**Course title:** Society & Politics in Contemporary Spain  
**Language of instruction:** English  
**Professor:** Javier Arregui  
**Professor’s contact and office hours:** Office hours, Thursdays 12.00-13.00 hours – Office 20.104  
**Course Contact Hours:** 45  
**Recommended Credit:** 3 US credits-5 ECTS credits  
**Course Prerequisites:** This course is oriented to students interested in Spanish politics. The course does not assume prior knowledge of Spanish and/or European politics.  
**Language Requirements:** None  

**Course Description:** This course is designed to give both political science and non-political science majors an overview of fundamental issues in the study of Spanish Politics. The core of the course is the study of the nature and functioning of the Spanish democratic system installed since the middle of the seventies, paying special attention to the main political processes, institutions, actors, political culture and electoral behaviour. We will spend also some time at the beginning of the course studying the previous Spanish democratic experience (1931-1936), its collapse (1936-1939), the authoritarian rule imposed by Franco and the Spanish transition to democracy (1975-1978) which has strongly influenced the current features of the Spanish political system.

**Learning Objectives:** At the end of this course the students will be able: 1) to understand the development and working of the Spanish political system in the last decades; 2) to comprehend the relationship between democracy and Spanish politics; 3) to become familiar with the key literature on Spanish and European comparative politics.

**Course Workload:** The workload of the course rests on the assigned readings that students are expected to complete prior to coming to class and to contribute to discussion during seminars. That is, during lectures, I will pose questions to encourage students’ participation and developing critical thinking. Students will also have to submit two short essays during the course which will be related to the field studies. Finally they will have to make a home midterm exam and also home final exam.

**Teaching Methodology:** The course is structured in both lecture and seminar formats. In the first part of each session there will be a lecture where the professor will present the most relevant issues of the topic at stake. In the second part there will be a seminar where students will have the opportunity to relate concepts, to express their
ideas as well as to develop their critical thinking on the topics under study. In addition, we will make two field studies during the course. The first one will be a simulation of the National Elections in Spain through which students will be able to know in detail which are the main political parties and which type of ideas they defend across different policy areas. The second field study will be a guided visit to the Catalan Parliament where students will be able to know in detail the political power that the Spanish Constitution has transferred to Autonomous regions in Spain.

**Assessment Criteria:** The final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Class attendance: 10%
- Term papers: 20 %
- Take Home Midterm exam: 30%
- Final exam: 40%

**Absence Policy:** After the add/drop day, all registrations are considered final and **HESP Absence Policy** begins to apply. For the academic year 2011-2012, such policy is as follows:

Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student’s final grade as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Penalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to two (2) absences</td>
<td>No penalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) absences</td>
<td>1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four (4) absences</td>
<td>2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five (5) absences or more</td>
<td>The student receives an INCOMPLETE (&quot;NO PRESENTAT&quot;) for the course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PEHE/HESP attendance policy **does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences**. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences.

Emergency situations (hospitalization, family emergency...) will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director of the HESP.

**Classroom Norms:**
- No food or drink is permitted in class
- Students will have a ten-minute break after one- hour session
Weekly Schedule

WEEK 1

Session 1 - Course description (Mo, Sept. 26th)

Introduction to the Course, Objectives, Course format, Principal contents and overview of the course.

No readings

Session 2 – Basics Facts of the Spanish Political System and Spanish Society (Wed, Sep. 28th)

Reading:


Recommended reading:


WEEK 2

Session 3 – The Legacy of History: the Institutional legacy of Francoism (Mo, Oct. 3rd)

Institutional legacies – The absence of a tradition of democratic stability- From dictatorship to democracy- The Emergence of democratic institutions.

Reading:


Recommended reading:

North, ´An Introduction to Institutions and Institutional Change´, in Institutions and Institutional Change and Economic Performance, pp. 3-10.

Session 4 - Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy I: Theories of Democratization (Wed, Oct. 5th)

The democratic moment- What democracy is ... and is not- Democracy´s Third and Fourth Waves – Dangers and dilemmas of
democracy – Explanatory factors for the consolidation of a democracy.

Reading:


Recommended reading:


WEEK 3

Session 5 – Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy II: The Spanish Case (Mo, Oct. 10th)


Reading:


Recommended reading:


Session 6 - The Institutions of the Spanish Democracy I: Parlamentarism versus Presidentialism, the Central Government, the executive and the Monarchy (Mo, Oct. 17th)


**Reading:**

Lijphart, ´Parliaments: Concentration vs. Sharing of Legislative Power´, in Democracies, pp. 90-105.


**Recommended reading:**


**WEEK 4**

**Session 7 – The Institutions of the Spanish Democracy III - The structure of the Spanish state: The Autonomous Regions (Comunidades Autónomas) (Wed, Oct. 19th)**

From authoritarian centralism to the Estado de las Autonomías – Theoretical models of decentralised power -Institutionalizing the Estado de las Autonomías – The nature of the system – The problems and the consequences of the system.

**Reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Session 8 - The Institutions of the Spanish Democracy IV: Political Parties and Party System in Spain (Mo, Oct. 24th)**


**Reading:**


WEEK 5

Session 9 – Simulation session (Wed, Oct. 26th)

Session 10 - The Institutions of the Spanish Democracy V: Legislatives in Spanish Politics (Wed, Oct. 3rd)


Reading:


Recommended reading:


WEEK 6

Session 11 – Midterm (take home exam) (Mo, Oct. 31th)

WEEK 7

Session 12 – The Institutions of the Spanish Democracy VI: The judiciary within the Spanish Political System (Wed, Nov. 2nd)


Reading:

Heywood, The Judiciary and the State of the Law, pp. 103-120.
Recommended readings:

Maravall, El Estado de Derecho como arma política, in ´El Control de los Políticos´, pp. 168-222.


**Session 13 - The Institutions of the Spanish Democracy VIII: The Spanish Media as political actors** (Mo, Nov. 7th)

Mass media and democracy – Regulating the media (the public service model/ the market model) – Theories of mass media – The impact of the media in the legislative, the executive and the judiciary in Spain – Ownership and control of the media in Spain.

Reading:


Recommended reading:


**WEEK 8**

**Session 14 –The Institutions of the Spanish Democracy IX: The Electoral System in Spain** (Wed, Nov. 9th)

Types of electoral system – Plurality and majority systems – Proportional representation in Spain – Why the electoral system matter.

Reading:


Recommended reading:

**Session 15 – Visit to the Parliament** (Mon, Nov. 14th)

**WEEK 9**

**Session 16 – Elections, political competition and the Spanish voter** (Wed, Nov. 16th)


**Reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Session 17 - Political culture and political participation in Spain** (Mon, Nov. 21th)

Cultural legacies: a tradition of discontinuities – Political attitudes in Spain - Dissatisfaction and Disaffection – Moderation and (Center) Leftism – Materialism and postmaterialism - Regional subcultures – Regionalist and nationalist identities.

**Reading:**


**Recommended reading:**

WEEK 10

Session 18 – The Europeanization of the Spanish Political System (Wed, Nov. 23th)

The European integration process – Europeanization and institutional analysis – Effects of the Europeanization process in the Spanish political system – The merger between the domestic and the European policy processes.

Reading:


Recommended reading:


Session 19 – Simulation EU decision-making process (Mon, Nov. 28th)

WEEK 11

Session 20 – General Conclusion: The Spanish Democracy. Majoritarian or Pluralistic? (Wed, Nov. 30th)

Formal conclusions of the course with respect to the main political and institutional characteristics of the Spanish political system within a comparative perspective.

Reading:


Recommended reading:

Session 21 - Final exam (Mon, Dec. 5th)

WEEK 12

Session 22 – Final conclusions of the course (by students) (Wed, Dec. 7th)

Required readings:


**Recommended bibliography:**


STONE-SWEET, A., 2000, Governing with judges: Constitutional politics in Europe, Oxford University Press, pp. 31-60.


