

**COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT**

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| <b>Academic School/Department:</b> | Communications, Arts and Social Sciences             |
| <b>Programme:</b>                  | Political Science                                    |
| <b>FHEQ Level:</b>                 | 3  |
| <b>Course Title:</b>               | Comparative Political Systems                        |
| <b>Course Code:</b>                | PLT 3105   |
| <b>Course Leader:</b>              | Dr Michael F. Keating                                |
| <b>Student Engagement Hours:</b>   | 120  |
| Lectures:                          | 22.5   |
| Seminar / Tutorials:               | 22.5   |
| Independent / Guided Learning:     | 75   |
| <b>Semester:</b>                   | FALL and/or SPRING and/or SUMMER                     |
| <b>Credits:</b>                    | 12 UK CATS credits<br>6 ECTS credits<br>3 US credits |

**Course Description:**

Examines the political experience, institutions, behavior and processes of the major political systems. Analyses major concepts, approaches and methods of political science in order to produce comparative analyses of different states and governments and provide a critical understanding of political decision-making processes in modern states.

**Pre-requisites:**

None

**Aims and**

**Objectives:**

- ☐ help students develop a critical understanding of decision-making processes in modern states
- ☐ lay the basic foundations that will enable more advanced study of political institutions
- ☐ introduce the major branches of the governmental process in a variety of countries
- ☐ enable students to examine the major theoretical perspectives that have sought to explain the operation of political institutions.
- ☐ introduce students to comparative material drawn from a variety of political contexts.

**Programme Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following programme outcomes.

3B(i); 3C(i); 3D(i)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

### **Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- ☐ Demonstrates a comparative understanding of political institutions, practices and systems
- ☐ Demonstrates the ability to gather, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to communicate arguments effectively in written, oral or other forms
- ☐ Demonstrates an awareness of views other than their own
- ☐ Completes obligations with regards to assigned work

### **Indicative Content:**

- ☐ Basic approaches to the study of comparative politics
- ☐ Core concepts for the study of comparative political systems (ie different configurations of the branches of government and their powers; different structures of electoral systems)
- ☐ Theories of the role of political institutions in structuring political behaviour
- ☐ Comparative political institutions and decision-making processes in major Western states
- ☐ Comparative political institutions and decision-making processes in non-Western states
- ☐ Key international and historical junctures in the transformation of political systems

### **Assessment:**

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board.

### **Teaching Methodology:**

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course, and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues, addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group

discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely, but must also maintain respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of

