

POL 372 - Contemporary Spanish Politics

Course Description

This class will introduce students to the important historical, political, social, and economic aspects of contemporary Spanish politics. Firstly, it will examine the legacy of the Franco regime and the transition to democracy after 1975. Secondly, it will focus on the new political, social, and economic institutions of the democratic regime. Lastly, it will immerse students in current situation in Spanish politics.

Course Goals and Methodology

The aim of this course is to introduce the students to the main debates surrounding the Spanish political system. During the 26 sessions of the course, different aspects of Spanish politics will be tackled.

Firstly, the course will question the historical roots of the current political system in Spain. Features like the Second Republic, the Civil War, Francoism, and the Transition to democracy will be analyzed in order to stress their relevance on current Spanish contemporary politics.

The second part of the course will deal with the different actors that structure Spanish politics. The role and structure of core institutions, political parties, social movements, lobbies, bureaucracy, mass media and political elites will be assessed.

Thirdly, the course will focus on the dynamics structuring the political system. Those dynamics include the processes of decentralization, Europeanization, internationalization. The rise of the Spanish welfare state, the state and nation building process, the new developments affecting the political culture, or the effects of the electoral system will be tackled.

Each session will be based on a fundamental question (e.g. Is Spain evolving towards federalism?). The professor will provide quantitative and qualitative data about that issue, and an open discussion will conclude each session. Different educational methods and techniques will be applied: debates, presentations, readings, videos, and an oratory contest will help students to get the basic knowledge about the Spanish political system.

Learning Objectives

1. By the end of the course, students will be able to:
2. Understand the recent developments in Spanish politics.
3. Debate about the current state of Spanish politics.
4. Make the distinction between the different concepts of political science (state, nation, power, institutions, social movements, pressure groups...).

Supporting Texts

There is no mandatory course book, these are recommended/supporting readings:

- Aramburu, F. (2016). Patria. Tusquets Editores
- Magone, J. M. (2008). Contemporary Spanish Politics. Routledge.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Midterm exam: 25 %
- Party manifesto/platform: 20 %
- Electoral debate: 15%
- Inaugural debate: 15%
- Final exam: 5%

Spanish grades run: 10-9.0 (A), 8.9-7.0 (B), 6.9-5.0 (C), 4.9-0 (F)

General Course Policies

Leaving the classroom: Leaving the classroom on repeated occasions is disturbing to both your professor and your classmates and may adversely affect your participation grade. Please make use of the 10-minute breaks in between classes to fill up your water bottle, use the restroom, etc.

Punctuality and tardiness: Arriving late to class is disruptive to both the professor and your classmates. Please be punctual as your professor may count your late arrival as half of an absence or simply close the door, not let any late students in and consider it as one full absence.

Communicating with instructor: Please allow at least 48 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails. The weekend is not included in this timeframe. If you have an urgent request or question for your professor, be sure to send it during the week.

Student engagement policy

Student's engagement will account for 20% of the final grade, thus highlighting its significance for high-impact learning. Students will receive two engagement grades: a mid-term grade (10%) and an end-of-semester grade (10%).

An engagement rubric is provided to ensure transparent and consistent grading.

Absences and lack of engagement

Absences during the add/drop period do not count against students' engagement grade, but may impact their performance in the course.

As a consistent lack of academic engagement may raise concerns about a student's overall academic performance, the following steps will be taken to support students' success:

Initial outreach – after missing 3 classes*

E-mail from professor reiterating engagement policy and consequences for additional absences.

* 1 class for courses that meet once a week and 6 classes for courses that meet daily.

Second outreach – after missing 4 classes*

E-mail from professor and notification of academic staff at the International office.

* 2 classes for courses that meet once a week and 8 classes for courses that meet daily.

Academic probation – after missing 6 classes*

Student is called in for a meeting with academic staff at the International office. Automatic notification of home institution and further academic consequences.

* 3 classes for courses that meet once a week and 12 classes for courses that meet daily.

Any additional absences will result in a failing grade.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Pablo de Olavide University. Cheating on exams and plagiarism (which includes copying from the Internet) are clear violations of academic honesty. A student is guilty of plagiarism when he or she presents another person's intellectual property as his or her own. The penalty for plagiarism and cheating is a failing grade for the assignment/exam and a failing grade for the course. Avoid plagiarism by citing sources properly, using footnotes and a bibliography, and not cutting and pasting information from various websites when writing assignments.

About using Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of AI tools such as grammar checkers, ChatGPT, etc. and automatic translation tools is prohibited unless expressly permitted by the instructor to enhance the students' learning experience. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unacknowledged use of these tools to create content submitted as one's own. If the use of any of these tools is suspected, the instructor may request notes and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students must retain these materials until final grades are posted. Failure to produce these materials when requested may negatively impact the student's grades.

Learning accommodations

If you require special accommodations, you must stop by the International Center to speak to Marta (the Faculty coordinator: mcaroro@acu.upo.es) to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received.

Behavior Policy

Students are expected to show integrity and act in a professional and respectful manner at all times. A student's attitude in class may influence his/her participation grade. The professor has a right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is unruly or appears intoxicated. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, that day will count as an absence regardless of how long the student has been in class. Cell phone use is not allowed and animals (except seeing-eye dogs) are not permitted in the classrooms.



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Criteria	Exemplary (9-10)	Proficient (7-8)	Passing (5-6)	Poor (0-4)
Attendance	Arrives on time and stays for the entire duration of class. No absences, or if absent once, demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses no more than two sessions or is occasionally late. Demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses 3 or 4 sessions or frequently arrives late/leaves early; exhibits little knowledge/interest regarding course material missed.	Misses 5 or more sessions and does not demonstrate knowledge of course material missed.
Preparation	Consistently well-prepared; demonstrates deep understanding of readings and completes assignments.	Usually prepared; completes readings with some understanding and usually completes assignments.	Occasionally prepared. Demonstrates limited understanding of materials and occasionally completes assignments.	Rarely prepared; minimal effort to engage with course materials.
Participation	Actively participates in discussions with thoughtful comments/questions; demonstrates knowledge of the material and critical thinking skills.	Participates often demonstrating knowledge of material and critical thinking skills.	Participates once in a while or contributions lack depth or relevance.	Does not participate or is disruptive during discussions.
Attentiveness & Respect	Fully engaged and attentive during all sessions; respectful to professor and fellow students. Use of laptop/tablet for notetaking only; no cellphone use.	Generally attentive, with very infrequent lapses in focus and use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes. Respectful to professor and fellow students.	Occasionally inattentive or disengaged. Use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.	Rarely attentive, focused or responsive. Repeated use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.
Collaboration & Feedback	Effectively collaborates with peers in group or in-class activities following professor's instructions. Incorporates feedback to improve learning & performance.	Collaborates frequently with peers or in in-class activities. Incorporates feedback and makes moderate efforts to improve learning & performance.	Occasionally works well with peers but does not contribute substantially to in-class or group assignments. Responds to feedback inconsistently with minimal improvement.	Does not collaborate with peers, does not complete in-class or group assignments. Ignores feedback.

Course contents

1. THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF CONTEMPORARY SPAIN
2. CORE ACTORS OF THE SPANISH POLITICAL SYSTEM
3. STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS OF SPANISH POLITICS

Class Schedule

1. THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF CONTEMPORARY SPAIN
 - Presentation of course/Introduction to Spain
 - Second Republic and Civil War: Why did Democracy Fail?
 - Francoism
 - The Spanish Transition to Democracy: A miracle?
 - The 80s and the 90s: The consolidation of democracy
2. CORE ACTORS OF THE SPANISH POLITICAL SYSTEM
 - Crown, Parliament, Government and Judiciary. Who Governs?
 - Parties and Party System: Who is who?
 - The Electoral System and elections. 1979-2023 What's new?
 - Social Movements in Spain: Is Civil Society Organized?
 - The Fourth Power? Mass Media in Spain and Political Elites
 - Territorial Political System: Multilevel governance
 - Midterm Review and political campaign presentation
 - MIDTERM EXAM
3. STRUCTURAL DYNAMICS OF SPANISH POLITICS
 - Nationalism in Spain: General Overview
 - Screening of Patria and discussion
 - Nationalism in Spain: Catalonia
 - Spanish Economy, a new hope?
 - Spain, a sui generis Model of Welfare State: Healthcare, Education and unemployment benefits
 - Presentation of manifestos/ party platforms
 - Recent Developments in Social Policy: Social rights pioneers?
 - Spanish Foreign Relations. US – Spain
 - Spain and the EU
 - Electoral Debate
 - Transparency and Quality of Democracy: Is Spain a Corrupt Country?
 - Inaugural Debate & What's next? The future of Spanish politics