COURSE UNIT DESCRIPTION

Course Unit Title	Code
POLITICAL SCIENCE	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s)
Coordinator: Jr. Assist.Rosita Garškaitė **Other(s):** Jr. Assit. Dominykas Kaminskas	Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University, Vokiečių str. 10, LT-01130, Vilnius, tel. +370 52514130, e-mail: tspmi@tspmi.vu.lt

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
First	Compulsory

Mode of delivery	Course unit delivery period	Language (s) of instruction
Face-to-face	2 (autumn) spring	English

Requirements for students	
Pre-requisites: -	Co-requisites (if any): -

Number of credits allocated	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
8	220	64	156

Purpose of the course unit: programme competences to be developed
The purpose of the course is to provide students with fundamental knowledge related to theoretical framework of political science (concepts, theories, institutions and actors) and to develop abilities to critically analyse and compare political systems, their causes and consequences, to predict and to evaluate the effects of societal and political-institutional change.

Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
Students will be able to define and explain major political science concepts.	Problem-oriented lectures, seminars (text analysis, comparative assessment and systemic analysis of practical issues, case study, group discussions, group presentations), individual studies (individual search for information, critical literature studies and the analysis of theoretical and practical problems, preparing a podcast)	Participation in seminar discussions, final examination, group and individual assignments
Students will be able to explain major political characteristics of a selected number of political systems (including Lithuania), to compare major political characteristics of most common political systems along relevant dimensions.		
Students will be able to explain causal theories about relationships between characteristics of political systems and evaluate the validity of those causal theories based on existing data.		
Students will be able to evaluate proposals for institutional change based on expected effects on relevant feature of political systems.		
Students will be able to predict the effect of societal and institutional changes on political phenomena.	Problem-oriented lectures, seminars, individual studies.	
Students will be able to plan, organize and conduct an independent policy analysis as well as provide recommendations related to the effects of societal and institutional changes on political phenomena.		
Students will be able to convey ideas and thoughts in an argumentative, clear and logical manner in both verbal and written form while defending own's view regarding topics covered by course.	Seminars, individual studies	Participation in seminar discussions, final examination, group and individual assignments

| Content: breakdown of the topics | Contact hours | | | | | | | Self-study: hours and assignments | |
	Lectures	Consultations	Seminars	Practical sessions	Laboratory activities	Internship/work	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Assignments
1. What is Politics? • Introduction to the course, course requirements; • Defining politics and the political; • Studying politics (approaches, concepts, models and theories); • Forms of government and sources of political power; • Historical development of the conception of the state.	2		2				4	6	Preparation for seminar "Rethinking the State: Political Instability, Inequality and the Origin of the State" **Read and analyze the texts**: Carles Boix, „Political Order and Inequality", Cambridge University Press, p. 1-15. Peter Baldwin, „Beyond Weak and Strong: Rethinking the State in Comparative Policy History", Journal of Policy History 17(1), 2005, p. 12-33.
2. Democracy and legitimacy: • Modern and classical democracy; • Understanding democracy (institutions, legitimacy, ontology); • Prevalent democratic theories; • Democracy in practice.	2		2				4	8	Preparation for seminar "Democracy in Perspective" **Read and analyze the texts**: Runciman, D. (2018). How democracy ends. Profile Books. Dahl, R. A. (2008). Democracy and its Critics. Yale University Press.
3. Democratic legitimacy under the microscope: • Different conceptions of the people; • General will, will of the people, public opinion; • Measuring democracy: various indices and methodologies; • The concept of sovereignty.	2		2				4	8	Preparation for seminar "Popular Sovereignty and Legitimacy: What is the Basis of Political Power?" **Read and analyze the texts**: Espejo, P. O. (2011). The time of popular sovereignty: Process and the democratic state. Penn State Press. Nässtrom, S. (2007). The legitimacy of the people. Political Theory, 35(5), 624-658.
4. Nations and nationalism: • What is a nation? • Varieties of nationalism; • Popularity and affectivity of national narratives; • Persistence of the nation state;	2		2				4	8	Preparation for seminar "Narratives of Globalization and The Future of Nationalism" **Read and analyze the texts**: Anderson, B. (2006). Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. Verso books. Holton, R. J. (2011). Globalization and the nation state. Macmillan Education UK.
5. Civil society • Collective action • Old and new forms of political participation • The rise of 'political hobbyism'	2		2				4	8	Seminar "Making Democracy Work" Readings (+ podcast) Putnam, R. (1993). Making Democracy Work. Civic

Topic										Readings
										Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton: Princeton UP. Laurie Taylor talks to Robert D Putnam "Community & Social Capital" https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000tskb
6. Multilevel Politics • Subnational democracy • Regionalism • EU's 'legitimacy deficit'	2		2					4	12	Seminar "Popular support for the European integration" Readings: Ejrnæs, A., Jensen, M. D. (2019). Divided but united: explaining nested public support for European integration, West European Politics, 42(7), 1390-1419, DOI: 10.1080/01402382.2019.1577632 Additional individual assignment – doing and analyzing an interview about the EU.
7. Representation and elections: • Theories of representation; • Elections and referendums • Electoral systems.	2		2					4	12	Seminar "Democracy at its best: designing a better electoral system for Lithuania" Readings: Jastramskis, M. (2019). Effects of the Mixed Parallel Electoral System in Lithuania: The Worst of All Worlds?, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 72(3). https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsy030 Reve, A. and Ware, A. (2016). *Electoral Systems: a Comparative and Theoretical Introduction.* London and New York: Routledge. Additional assignment – group presentations on better electoral system for Lithuania during the seminar.
8. Parties and party systems: • Party politics; • Party systems and formats; • A crisis of party politics?	2		2					4	8	Seminar "Do parties fail to represent the people?" Readings: Thomassen, J., van Ham, C. (2014). Failing Political Representation or a Change in Kind? Models of Representation and Empirical Trends in Europe. *West European Politics*, 37(2). Ignazi, P. (2.14). Power and the (il) legitimacy of political parties: An unavoidable paradox of contemporary democracy. *Party Politics*, 20(2).
9. Voting behavior	2		2					4	8	Seminar "Emotions in politics"

Topic									Readings
• Social cleavages • Effects of media • Is voting rational?									Readings (+video): Walsh, K. (2012). Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective. American Political Science Review, 106(3), 517-532. doi:10.1017/S000305541200030 5 Interview with Katherine Cramer https://www.youtube.com/watc h?v=hK3fNfq-e8Y
10. Constitutions, laws and judges: • Constitutions: their nature and origins; • Do constitutions matter? • Law, morality and politics; • Judiciary and politics.	2		2				4	8	Seminar "An important role of Constitutional courts" Readings: Brouard, S., Hönnige, Ch. (2017). "Constitutional courts as veto players: Lessons from the United States, France and Germany". European Journal of Political Research, 56: 529–552. doi: 10.1111/1475-6765.12192 Tsebelis, G. (2011). Veto Players. How Political Institutions Work. Princeton University Press. (Introduction) Preparation in groups in a social reading platform "Perusall".
11. Political executives and leadership: • Role of the executive • Power in the executive: who leads? • Leaders and leadership	2		2				4	8	Seminar "The making of politician" Readings (+ podcast) Weber, M. (1919). *Politics as a Vocation.* https://www2.southeastern.edu/ Academics/Faculty/jbell/weber. pdf David Runciman "Weber on Leadership" https://www.talkingpoliticspod cast.com/history-of-ideas-1 Preparation in groups in a social reading platform "Perusall".
12. Assemblies: • Role of assemblies (parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential systems) • Structure of assemblies • Performance of assemblies	2		2				4	8	Seminar "Semi-presidentialism: pros and cons" Raunio, T., Sedelius, T. (2017). "Shifting Power-Centres of Semi-Presidentialism: Exploring Executive Coordination in Lithuania." Government and Opposition, doi:10.1017/gov.2017.31 Elgie, R.. (2008). "The Perils of Semi-Presidentialism. Are They Exaggerated?" Democratization 15 (1), 49–66.

									doi: 10.1080/13510340701768125
13. Democracy in crisis: • The role of affects and mobilization of distrust; • Counter-democracy; • Polarization • Cases of direct democracy;	2	2					4	8	Preparation for seminar "Populism: Pathology or the Future of Democratic Politics" **Read and analyze**: Moffitt, B., & Tormey, S. (2014). Rethinking populism: Politics, mediatisation and political style. Political studies, 62(2), 381-397. Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. R. (2017). Populism: A very short introduction. Oxford University Press.
14. Political Psychology: • Identity in politics; • Theories of social conflict; • Theories of social movements; • Mobilization and social networking.	2	2					4	8	Preparation for seminar "Identity Politics and the New Social Movements". **Read and analyze**: Fraser, N. (2009). Fukuyama, F. (2018). Identity: Contemporary identity politics and the struggle for recognition. Profile books. Appiah, K. A. (2018). The lies that bind: Rethinking identity. Profile Books.
15. Different socio-economic models: • The liberal vs. conservative model: the spread of post-materialism; • Welfare state and its practical implications. • Supranational organizations and sustainable development.	2	2					4	8	Preparation for seminar "Politics of Equity: Welfare State, Universal Basic Income and Other Questions of Social Justice" **Read and analyze**: Rosanvallon, P. (2000). The new social question: rethinking the welfare state. Princeton University Press. Harvey, D. (2010). Social justice and the city (Vol. 1). University of Georgia press. Social justice in the age of identity politics. Geographic thought: A praxis perspective, 72-91.
16. The future of politics: • The crisis of anti-politics and why we hate politics; • The principles and methods of political science, the duties of political scientists; • The quality of the democracy in the world.	2	2					4	6	Preparation for seminar discussion "Are We Living in a Post Political World?" **Read and analyze**: Rancière, J. (1999). Disagreement: Politics and philosophy. U of Minnesota Press. McIntyre, L. (2018). Post-truth. MIT Press.
Final exam								24	Preparation for the final exam
Total	**32**	**32**					**64**	**156**	

Assessment strategy	Weight, percentage	Assessment period	Assessment criteria
Participation in seminar discussions	30%	During semester	Active and high-quality participation will be assessed. Students should be well-prepared for each discussion by reading and analyzing the compulsory literature. They should actively engage in class discussions, provide feedback for their peers, be able to answer various questions related to different elements of political systems discussed and the effects they might have on various political phenomena.
Group and individual assignments	40%	During semester	Students will have to complete 4 assignments: 1) 2 group assignments (in groups of 3) (each of equal weight – 10%): - Proposal of a better electoral system for Lithuania (knowledge of and ability to apply course literature on the subject, creativity, problem-solving attitude, persuasiveness of argumentation); - Podcast on a selected topic (capability to prepare for debate, to effectively orally discuss, to raise questions, to provide own insights and arguments in a logical and structured manner, to critically assess the discussed issues, to provide clear arguments in support of the points made, offer thoughtful critical remarks, contribute to other participants' ideas). Podcasts will be uploaded to the Vilnius University E-learning platform and shared with student peers. 2) 2 individual assignments (each of equal weight – 10%): - Preparing a short biographic interview that would highlight a transformative point in their home country's political history and connecting it to the theories presented during the course (knowledge of and ability to apply course literature on the subject, creativity, persuasiveness of argumentation) - Preparing a short critical essay on the state and development of democracy in a selected country based on various indices that evaluate democracy (ability to critically evaluate information, ability to analyze and interpret data, persuasiveness of argumentation, ability to integrate theories and cases from the course).
Examination	30%	At the end of the semester	Answering 3 theoretical open-ended questions (all of the equal weight of 2 points) and solving 1 practical situation (4 points) in written. Students are thereby required to demonstrate their advanced knowledge related to theories of political science gained during the course, their conceptual understanding and assessment of major political characteristics of selected political systems and the effects they have on various political phenomena. When answering, students should provide all the necessary information in an argumentative, coherent, structured and clear manner, to base their arguments on the compulsory literature, lecture notes and class discussions.

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of periodical or volume of publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Compulsory readings provided next to seminar assignments.				
Recommended reading				
Daniele Caramani	2020	Comparative Politics (5th edition)		Oxford: Oxford University Press
David Estlund	2012	The Oxford Handbook of Political Philosophy		Oxford: Oxford University Press
Robert E. Goodin	2011	The Oxford Handbook of Political Science		Oxford: Oxford University Press
Andrew Heywood	2019	Politics (5th edition)		London: Red Globe Press
John Mccormick, Rod Hague, Martin Harrop	2019	Comparative Government and Politics (11th edition)		London: Red Globe Press