

SPANISH POLITICS

Language: English

Level of Spanish required: Not required

Hours of description: 45

Course description

The aim of the course is to introduce students to the main features of Spanish Political system and its evolution. In order to do so the main elements that compose political systems are reviewed. The course will also review how the Spanish system might be different or similar to other systems of the world.

The course is divided in three main sections: Institutional framework, Elections and Political Culture. The first section explains the institutions that govern the life of the country and the legal basis of the system. This first section is divided in three subsections, one that explains the background and context where the institutions were chosen and approved; one that explains the main institutions of the constitutional agreement reached in 1978 and their; and one that introduces the territorial organisation and the process of decentralisation. The second section focuses on one of the main figures of democratic systems: electoral dynamics in Spain. This section starts with a description of regulation of elections in Spain. Then Spanish political parties are presented and discussed. Finally, the electoral dynamics are explained by reviewing the different phases of electoral behaviour in different elections since democracy was established. The last section introduces the main figures of political culture in Spain and the ways in which it might be different from that of other countries. It is divided in two section, one that focuses on the elites and its characteristics and one that will review the main figures of citizens political culture and public attitudes.

Methodology

Sessions are structured in three parts. First a presentation with the main concepts and ideas of the topic is delivered by the lecturer. Once the presentation is finished, students are asked to engage in a debate on how the Spanish political system is similar or different to other political systems they know in regard to the concepts explained, participation in these debates will be evaluated. Finally, session will finish with an exercise that links the theory presented with some practical elements. That latter part will usually involve some reading or the analysis of some data. Some of these exercises will have to be handed in the next session as part of the evaluation of the module.

Assessment

Class attendance and participation: 40%

Exercises to be handed in: 30%

Final exam: 30%

Program

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

1- Historical background

- a. Previous democratic experiences
- b. Franco's dictatorship
- c. The Spanish transition
- d. The Constitution of 1978

2- The institutions

- a. The Parliament: senate and congress
- b. Government
- c. The monarchy
- d. The Constitutional Court
- e. The Judiciary

3- The Territorial organisation

- a. Main Principles and characteristics
- b. Two systems that became one
- c. Regional Political systems
- d. The relations between the different levels of government

ELECTIONS

4- Elections and electoral system

- a. The different elections and its regulations
- b. Electoral law

5- Spanish Political Parties

- a. The Socialist Party
- b. The Popular Party and its predecessor AP
- c. The left: from the Communist Party to Podemos through United Left
- d. Is there a centre in Spain? Ciudadanos and UCD
- e. The regional parties

6- The electoral dynamics of Spain

- a. The role of UCD and the first elections
- b. The collapse of UCD and the Socialists big majorities
- c. The arrival of the PP to the power
- d. 11M and the Zapatero government
- e. The economic crisis and Rajoy
- f. The collapse of the bipartisan system

POLITICAL CULTURE

7- Political elites in Spain

- a. Lobbies
- b. Think tanks
- c. Social Movements

8- Public Opinion in Spain

- a. Public Opinion in Spain
 - i. The decline of traditional morality
 - ii. Welfare state and economic views

- iii. Europe and views of the role of Spain in the world
- iv. Spain as a nation and the territorial conflict
- b. The media

Bibliography

Caminal, M (ed.) *Manual de ciencia política*. Madrid: Tecnos, 2006

Vallès, J.M. *Ciencia política: una introducción*. Barcelona: Ariel 2007

Reniu, J.M. (ed.) *Sistema político español*. Barcelona: Huygens, 2012

Román, P. (Coord.) *Sistema político español*. Madrid: McGraw-Hill, 2002