Course title:
Society & Politics in Contemporary Spain

Language of instruction:
English

Professor:
Mariano Torcal
Building Jaume I, Office 20.221
Mariano.torcal@upf.edu

Class schedule:
Tuesdays and Thursdays 13.00-15.00 hours –
First class Tuesday October 1st at the same hour

Course contact hours: 45
Recommended credit: 3 US credits-5 ECTS credits

Course focus and approach:
Although with an important historical perspective, this course is mostly a political science course dealing with topics such as regime political change, institutions, elections, and public opinion.

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 behavior. We will spend also some time at the beginning of the course
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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 course material. Finally they will have to make a take-home midterm exam and also take-home final exam.

Methods of Instruction:

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.

Method of Assessment

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Class attendance: 10%
Term papers: 20%
Take Home Midterm exam: 30% (after session 5)
Take Home Final exam: 40% (after session 10)

Requirements: None

Absence policy:

After the add/drop, 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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>Four (4) absences</td>
<td>2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five (5) absences or more</td>
<td>The student receives an INCOMPLETE (&quot;NO PRESENTAT&quot;) for the course</td>
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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
- Use of computers restricted to take notes (no facebook, internet or mail)
Weekly Schedule

WEEK 1

Session 1 - Course description (Tues, Oct. 1st)

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

No readings

Session 2 – The History of the Spanish Political System (Tues, Oct. 8th- Thrus. Oct. 10th)

Reading:


Recommended reading:


Session 3 - Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy: the Spanish case (Tues, Oct. 15th- Thrus. Oct. 17th)


Reading:


Recommended reading:

Preston, Paul, The Triumph of Democracy in Spain, pp. 53-121.


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 5 - The Institutions of the Spanish Democracy II: Political Parties and Party System in Spain** (Tues. Oct. 29th - Thurs. Oct. 31st)


**Reading:**

**Recommended reading:**


**Session 6 – The Institutions of the Spanish Democracy IV: The Electoral System in Spain** (Tues., Nov. 12th - Thrus., Nov. 14th)

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

**Reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Session 7 – Elections, political competition and the Spanish voter** (Tues., Nov. 12th - Thrus., Nov. 14th)


**Reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Session 8 - Political culture and political participation in Spain** (Tues., Nov. 19th - Thrus., Nov. 21st)
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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:


Session 9 – The Europeanization of the Spanish Political System (Tues., Nov. 26th - Thurs., Nov. 28th)

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 10 – General Conclusion: The Spanish Democracy. Majoritarian or Pluralistic? (Tues., Dec. 3rd - Tues, Dec 10th)

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:


Bibliography:


Carr, Raymond and Juan Pablo Fussi, Spain Dictatorship to Democracy.


