



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

SK1214 Democracy and democratization in a comparative perspective, 15 credits

Demokrati och demokratisering i ett jämförande perspektiv, 15 högskolepoäng
First Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Political Science on 2015-10-01 and was last revised on 2024-02-22 to be valid from 2024-09-02, autumn semester of 2024.

Field of education: Social Sciences 100%

Department: Department of Political Science

Position in the educational system

The course is a compulsory course on the second semester in the Program in Political science and is also given as a freestanding course. The course is also given as an elective course in the European Studies Program and in the Program in Environmental Social Science.

The course is an in-depth course in political science.

The course can be part of the following programmes: 1) European Studies Program (S1EUR), 2) Program in Environmental Social Science (S1SMI) and 3) Program in Political Science (S1STV)

Main field of studies

Political Science

Specialization

G1F, First cycle, has less than 60 credits in first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Entry requirements

Admission to the course requires the successful completion of at least 15 credits from one or a combination of core courses in political science or the equivalent knowledge.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- Account for different understanding and definitions of democracy and democratisation.
- Describe the main arguments, both the advantage and the disadvantage for democracy as governance.
- Describe the main features of the theories on how democratic governance can be established and maintained.
- Account for how the character of the underlying society influences the conditions for the design of the democracy.
- Describe the main challenges democratic systems have faced and faces.

Competence and skills

- Discuss and compare how democracies differ regarding quality, preconditions and grade of consolidation based on the literature.
- Analyse the possibilities and challenges democratic systems face based on the literature.
- Discuss how the character of the underlying society influences the conditions for the design of the democracy from different theoretical perspectives.

Judgement and approach

- Independently evaluate and criticise established political science theories of democracy and democratisation.
- Independently formulate theoretically and empirically based research questions.
- Actively and independently participate in scientific discussions and carry out written and oral assignments in accordance with good academic standard.

Course content

In recent decades, a wave of democratization has swept across the world. As a result of this, most countries in the world today at least hold elections. Depending on where in the world one is, the quality, design, conditions and degree of consolidation of democracy differ greatly. These differences mean that democracy produces different outcomes in different countries and for different sections of the population. Depending on the nature of the society, democracy is also faced with different types of challenges.

Based on the differences described above, this course offers an in-depth dive into some of the most central issues for democracy. The course deals, in particular, with different theories on how democracy can be understood and defined, how a democratic system is established and maintained, how the nature of the society affects the conditions for the

design of the democratic system, and what challenges democratic systems - old and new - have faced and faces. To illustrate differences in the quality, design, conditions, degree of consolidation, opportunities and challenges of democracy, the course is based on both historical and current events and happenings. Central political science theories are used and discussed within the framework of a comparative and problem-driven approach.

Form of teaching

The teaching of the course is organised in the form of lectures and seminars in small groups. The course contains both oral and written assignments.

Language of instruction: Swedish

The lectures are given in Swedish or English. Most of the course literature is in English.

Assessment

Student performance is assessed through written and oral assignments. All assignments, with the exception of assignment 2, are individual.

- Assignment 1 (3 credits), a written assignment and an oral assignment in which the student is expected to actively participate in the discussion. Assignment 1 is graded with fail, pass or pass with distinction.
- Assignment 2 (1.5 credits), an oral group assignment in which the student is expected to actively participate in the discussion. Assignment 2 is graded with fail or pass.
- Assignment 3 (6 credits), a written assignment and an oral presentation of the literature review, including an oral opposition to another student's literature review. The literature review is graded with fail, pass or pass with distinction.
- Assignment 4 (1,5 credits), an oral assignment in which the student is expected to actively participate in the discussion. Assignment 4 is graded with fail or pass.
- Assignment 5 (3 credits), a written assignment and an oral presentation of the assignment. Assignment 5 is graded with fail, pass or pass with distinction.

Students can be asked to re-work graded assignments and re-submit them. If the student does not re-submit the reworked assignment on time, the student will be failed on the assignment.

Student who has not could be present at a compulsory component can make an alternative assignment. The assignment will be described in the course guide.

A student who has taken two exams in a course or part of a course without obtaining a pass grade is entitled to the nomination of another examiner. The student needs to contact the department for a new examiner, preferably in writing, and this should be

approved by the department unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6 Section 22 of the Higher Education Ordinance).

If a student has received a recommendation from the University of Gothenburg for special educational support, where it is compatible with the learning outcomes of the course and provided that no unreasonable resources are required, the examiner may decide to allow the student to sit an adjusted exam or alternative form of assessment.

At least five occasions shall be offered the students to pass a course or part of a course (Chapter 6, Section 21 of Higher Education Ordinance).

In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, but no more than two years, after the course has ceased/been changed.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).

To obtain the grade Pass (G) on the entire course, the student must have the grade Pass on all oral and written assignments. In order to obtain the grade Pass with Distinction (VG) on the entire course, the student must have VG on the literature review and VG on assignment 1 or assignment 5 and G on all additional assignments.

The following applies on grades: To achieve the grade Pass, requires showing a properly and adequately account for basic facts - whether it is a definition of a concept or an account of the different institutional and constitutional choices of democracy. In addition, the answer must be well disposed and hold a line of argument. For the grade Pass with distinction, the requirements increase, by also having to show that you can make your own contribution to the discussion. What is assessed here is the degree of independence in relation to the literature, or otherwise expressed the ability to perform an analysis.

Course evaluation

The student will be given the opportunity to do a course evaluation. The results of and possible changes to the course will be shared with students who participated in the evaluation and students who are starting the course.