

Sociology of Politics

LEVEL	SEMESTER	ECTS	FORMAT	LANGUAGE
Bachelor - Master	Winter	4 ECTS	Lectures and seminars	English

Course description

This course examines the relationship between politics and society, focusing on how political institutions, actors and processes are shaped by social structures and, in turn, influence society. It introduces key concepts, theories and methodological approaches in political sociology and uses a comparative perspective to analyse political and social phenomena. The course covers democracy, political participation, political parties, power, social and political structures, political culture, populism, nationalism and contemporary political challenges.

Main topics

- Introduction to political sociology and its relationship to sociology and political science
- Historical development of political sociology and changing concepts of politics and power
- Comparative approaches in political sociology
- Democracy, the state and society in comparative perspective
- Social capital and political participation
- Political and social capital and theories of democracy
- Political participation and voting behaviour
- Political parties, voters and socio-structural relationships
- Political culture, legitimacy, political preferences and power relations
- Social and political structures, social classes and interest groups
- Political parties, NGOs, lobbying and theories of elites
- Populism and political extremism in comparative perspective
- Nation, nationalism, multiculturalism and historical memory

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- understand key concepts and perspectives in political sociology
- analyse the relationship between society, political institutions and political processes
- apply comparative approaches to the study of political systems and institutions
- analyse democracy, political participation and voting behaviour
- understand the social and structural bases of political parties and political preferences
- analyse power relations, social classes, elites and interest groups
- understand the role of political culture, legitimacy and social capital
- identify and analyse contemporary political phenomena such as populism and extremism
- discuss nationalism, multiculturalism and historical memory from a sociological perspective
- apply basic sociological approaches to the analysis of contemporary political and social issues

Teaching methods

Lectures, seminars, discussions, presentations, individual reading and analysis of selected political and social phenomena in a comparative perspective.

Assessment

Active participation, reading notes, a student presentation on a selected topic and a final essay.