



## COURSE SYLLABUS

---

Course: **POLITICAL SYSTEM AND POLITICS IN SPAIN**

---

---

### COURSE DATA

Degree	Diploma in Humanities and Global Challenges
Academic Year	2023-24
Credits	6
Course type	Elective
Department	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Language of instruction	English

---

### SHORT DESCRIPTION

---

**This course addresses the main characteristics of the political system in Spain from a comparative perspective and considering the singularities of the Spanish case in relation with other advanced democracies.**

It will start from a review of the Spanish characteristic elements, considering the process of transition to democracy in 1975-1978 and the current constitutional system. It will review the institutional structure and the territorial model, highly relevant both in the current constitutional debate and political competition. We will study the role of main political actors as political parties, voters, trade unions and labour forces, business associations and the organization of civil society. We will analyze Spain's position in the European Union and the key elements of its foreign policy, its relations with Latin America and with the Mediterranean countries and the most relevant political events of the last 10 years that influence current Spanish political situation: the pandemic, the financial crisis in 2008, the crisis of representation that gave rise to the 15M phenomenon; the ideological and affective polarization, and the problems caused by corruption and the quality of democracy.

---

---

## **CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE**

---

### **TOPIC 1: POLITICAL SYSTEMS ELEMENTS FOR DISCUSSION.**

Understanding the main concepts and questions

#### **1.1 POLITICAL STRUCTURE**

#### **1.2 POLITICAL ACTORS**

#### **1.3 CONSTITUCIONAL ORDER**

#### **1.4 OTHER ELEMENTS OF INTEREST**

---

### **TOPIC 2: SPANISH HISTORICAL CONTEXT.**

A brief historical approach to the Spanish constitutional System.

#### **2.1. CONSTITUTIONS FROM 1812 TO 1978**

#### **2.2 HISTORICAL CONSTITUTIONALISM**

#### **2.3 SOCIOLOGICAL AND ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT**

---

### **TOPIC 3: TRANSITION AND CONSTITUCIONAL DEMOCRACY 1978**

**Spanish process of democratization: consensus, constitution-making, and consolidation.**

#### **3.1. SPANISH SITUATION AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (1936-1970)**

#### **3.2. 1970-1975**

#### **3.3. CONSTITUENT PROCESS**

#### **3.4. POLITICAL AGREEMENTS AND CONSTITUCIONAL CONSENSUS**

---

### **TOPIC 4: CONSTITUCIONAL STRUCTURE, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND CONSTITUCIONAL GUARANTEES**

#### **4.1 DOGMATIC AND ORGANIC PART OF THE CONSTITUTION**

#### **4.2 CONSTITUCIONAL PRINCIPLES. SOCIAL STATE, DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW**

#### **4.3 FUNDAMENTAL AND CONSTITUCIONAL RIGHTS.**

#### **4.4 BASIS OF WELFARE STATE**

#### **4.5. CONSTITUCIONAL GUARANTEES :**

- **THE ROLE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT**
  - **THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW IN SPAIN.**
  - **DEFENSOR DEL PUEBLO**
  - **GUARANTEES OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS**
  - **JUDICIAL GUARANTEES**
  - **ART. 116 (EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS)**
-

---

## **TOPIC 5. PARLAMENTARY SPANISH SYSTEM**

### **5.1 BICAMERAL PARLIAMENT. CORTES GENERALES, CONGRESO DE LOS DIPUTADOS, SENADO**

### **5.2 ELECTORAL SYSTEM**

- **FEATURES OF THE SPANISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM?**
- **SYSTEM FOR ELECTION TO THE CONGRESS AND TO THE SENATE.**
- **THE PRINCIPLE OF "PROPORTIONALITY" FOR THE CONGRESS, MAYORITARIAM PRINCIPLE THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SPANISH TWO-PARTY SYSTEM (BIPARTIDISMO).**
- **OTHER ELECTORAL SYSTEMS: AUTONOMOUS PARLIAMENTS, LOCAL COUNCILS, THE SENATE, AND SPANISH SEATS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT.**

### **5.3 FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE PARLIAMENT**

### **5.4 DECISION AND LAW MAKING PROCESS**

### **5.5 INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS WITH THE EXECUTIVE POWER**

---

## **TOPIC 6: MONARCHIE AND EXECUTIVE POWER**

### **6.1. MONARCHIE. FUNCTIONS AND POWERS**

### **6.2. SUCCESSION**

### **6.3. COUNTERSIGNING OF THE ACTS OF THE KING**

### **6.4. HOUSEHOLD OF THE KING**

### **6.5. GOVERNMENT ELECTION**

### **6.6 PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNEMENT ROLE**

### **6.7. CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE GOVERNEMENT**

---

## **TOPIC 7: JUDICIARY POWER**

### **7.1. ORGANIZATION**

### **7.2. PRINCIPLE OF INDEPENDENCE**

### **7.3. INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT (CGPJ)**

---

## **TOPIC 8: COMUNIDADES AUTONOMAS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

### **8.1. ASYMMETRIC AND WAKE FEDERALISM**

### **8.2. PRINCIPLES**

### **8.3. ORGANIZATION**

### **8.4. COMPETENCES**

---

---

## TOPIC 9. POLITICAL ACTORS: POLITICAL PARTIES, VOTERS

9.1. WHAT ARE THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE SPANISH PARTY SYSTEM?

**9.2. RIGHT/LEFT AND CENTRALISM/REGIONALISM**

9.3. PARTY SYSTEM STABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION IN THE XXI CENTURY.

**9.4. CRISIS OF REPRESENTATION**

**9.5 FRAGMENTATION AND POLARISATION. CRISIS OF POLITICAL TRUST**

---

## TOPIC 10. POLITICAL ACTORS: CIVIL SOCIETY AND OTHER GROUPS OF INTEREST

10.1 TRADE UNIONS, BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.

10.2 INFLUENCE OF ECONOMICAL CRISIS INTO POLITICAL CRISIS

10.3 RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANITATIONS. 10.4.

10.4 PLURALISM VERSUS SOCIAL HOMOGENIZATION

---

## METHODOLOGY

---

**The course will consist of master sessions, where the main theoretical contents will be taught, and complementary practical sessions. For the master classes, some readings will be provided with the minimum contents of the session.**

**The practical sessions are structured around the discussion of one or several relevant readings on the topics covered in the master classes. The students will prepare the practical session with the help of a script of questions that the practical teacher will provide in advance.**

**Visits to the main political institutions of the country are also included.**

Finally, attendance at practices is mandatory and, together with participation in lectures and practices, they represent 10% of the final grade.

In addition, students will carry out a research project during the course and they will present the results in public for approximately 10 minutes, last week of the quarter, on some of the issues of the subject. The written delivery of the work and the presentation will be made at the end of the course.

---

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Percentage
FINAL EXAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• knowledge of main Spanish political institutions</li><li>• knowledge about actors, current situation, and main challenges in Spain</li><li>• Analytical capacity on essential issues of the Spanish political system</li></ul>	60%

---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to relate these concepts to current situations in the Spanish case</li> </ul>	
	Clarity and conciseness of the exhibition	
<b>GROUP PRESENTATION AND FINAL PAPER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity and conciseness of the exhibition</li> <li>Analytical capacity</li> <li>depth of analysis and conclusions</li> </ul>	20%
<b>PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity of relate knowledge for an understanding of set.</li> <li>Clarity and conciseness of the exhibition</li> <li>Deductive ability</li> <li>Interest and concern about the matter</li> </ul>	20%

- Committing any serious academic misconduct, such as **plagiarism** of previously published material, or **copying** in the exam or any other graded activity, **will imply not being able to pass the course in the ordinary assessment period.**
- At the beginning of the term the professor will announce the office hours for the course. Tutorials are an essential part of the development of the course, and students may attend tutorials during the course within those office times, but it is recommended that they are arranged in advance with the professor.
- Any non-face-to-face learning activity that requires the submission of an assignment/document, etc. will be submitted by the student through Moodle, always in PDF format.
- To be able to take the final exam, students must not have missed **more than one third of the classes without justification.** If this requirement is not met, the student may lose the right to be assessed both in the ordinary and extraordinary assessment period (art. 93-1 of the General Regulations). Failure to attend to the first hour of a two-hour lecture, means having missed the whole session in terms of attendance, regardless of whether or not the student the second hour.

<b>STUDENT WORKLOAD</b> (in hours)		
CONTACT HOURS	OUTSIDE CLASSROOM	OVERALL
60	90	150

---

## READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

---

- Alcántara, M. y Martínez, A., *Política y Gobierno en España*. Valencia: Tirant lo Blanch, 1997.
- Gunther, R., Montero, J.R. y Botella, J., *Democracy in modern Spain*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004
- Román, P. (Coord.), *Sistema político español*. Madrid, McGraw-Hill, 2001.
- Paniagua Soto, J.L., "Spain: A Fledging Parliament, 1977-1997", *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 50-53 (1997)
- Muro and I. Lago (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Spanish Politics* (pp.210-223). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Llera, F. y Torcal, M., "Sistemas electorales en España: una recapitulación", *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*", nº 58 (1991), pp. 7-56
- Moral, F., *Identidad regional y nacionalismo en el Estado de las autonomías*. Madrid: CIS, 1998
- Castro, C. . *Relato electoral de España (1977-2007)*. ICPS. 2008
- Baras, M y Botella, J.. *El sistema electoral*. Tecnos. 2009
- Berry, M., García-Blanco, I., and Moore, K. (2016). Press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the EU: A content analysis of five European countries
- Bosco, A., "Midlife Crisis? Spanish Democracy at 40", *Juncture*, 22:1 (2015), 65-73.
- Casal Bertoa, F., & Bourne, A. (2017). Prescribing democracy? Party proscription and party system stability in Germany, Spain and Turkey. *European Journal of Political Research*, 56(2), 440-465.
- Desfor Edles, L., "Rethinking Democratic Transition: A Culturalist Critique and the Spanish Case", *Theory and Society*, 24:3 (1995), 355-384
- Díaz, E., "Ideologies in the Making of the Spanish Transition", *West European Politics*, 21:4 (1998), 26-39. Rodríguez-Teruel, J., "But Still Enthusistic; The Unchanged Europeanness of the Spanish Parliamentary Elite during the Crisis of the Euro-Zone", *Historical Social Research*, 41:4 (2016), 214-238.
- Hutter, S., Kriesi, H., and Vidal. G. (2018). Old versus new politics: The political spaces in Southern Europe in times of crises. *Party Politics*, 24(1), 10-22.
- Juliá, S.. *La España del siglo XX. Política y Sociedad*. Marcial Pons. 2007
- Lago, I., and Montero, J. R. (2010). Participación y resultados electorales en España. *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Reis)*, 130(1), 97-116.
- Maravall, J.M. y Santamaría, J.. *Transición política y cambio político en España* (en Tezanos, Cotarelo y de Blas, "La transición democrática española"). The Johns Hopkins University Press.1985.
- Mechan, *Polarización, preferencias partidistas y voto estratégico en España (2015-2019): una aproximación al voto Estratégico en el espectro de la izquierda*. *Revista Jurídica de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*.
- Medrano, J. D. (2010). *Framing europe: attitudes to European integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Medrano, J. D., Cortina, C., Safranoff, A., and Castro-Martín, T. (2014). Euro-marriages in Spain: Recent trends and patterns in the context of European integration. *Population, Space and Place*, 20(2), 157-176
- Méndez Lago, M. (2020). Parties and party systems. In D. Muro and I. Lago (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Spanish Politics* (pp.331-348). Oxford: Oxford University Press
-

---

Merchán, J. M., Portero, J. G., and Taboada, A. (2020). Imperfecta pero necesaria: la crisis de la democracia liberal. In J.M. Marco and J.M. Frías (eds.), *La hora de España: una afirmación liberal conservadora* (pp.133-143). Barcelona: Deusto

---

Molina, I. (2020). Spain in the EU: preferences, policy process, and influence in Brussels. In D. Muro and I. Lago (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Spanish Politics* (pp.683-698). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

---

Petkanopoulou, K., Sánchez-Rodríguez, Á., Willis, G. B., Chrysoschoou, X., and Rodríguez-Bailón, R. (2018). Two countries in crisis: Economic inequality in the EU and disidentification with Europe in Spain and Greece. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49(6), 888-906.

---

Reniu, J.M. (edi.), Ruiz Martínez, F.J. et al. *Sistema Político Español*. Huygens Editorial. 2012

---

Rodríguez-Teruel, J., Barberà, O., Barrio, A. and Casal Bértoa, F. (2018). From stability to change? The evolution of the party system in Spain. In *Party System Change, the European Crisis and the State of Democracy* (pp.248-270). London: Routledge.

---

Rowe, K. T., Lago, I., and Lago, S. (2015). The partisan consequences of turnout revisited. *Comparative European Politics*, 13(4), 514-534.

---

Royo, S. (2010). Portugal and Spain in the EU: paths of economic divergence (2000-2007). *Análise Social*, 209-254.

---

Valera Ordaz, L. "Building the news media agenda: Spanish political parties' influence on traditional media and blogosphere agendas during 2011 electoral campaign". *Communication & Society*, 28:3 (2015), 115-134

---

Verge, T., "Party Strategies towards Civil Society in New Democracies: The Case of Spain", *Party Politics*, 18:1 (2012), 45-60.

---

Vidal, G. (2018). Challenging business as usual? The rise of new parties in Spain in times of crisis. *West European Politics*, 41(2), 261-286.

---

Viver Pi I Sunyer, C., *The Transition to a Decentralized Political System in Spain*, Ottawa, Forum of Federations, 2010.

---

Zarzalejos, J. (2020). La crisis europea. In J.M. Marco and J.M. Frías (eds.), *La hora de España: una afirmación liberal conservadora* (pp.213-223). Barcelona: Deusto.

---