

PO4023 Comparative European Politics

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Aims and Objectives

This course provides a systematic introduction to politics and government in European democracies. The similarities and differences among these countries in terms of key political features (such as political institutions, party systems, voting behaviour and political culture) will be explored. Students will also be familiarised with the central debates and evidence regarding the impact of political institutions and processes on government and society. In this way, the course provides a basis for understanding the striking diversity we see in how European countries are governed.

By the end of this course, it is expected that students will:

- Be familiar with the different political systems that exist in European countries
- Understand the main political developments and trends across Europe in recent decades
- Be able to analyse and explain differences between countries in terms of political outcomes
- Be able to formulate an informed position regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the different forms of democracy that are practiced in Europe.



Contents

The course provides a comparative analysis of the major aspects of European politics, including: electoral systems; voting behaviour; political parties and party systems; political ideologies; government formation; coalition politics; executive/legislature relations; regionalism and federalism; political participation and protest; the impact of the EU.

Textbook

Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver and Peter Mair (2011), *Representative Government in Modern Europe* (5th edition). New York: McGraw Hill.