessary for own personal development: reflection on own progress and responsibility for own learning, organization of own work, time management and meeting deadlines, independent & group work,
- Written and oral presentations of knowledge, critique and analyses
- Skills in communication of ideas, problems and solutions in different ways to different

audiences. Disseminating the findings in at least one of the following ways: 1) Present the findings of research
project in the setting of an academic conference 2) Make a short film related to 'democracy', which is a core
concept in the discipline of comparative politics 3) Write a research essay

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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	(0%)
Seminars	17 sessions of 2 hours (11%)
Tutorials	1 session of 30 minutes (0%)
Project supervision	1 session of 30 minutes (0%)
Private study	265 hours (88%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

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Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time
Research Proposal	20%	

Research Proposal. In term 1, students will learn how to do research, by applying the essential elements of the research process, while focusing on one core issue in comparative politics (democracy). They will investigate why some countries made a transition to democracy (while others did not), or why some democracies are in decline (while others are not). They will compare

	Weighting	**Study time**

two countries, based on their own choices and preferences, but the module director always needs to be consulted. Students will go through the research process - step by step- , led by the module director in term 1, which will result in the submission of their own project proposal, to be submitted in week 9 of term 1.

	Weighting	**Study time**
Presentation: Dissemination of Research Findings	10%	

In term 2, students will apply their knowledge, while researching core issues in comparative politics, as discussed in the PO233 module (e.g. civil war, nationalism, political parties, electoral systems, populism and public opinion, democracy and political participation, poverty and corruption, political institutions in divided societies etc.) At the end of term 2, they will be introduced to different ways to disseminate their research findings. To share their academic, theoretical and empirical knowledge of this module (see the required literature of week 1-18, PO233), they will have two different options 1) give a short presentation about own research project, following the format of an academic conference 2) make a short film about own research project, sharing the findings in a more creative way

	Weighting	**Study time**
Academic article based on own research project	70%	

Academic article based on own research project. This project can be based on the research proposal (around democracy; to be submitted in week 9 of term 1; 10% of total mark), but can also be based on new ideas which were developed in term 2 (around other core issues such as nationalism, civil war, corruption, political institutions etc). At the end of term 2, students will learn how to share their research findings in non-written form (in week 8-10 of term 2) and also in written form, so as a short academic article (to be submitted in week 2-4 of term 3).

Feedback on assessment

FORMATIVE feedback will be provided throughout the module, in a detailed and regular way, also via weekly homework. At the end of term 1, there will be individual appointments with the module director/ tutor to talk with students about the next steps of their research projects. Group appointments are also possible, but only if the projects overlap (e.g. regionally). In addition, student participation will be strongly encouraged during the seminar sessions, as well as peer review by students. Peer feedback is particularly important at the end of term 2, when students will present their research projects. Students also have the opportunity to discuss their proposals, presentations and projects with the module director / tutor during the Advice&Feedback Hours.

SUMMATIVE feedback will be provided based on the summative work (proposals 10%, presentations 10%, projects 10%), via the PAIS assessed essay feedback form s(Tabula submission).

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 2 of UPOA-M162 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics

This module is Optional for:

- UECA-3 Undergraduate Economics 3 Year Variants
  - Year 2 of L100 Economics
  - Year 2 of L100 Economics
  - Year 2 of L100 Economics
- UECA-LM1D Undergraduate Economics, Politics and International Studies
  - Year 2 of LM1D Economics, Politics and International Studies
  - Year 2 of LM1D Economics, Politics and International Studies
- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
- Year 2 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics
- UPOA-M16A Undergraduate Politics and International Studies
  - Year 2 of M16A Politics and International Studies
  - Year 2 of M16A Politics and International Studies
  - Year 2 of M16A Politics and International Studies
- Year 2 of UPOA-M169 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese (3 year)
- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law

This module is Unusual option for:

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - Year 2 of V7MR Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major)
  - Year 2 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
  - Year 2 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law

This module is Core option list A for:

- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law

This module is Core option list C for:

- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 2 of UPOA-M168 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese
- Year 2 of UPOA-M169 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese (3 year)
- Year 2 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology
- UPOA-M163 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and French
  - Year 2 of M163 Politics, International Studies and French
  - Year 3 of M163 Politics, International Studies and French
- UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
  - Year 2 of M164 Politics, International Studies and German
  - Year 3 of M164 Politics, International Studies and German
- UPOA-M166 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies
  - Year 2 of M166 Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies
  - Year 3 of M166 Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies
- UPOA-M165 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Italian
  - Year 2 of M165 Politics, International Studies and Italian
  - Year 3 of M165 Politics, International Studies and Italian

This module is Option list B for:

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - Year 2 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
  - Year 2 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)

This module is Option list C for:

- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
  - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
  - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
  - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics

This module is Option list D for:

- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
  - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
  - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
  - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics

- Year 2 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics

This module is Option list E for:

- UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law
  - Year 2 of V7MW Politics, Philosophy and Law