

STUDY GUIDE

DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIANISM. GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN DYNAMICS

**Organised by
University of Catania**

1. IDENTIFYING DATA.		
· Course Name.	Democracy and Authoritarianism. Global and European Dynamics	
· Coordinating University.	University of Catania	
· Partner Universities Involved.		
· Course Field(s).	Political Science-International Politics	
· Related Study Programme.	Global Politics and Euro-Mediterranean Relations	
· ISCED Code.		
· SDG.	4 – 10 -16	
· Study Level.	M	
· EUNICE Key Competencies	[Indicate the Key Competencies required for the course.]	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green – strongly • Orange- moderately • Red – partially • Blank cell - not at all 	
	Problem solving	Orange
	Teamworking	Orange
	Communication	Green
	Self-management	Orange
	Cognitive flexibility	Green
	Digital competence	
Technical competence		

	Global intercultural competence	Red
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· Number of ECTS credits allocated.	Nine- 9
· Mode of Delivery.	On Site for UNICT enrolled students – Online for Eunice students
· Language of Instruction.	English
· Course Dates.	October 2025
· Precise Schedule of the Lectures.	October 2025- January 2026
· Key Words.	Comparative politics, Europe, Global politics, democracy, authoritarianism
· Catchy Phrase.	Understand the forces reshaping democracy and autocracy in Europe and beyond.

· Prerequisites and co-requisites.	The course holders will recommend some background readings to those who do not have a background in political science.
· Number of EUNICE students that can attend the Course.	Up to five students
· Course inscription procedure(s).	

2. CONTACT DETAILS.

· Department.	Department of Political and Social Sciences
· Name of Lecturer.	Marcello Carammia and Iole Fontana
· E-mail.	marcello.carammia@unict.it , iole.fontana@unict.it
· Other Lecturers.	-----

3. COURSE CONTENT.

The course provides theoretical and empirical foundations for analysing institutions, actors, and processes in political systems. Drawing on the comparative politics literature, students will engage with key issues in both public and scholarly debates, with a particular focus on the global state of democracy. The first part of the course adopts a global perspective, while the second part turns to European politics, exploring democratic and authoritarian dynamics across different contexts.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain the core concepts, theories, and methodological approaches in comparative politics.
- Critically analyse democratic and authoritarian regimes in a global and European context.
- Compare political institutions and processes across countries using relevant theoretical frameworks.
- Evaluate current trends and challenges to democracy worldwide.
- Analyse the evolution of European political systems with respect to populism, democratic backsliding, party system change, and institutional reform.
- Assess the implications of EU integration and multilevel governance for national political systems in Europe.
- Apply comparative analysis to assess political developments and policy debates.
- Communicate their findings effectively, both orally and in writing, using appropriate academic conventions.

5. OBJECTIVES.

The course aims to:

- Introduce key concepts and approaches in comparative politics.
- Provide tools to analyse democratic and authoritarian regimes globally and in Europe.
- Foster critical understanding of contemporary political developments, including populism and Euroscepticism.
- Develop students' ability to apply comparative methods to real-world political issues.

6. COURSE ORGANISATION.

UNITS To be provided

1.	[Indicate the name of the units and topics of the course]
2.	[Indicate the name of the units and topics of the course]
3.	[Indicate the name of the units and topics of the course]
4.	[Indicate the name of the units and topics of the course]

LEARNING RESOURCES AND TOOLS.

[List the most important learning resources and tools]

PLANNED LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING METHODS.

The course is structured around interactive seminars that combine theoretical input with active student participation. Teaching methods include:

- **Class discussions** based on assigned readings and current political events;
- **Student presentations** on selected topics or case studies;
- **Collaborative classwork**, such as group analysis of political developments and comparative exercises;
- **Event log assignment**, where students track and reflect on relevant political events throughout the course. These reflections will be discussed in class and may contribute to a **collective online platform** (e.g., course webpage or blog) to foster public engagement and peer learning.

7. ASSESSMENT METHODS, CRITERIA AND PERIOD.

Student performance will be assessed through a combination of individual and group activities, aimed at evaluating analytical skills, engagement, and the ability to apply comparative approaches:

- **Class presentation(s)** on selected topics (20%)
- **Contribution to the class platform or event log** (20%)
- **Final term paper** on a topic agreed with the instructor, demonstrating the ability to conduct comparative political analysis (30%)
- **Oral interview** based on the term paper, assessing critical thinking and understanding of broader course themes (30%)

The assessment will take place during and at the end of the course, with the final interview scheduled during the official exam period.

Attendance is compulsory. Only students attending at least 70% of the seminars will be admitted to the final exam.

OBSERVATIONS.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND TEACHING MATERIALS.

Core texts:

Caramani, D. (eds). 2023. *Comparative politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

De Vries, C. E., Hobolt, S. B., Proksch, S.-O., & Slapin, J. B. (2025). *Foundations of European Politics: A Comparative Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Plus a set of additional readings that will be provided by the course holders.