



Italian code: SPS/04 (old) – GSPS-02/A (new)

Credits: 9

Course: Political Science and Legislation/ Scienza Politica e Legislazione

Main language of instruction: Italian

Other language of instruction: English

Head instructor

Professor Roberto De Rosa - roberto.derosa@unicusano.it

Objectives

The course aims to equip students with the methodological, linguistic, and conceptual tools that form the foundation of the theoretical and empirical analysis of political phenomena, with a primary focus on contemporary democratic regimes. This will enable students to understand and interpret the dynamics and significance of politics at the individual and group levels, as well as at national and international levels.

Specifically, these objectives will be addressed through an analysis of fundamental theoretical and methodological concepts, with particular attention to political systems, their functioning, and their organization.

To ensure a solid understanding of the concepts, all theoretical components of the course will be accompanied by an examination of various empirical studies drawn from the relevant literature.

Prerequisites for admission

Basic knowledge of contemporary history and general sociology is presumed, but there are no strict prerequisites for this course

Course structure

The Bachelor's Degree Course in Political Science has the following learning objectives:

- Understand the nature and evolution of the discipline, the practice of research, and the main methods of analysis employed.
- Examine the state, society, and spheres of power.
- Analyse political actors: citizens, groups, and movements; social capital and trust; political parties and party systems.

- Explore systemic variables: elections and electoral systems; parliaments and political representation; executives and systems of government; public policies as products of the political system.
- Investigate political communication and propaganda.
- Compare democracies and non-democratic regimes.

Competencies

A. Knowledge and Understanding

Students are expected to learn the fundamental concepts of Political Science and acquire all the necessary tools to analyze and interpret the most significant domestic and international political events. By the end of the course, students should be able to re-elaborate disciplinary knowledge related to the themes, theoretical foundations, and practical aspects of the field.

B. Applying Knowledge and Understanding

Students must demonstrate the ability to professionally apply the topics covered in the course, with reference to the analysis of situations typical of various political systems. They should be able to identify potential connections between different areas of disciplinary knowledge and their application in political practice, developing an appropriate analytical profile and reflective capacity regarding practices.

C. Making Judgements

Students must be able to apply the knowledge they have acquired to develop analyses that are as original as possible and be capable of processing analytical data to define the scenario, context, or systemic or specific climate.

D. Communication Skills

Students must acquire an appropriate disciplinary vocabulary and be able to articulate it across various communication channels. They should be able to communicate clearly and thoroughly with specialists in the field and effectively address non-specialists.

E. Learning Skills

Students must be capable of applying the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course in an integrated manner. They should be able to complement this with knowledge from other courses in the program and develop methodological competencies that allow them to independently undertake new learning paths in the field of Political Science.

Syllabus

Subject 1 – Introduction

- Nature and evolution of political science
- Definition and field of analysis
- Schools of thought and different approaches in political science
- Methodologies of analysis and research in political science
- The issue of methodology and analytical techniques

Subject 2 – Fundamental Characteristics of Political Society: State and Power

- State and society
- The Marxist (and post-Marxist) conception of the state
- Origins of the state
- Forms of the state
- Theories of conflict and integration
- The modern state
- Forms and configurations of power
- Power distribution and elite theory (Mosca, Michels, and Pareto)
- Elites in contemporary society

Subject 3 - Actors and Forms Of Political Participation

- Political participation
- Participation within organizations
- Lobbies and pressure groups
- Social movements
- Political behavior and social capital: two reflective aspects in political action

Subject 4 – Between Participation and Representation: Formal and Systemic Elements – Electoral Systems, Parties, and Party Systems

- Electoral systems: majoritarian systems and proportional systems; mixed systems
- Political parties: origins, functions, organizational typologies
- Transformations of political parties (models of parties)
- Party systems
- Historical development of party systems in Western Europe
- Sartori's theory of party systems

Subject 5 – Systemic Spheres: Parliaments, Governments, and Public Policies

- Sovereignty and political representation: theories and models

- Structure of political representation
- Parliaments: forms and functions; parliamentary degeneration
- Government and governance
- Formation of executives and coalition theory
- Forms of government and comparative political systems
- Public policies

Subject 6 – Political Communication

- Political communication and electoral communication
- Government communication
- Language and political discourse
- Political propaganda

Subject 7 – Democratic and Non-Democratic Regimes

- Democratic regimes: operational definitions; critiques and syntheses
- Phases of democratization
- Types of democracies
- The quality of democracies
- Non-democratic regimes: authoritarian regimes, totalitarian regimes, sultanistic regimes, post-totalitarian regimes, praetorianism

Evaluation system and criteria

The exam consists of an oral and/or written test aimed at assessing the ability to analyse and re-elaborate the concepts acquired, as well as a series of interactive activities carried out during the course.

Erasmus students are encouraged to contact the professor to agree on a customized syllabus.

Study materials (available in both Italian and English) will be provided directly by the professor if not available in the library. The oral exam can be taken in English.

The examination will be aimed at:

- ascertaining the knowledge and comprehension of the main IR theories and concepts;
- ascertaining the ability to apply that knowledge to current trends and events in international politics;
- ascertaining the mastery of the specific language concerning the Political Science vocabulary

Bibliography and resources

1. Materials to consult

Notes written by the instructor are available in Italian (part of the notes are also available in English).

2. Recommended bibliography

The student is required to select one (and only one) of the following recommended texts:

Suggested readings are:

- A) Italian Version - L. Morlino, D. Berg-Schlosser, B. Badie, *Scienza politica. Una prospettiva globale*, Utet Torino, 2018

- B) English Version - L. Morlino, D. Berg-Schlosser, B. Badie, *Political Science. A Global Perspective*, London, Sage, 2017: Intro, chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15