

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE

Academic year **2026-2027**

1. Programme-related data

1.1. Higher Education Institution	Babeş-Bolyai University
1.2. Faculty	History and Philosophy
1.3. Department	International Studies and Contemporary History
1.4. Field	Security Studies
1.5. Level of study	Undergraduate
1.6. Degree programme / Qualification	Security Studies/ Bachelor's
1.7. Form of education	Full-time

2. Course-related data

2.1. Course title	Introduction to Political Science			Course code	HLE3102
2.2. Course coordinator	Lecturer Dacian Duna, PhD				
2.3. Seminar coordinator	Lecturer Dacian Duna, PhD				
2.4. Year of study	I	2.5. Semester	I	2.6. Type of assessment	Exam
2.7. Course status	Compulsory			2.8. Course type	Core subject

3. Total estimated time (hours/semester of didactic activities)

3. Total estimated time (hours per semester of teaching activities)

3.1. Number of hours per week	3	of which: 3.2. course	2	3.3. seminar/ laboratory/ project	1
3.4. Total of hours in the curriculum	42	of which: 3.5. course	28	3.6. seminar/ laboratory	14
Time allocation for individual study (IS) and self-taught activities (ST)					hours
Learning from textbooks, course materials, bibliography, and notes (IS)					25
Additional research in the library, on subject-specific electronic platforms, and on-site					30
Preparing seminars/ laboratories/ projects, assignments, reports, portfolios, and essays					24
Tutoring (professional guidance)					
Examinations					4
Other activities					
3.7. Total hours of individual study (IS) and self-taught activities (ST)				83	
3.8. Total hours per semester				125	
3.9. Number of credits				5	

4. Prerequisites (where applicable)

4.1. curriculum-related	-
4.2. skills-related	-

5. Specific conditions (where applicable)

5.1. course-related	-
5.2. seminar/laboratory-related	-

6.1. Competencies resulting from the completion of the degree programme (as referred to in the curriculum)

Professional competencies	
Competency code	Competency

PC1	Analysis of the national and international security environment
PC5	Public policy and security policy analysis
PC9	Research methods in security studies
PC10	Analysis of international cooperation and inter-institutional relations
Transversal competencies	
Competency code	Competency
TC1	Critical thinking and reflective analysis
TC2	Professional communication and analytical reporting
TC4	Professional ethics and accountability
TC6	Adaptability and lifelong learning competence
TC7	Intercultural competence and contextual awareness
TC8	Responsible digital and information literacy

6.2. Learning outcomes relevant to the degree programme (as referred to in the curriculum)¹

Learning outcomes targeted by the subject		
Competency code	Knowledge and comprehension	Specific academic skills
PC1	C9: The student/graduate identifies, interprets and analyses political and economic factors in the analysis of modern societies, focusing on factors such as production and trade and their relations with law and authorities.	A2: The student/graduate applies scientific methods and techniques to investigate phenomena, acquiring new knowledge or correcting and integrating prior knowledge.
PC5	C6: The student/graduate recognises, analyses and explains political activities, plans and intentions of a government for a legislative session addressing specific causes. C8: The student/graduate recognises, analyses and explains procedures related to the implementation of government policies at all levels of public administration.	A2: The student/graduate applies scientific methods and techniques to investigate phenomena, acquiring new knowledge or correcting and integrating prior knowledge.

¹ The learning outcomes relevant for the degree programme and targeted by the subject for which the course description is prepared will be listed. The entries, copied without any changes from the Curriculum by subject type (Core Subject/Specialisation Subject/Complementary Subject), are listed under the corresponding competency.

PC9	C1: The student/graduate uses the theoretical methodology of scientific research, including conducting background research, building a hypothesis, testing it, analysing data and substantiating results. C2: The student/graduate recognises, selects and uses research methods and techniques to carry out a study.	A1: The student/graduate engages in designing or creating new knowledge by formulating research questions; researching, improving or developing concepts, theories, models, techniques, tools, software or operational methods; and using scientific methods and techniques. A2: The student/graduate applies scientific methods and techniques to investigate phenomena, acquiring new knowledge or correcting and integrating prior knowledge. A3: The student/graduate applies fundamental ethical principles and legislation in scientific research, including research integrity aspects. They conduct, review or report research while avoiding misconduct such as fabrication, falsification and plagiarism. A6: The student/graduate prepares research documents or delivers presentations to report the results of a research and analysis project, indicating the analysis procedures and methods that led to those results, as well as possible interpretations.
PC10	C4: The student/graduate recognises, analyses and explains systems of governance; methodologies for analysing political activity and behaviour; and the theory and practice of influencing people and acquiring governance. C8: The student/graduate recognises, analyses and explains procedures related to the implementation of government policies at all levels of public administration.	A6: The student/graduate prepares research documents or delivers presentations to report the results of a research and analysis project, indicating the analysis procedures and methods that led to those results, as well as possible interpretations
TC1	C1: The student/graduate uses the theoretical methodology of scientific research, including conducting background research, building a hypothesis, testing it, analysing data and substantiating results.	A2: The student/graduate applies scientific methods and techniques to investigate phenomena, acquiring new knowledge or correcting and integrating prior knowledge.
TC2	-	A6: The student/graduate prepares research documents or delivers presentations to report the results of a research and analysis project, indicating the analysis procedures and methods that led to those results, as well as possible interpretations.
TC4	-	A3: The student/graduate applies fundamental ethical principles and legislation in scientific research, including research integrity aspects. They conduct, review or report research while avoiding misconduct such as fabrication, falsification and plagiarism. A5: The student/graduate develops and demonstrates indepth knowledge and complex understanding of a specific research field, including responsible research, ethical and scientific integrity principles, respect for privacy and GDPR requirements related to research activities in a given discipline.

TC6	-	A1: The student/graduate engages in designing or creating new knowledge by formulating research questions; researching, improving or developing concepts, theories, models, techniques, tools, software or operational methods; and using scientific methods and techniques.
TC7	C5: The student/graduate recognises, analyses and explains methods and processes of influencing people and gaining control over a community or society, as well as the distribution of power within a community and between societies.	The student integrates different cultural perspectives into international situation analysis
TC8	C3: The student/graduate recognises, selects and uses statistical methods and practices, such as collecting, organising, analysing, interpreting and presenting data.	A4: The student/graduate uses models (descriptive or inferential statistics) and techniques (data mining or machine learning) for statistical analysis, as well as ICT tools to analyse data, discover correlations and forecast trends.

7. Subject-specific learning outcomes

Knowledge and comprehension
1. Understanding of basic concepts of politics, power, authority, legitimacy, and the state.
2. Recognition and analysis of different political ideologies and systems.
3. Familiarization with the sub-fields of political science such as comparative politics, international relations, political theory, and public policy.
4. Ability to explain or interpret political processes and phenomena evolving within human society.
Specific academic skills
1. Develop critical thinking, argumentation, and academic writing skills.
2. The ability to apply political science tools to contemporary political issues.

8. Content

8.1. Course	Teaching and learning methods	Remarks
1) What is Political Science?	- Lecture – foundational knowledge - Active engagement of students	- Politics as the study of power and governance. - Political science as a discipline (subfields: theory, comparative politics, IR, policy). - Why politics matters.
2) Key Concepts in Politics	- Lecture – foundational knowledge - Active engagement of students	- Power, authority, legitimacy. - The state, sovereignty, and nation. - Democracy vs. authoritarianism.
3) Political Ideologies	- Lecture – foundational knowledge - Active engagement of students - Discussion of multimedia files	- Liberalism, conservatism, socialism. - Nationalism, feminism, environmentalism. - Populism and contemporary ideologies
4) Political Theory & Philosophy	- Lecture – foundational knowledge - Active engagement of students	Classical thinkers (Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli).

	• Discussion of multimedia files	• Social contract theories (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau). • Justice, rights, and liberty.
5) Political Systems and Regimes	• Lecture – foundational knowledge • Active engagement of students • Discussion of multiple cases	• Types of political systems (democracies, hybrids, authoritarian regimes). • Constitutions, rule of law. • Transitions and regime change.
6) Institutions of Government	• Lecture – foundational knowledge • Active engagement of students • Discussion of multiple cases	• Executives, legislatures, judiciaries. • Bureaucracies. • Electoral systems and their effects.
7) Political Participation	• Lecture – foundational knowledge • Active engagement of students • Story telling	• Voting and elections. • Political parties, interest groups, and movements. • Media and public opinion.
8) Comparative Politics Approaches	• Lecture – foundational knowledge • Active engagement of students • Discussion of multiple cases	• Case studies (e.g., Romania, US, UK, France, China, Russia). • Methods of comparison. • Political culture.
9) International Relations (IR)	• Lecture – foundational knowledge • Active engagement of students • Discussion of multiple cases	• Anarchy, sovereignty, international order. • Realism, liberalism, constructivism. • International organizations (UN, NATO, EU).
10) Political Economy	• Lecture – foundational knowledge • Active engagement of students • Discussion of multiple cases	• Capitalism, socialism, and mixed economies. • Globalization and inequality. • Development and state capacity.
11) Public Policy and Administration	• Lecture – foundational knowledge • Active engagement of students • Discussion of multiple cases	• Policy-making process. • Welfare state, healthcare, education. • Policy evaluation.
12) Contemporary Issues	• Lecture – foundational knowledge • Active engagement of students • Inquiry based learning	• Climate change and politics. • Migration and identity. • Technology, AI, and democracy.
13) Research in Political Science	• Lecture – foundational knowledge • Active engagement of students • Inquiry based learning	• Quantitative vs. qualitative methods. • Data sources, case studies, surveys. • Writing policy briefs and academic essays.
14) Review and Future of Politics	• flipped classroom	• Trends in global politics.

	• inquiry-based learning • collaborative learning	• Rise of multipolarity. • Debate
Bibliography² GOODIN, R.E., KLINGEMANN, H-D., eds. (1996). <i>A New Handbook of Political Science</i>, Oxford University Press. HAGUE, R., HARROP, M., McCORMICK, M. (2016). <i>Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction</i>, MacMillan. HEYWOOD, A. (2013). <i>Politics</i>, Palgrave Macmillan. LEFTWICH, A., ed. (2004). <i>What is Politics?</i>, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2004. ROSKIN, M., CORD, R. et al. (2017). <i>Political Science: An Introduction</i>, Pearson.		
8.2. Seminar/ laboratory	Teaching and learning methods	Remarks
1) What is Political Science?	Evaluation of previously received knowledge, Q&A session	Seminar Questions: • How do we define politics? Is it about conflict, consensus, or power? • Why do we need political science as a discipline? Activities: • Icebreaker: students define “politics” in one sentence, then compare. • Mapping the subfields of political science (theory, IR, comparative, policy).
2) Power, Authority, Legitimacy	Discussion of literature, Q&A session	Seminar Questions: • What is the difference between power and authority? • What makes political authority legitimate? Activities: Case study: compare legitimacy of democratic vs. authoritarian governments.
3) Political Ideologies	Discussion of literature, inverted classroom, debate, ideology mapping	Seminar Questions: • Are ideologies still relevant in the 21st century? • How do populism and nationalism challenge liberal democracy? Activities: • Debate: “Liberalism vs. Conservatism in today’s politics.” • Students map ideological positions of current political parties.
4) Political Theory & Philosophy	Discussion of literature, inverted classroom, debate, roleplaying	Seminar Questions: • Is human nature inherently cooperative or conflictual? • What is the “social contract,” and does it still matter? Activities:

² Sections of the handbooks will be available on the Microsoft Teams class in pdf format. Students may not copy or distribute the documents to persons outside the university.

		• Roleplay: Hobbes vs. Locke vs. Rousseau debate on the role of the state.
5) Political Systems and Regimes	Discussion of literature, inverted classroom, debate, case-study discussion	Seminar Questions: • What are the main differences between democratic, authoritarian, and hybrid regimes? • How do democracies collapse? Activities: • Group exercise: classify regime types from short case descriptions (e.g., Russia, Turkey, Sweden, Brazil).
6) Institutions of Government	Discussion of literature, inverted classroom, simulation	Seminar Questions: • How do electoral systems shape party politics? • Is presidentialism more prone to crisis than parliamentarism? Activities: • Simulation: "Design your own constitution" (choose system, executive type, electoral rules).
7) Political Participation	Discussion of literature, inverted classroom, case-study	Seminar Questions: • Why do people vote (or not vote)? • How are social movements changing political participation? Activities: • Case study: social media and protest movements (e.g., Arab Spring, #MeToo, climate strikes).
8) Comparative Politics Approaches	Discussion of literature, comparative cases discussion, mini-research workshop	Seminar Questions: • Why do we compare countries? • What are the strengths and weaknesses of the comparative method? Activities: • Mini-research workshop: groups design a comparative research question (e.g., "Why do some democracies last longer than others?").
9) International Relations	• Discussion of literature and concepts, inverted classroom, simulation/film screening	Seminar Questions: • Is the international system anarchic? • Do states pursue power, cooperation, or norms? Activities:

		Simulation: UN Security Council crisis negotiation/ film screening.
10) Political Economy	Discussion of literature, group debate	Seminar Questions: - What is the relationship between politics and economics? - Do institutions or geography matter more for development? Activities: - Group debate: "Globalization is good for democracy."
11) Public Policy and Administration	Discussion of literature and concepts, inverted classroom, policy simulation	Seminar Questions: - How do policies get on the political agenda? - Who has the most influence in the policymaking process? Activities: - Policy simulation: students act as interest groups lobbying for/against a new law.
12) Contemporary Issues	Discussion of literature and concepts, inverted classroom, case-study	Seminar Questions: - How do populism, climate change, and migration challenge modern politics? - Is the welfare state sustainable in the 21st century? Activities: - Case study: analyzing one contemporary crisis (Brexit, EU migration policy, climate negotiations).
13) Research in Political Science	Discussion of literature and concepts, inverted classroom, workshop	Seminar Questions: - What makes research in political science "scientific"? - What are the trade-offs between case studies and large-N studies? Activities: - Workshop: students draft their own research question + method (present in groups).
14) Review and Future of Politics	Discussion of literature and concepts, inverted classroom, final debate	Seminar Questions: - What are the biggest global political challenges ahead? - Is liberal democracy in decline, or transforming? Activities:

		- Final debate: “The 21st century will be democratic, authoritarian, or hybrid?” - Student presentations of final research/policy brief.
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Bibliography

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The seminar syllabus also indicates multimedia sources for documentation!

9. Evaluation

Type of activity	9.1 Evaluation criteria ³	9.2 Evaluation methods ⁴	9.3 Percentage in the final grade
9.4. Course	- Knowledge of basic concepts. - Understanding of how politics functions, the actors and their interactions. - Identification of sub-fields of political science.	Midterm exam	20%
	Knowledge of basic concepts.	End-term exam	30% (+1 p. ex officio)

³ The evaluation criteria must directly reflect the learning outcomes targeted at the level of the degree programme respectively at the level of the subject. More specifically, the learning outcomes set out in the expected learning outcomes are assessed.

⁴ Both final evaluation methods and ongoing evaluation strategies should be established.

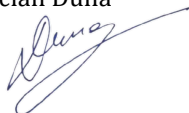
	- Understanding of how politics functions, the actors and their interactions. - Identification of sub-fields of political science.		
9.6 Minimum standard for passing	assessment of interpersonal communication skills, critical thinking, imagination and anticipation	Participation (class discussions, debates)	25%
	assessment of writing skills and presentation	Written assignment (essay)	15%
9.6 Minimum standard for passing			
ability to understand and use basic notions of political science. Organizational details, exceptional situation management: In case of health issues, personal and family urgencies, the tutors and the students will find the most appropriate means to solve these situations (e.g. rescheduling lectures and seminars, finding alternative solutions for examining students in case of disabilities and/or illness).			

10. SDG labels (Sustainable Development Goals)

  Sustainable Development Generic Label								
								
								
								No label applies
								

Date of entry:
10.05.2026

Signature of course coordinator
Dacian Duna



Signature of seminar coordinator
Dacian Duna



Date of approval in the department:

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Signature of the head of department

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