

Fall 2016

4 credits

Anton Pelinka

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Office: FT 202

Office hours: Tuesday, 14:00 – 16:00

COMPARATIVE EUROPEAN POLITICS

Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00 – 10:40

Course Description:

The focus of this course is:

- giving a theoretically based introduction into political systems in general, into European political systems in particular;
- emphasizing especially the role of political parties and interest groups in Europe;
- developing an understanding of the changes the European political systems having to face.

Basic questions to be answered in different ways during the whole term will be:

- Is there a specific European type of democracy?
- What are the common characteristics of European parties, party families, party systems?
- The specific qualities of specific political systems (especially the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia)
- The consequences of transformation, especially in Central-Eastern Europe, beginning with 1989
- What is the state of Europeanization – within the EU, and what is the impact of Europeanization especially for national politics and political parties?

The course is designed to start with the essentials of European politics – the understanding of democracy, of parliamentary systems, of elections, of parties and interest groups. Based on these essentials, specific political systems will be approached – major (i.e. larger) as well as smaller countries. The phenomenon of political transition and the analysis of the European Union as a political system will be studied at the end of the term.

The basic literature is provided by the reader available at the beginning of the term.

Requirements:

Students are expected to

- participate actively in all classes. For that purpose, it is necessary to prepare for each class by reading the specific texts designated to the different weeks.
- give at least one special presentation in class. The presentations (person, topic, time) will be decided at the term's second week.
- write a term paper of approx. 3500 words. The paper should be delivered at the end of the term.

Grading will be based on the quality of the paper (50%), participation in class (25%) and presentation (25%).

The students are asked to contact me whenever they need further information or special advice. They can do it via e-mail or during my office hours.

Format:

Any week's first session will be dedicated to the students' presentations, the second session to a summarizing lecture – both followed by seminar-style questions and answers. The classes in week 6 will be designated to reflect on the term after the first half and discuss the term papers.

Learning Outcome:

The course is specifically dedicated to enable the students to understand politics and policies of any particular European country in a comparative way. The students should be able to “de-nationalize” a political system as much as possible. The similarities and differences between the systems should become as clear as possible, beyond the traditions of explaining national politics out of “culture”, “nature”, “identity”, and “history”.

Schedule:

Classes will follow the structure provided by the reader:

1. Week 1 (September 20, September 22)

Political Systems and the Self-Evidence of Democracy

2. Week 2 (September 27, September 29)

Parliamentary Systems – the European Concepts

3. Week 3 (October 4, October 6)

Majoritarian vs. Consensus Democracy

4. Week 4 (October 11, October 13)

Elections and Electoral Systems

5. Week 5 (October 18, October 25 – no class October 20)

Political Parties and Party Systems

6. Week 6 (October 27, November 3)

Reflections, feedback, debating the term papers

7. Week 7 (November 8, November 10)

Case Studies: The United Kingdom and France

8. Week 8 (November 15, November 17)

Case Studies: Germany and Russia

9. Week 9 (November 22, November 24)

Case Studies: Political Transition in Central-Eastern Europe

10. Week 10 (November 29, December 1)

Case Studies: Smaller European Democracies

11. Week 11 (December 6, December 8)

The European Union and the Dawn of a European Party System

December 31: deadline for delivering the final paper

Readings:

1. Political Systems and the Self-Evidence of Democracy

Almond/Powell, “Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach”, Boston 1966 (Little, Brown and Co.), 16 – 72

Lakin/Lipset, “The Democratic Century”, Oklahoma, OK 2004 (University of Oklahoma), 19 – 49

Munck, Gerardo L., “Measuring Democracy. A Bridge between Scholarship and Politics”, Baltimore, MD 2009, 120 – 132, 156 f.

2. Parliamentary Systems – the European Concept

Sodaro (ed.), “Comparative Politics. A Global Introduction”, 2nd ed., Boston 2004 (McGraw Hill), 185 – 206

Von Beyme, in Alonso et al. (eds.), “The Future of Representative Democracy”, Cambridge 2011 (Cambridge University), 50 – 73

Schmitter, in Alonso, op.cit., 191 – 211

3. Majoritarian vs. Consensus Democracy

Lijphart, "Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries", New Haven, CT 1999 (Yale University), 9 – 47

Schmidt, in: Steiner/Ertman (eds.), „Consociationalism and Corporatism in Western Europe. Still the Politics of Accommodation?", Amsterdam 2002 (Uitgeverij Boom, Acta Politica), 213 – 227

4. Elections and Electoral Systems

Sodaro, op.cit., 230 – 253

Gschwend, in: Klingemann (ed.), "The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems", Oxford 2009 (Oxford University Press), 289 – 307

5. Parties and Party Systems

Katz/Crotty (eds.), "Handbook of Party Politics". London 2006 (Sage), 5 – 24, 34 – 46, 51 – 73, 228 – 238

Volgens/Klingsmann, in: Luther/Müller-Rommel (eds.), „Political Parties in the New Europe. Political and Analytical Changes“, Oxford 2005 (Oxford University), 143 – 167

6. Reflections, feedback, debate concerning term papers

7. Case Studies: Britain and France

Kesselman, Krieger, Joseph (eds.), „Introduction to Comparative Politics“, 6th ed., Boston 2016 (Cengage Learning), 37 – 79, 81 - 124

8. Case Studies: Germany and Russia

Kesselman, Krieger, Joseph, op.cit., 126 – 175, 545 – 594

9. Case Studies: Political Transformation in Central-Eastern Europe

Mark et al., in: Kopecek, Wcislik (eds.). "Thinking through Transition. Liberal Democracy, Authoritarian Pasts, and Intellectual History in East Central Europe After 1989", Budapest (CEU Press) 2015, 463 – 503

McFaul, in: McFaul, Stoner-Weiss (eds.), "After the Collapse of Communism. Comparative Lessons of Transition", Cambridge 2010 (Cambridge University), 58 – 95

10. Case Studies: Smaller European Democracies

Kriesi, „The Politics of Switzerland. Continuity and Change in a Consensus Democracy", Cambridge 2008 (Cambridge University), 69 – 98

Pappas, "Populist Democracies: Post-Authoritarian Greece and Post-Communist Hungary", in: Government and Opposition, vol.49/1, 2014, 1 – 23

11. The EU and the Dawn of a European Party System

Kesselman, Krieger, Joseph, op.cit., 176 – 218

Almeida, Dimitri, "The Impact of European Integration on Party Politics. Beyond the Permissive Consensus", Abingdon 2012 (Routledge), 1 - 44