TEACHING GUIDE - 2026-2027

Democratic Political Culture

UGRA_017071

Departments	Department of Society, Politics and Sustainability
Teaching Languages	English
ECTS	4
Teacher responsible	Alejandro Santana Mariscal - alejandro.santana@esade.edu

Course Goals

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the concepts of culture, political culture, and democracy, as well as their interrelation in contemporary societies.
- Critically analyze the main transformations occurring in the political cultures of contemporary democracies.
- Identify and evaluate the social, economic, and cultural factors that weaken citizen trust and erode public dialogue in contemporary democracies.
- Reflect on the symbolic function of culture in creating a sense of belonging and social cohesion.
- Propose strategies to strengthen democratic resilience through civic education, public deliberation, and collective action.
- Participate in debates and activities that foster critical thinking, respect for pluralism, and civic engagement, intending to reflect on the importance of strengthening or generating a democratic political culture.

Previous knowledge

No

Prerequisits

No

Teaching methodology

Course Format and Methodological Approach:
The course is based on a dialogical and reflective pedagogy, which seeks to create space for critical conversation and interaction between students and the professor. This approach aims to foster a deep understanding of real-world contexts through theoretical frameworks that contribute to understanding the state of democracy in those societies.

The methodology aims to combine theoretical presentations with a reflective dialogue, enabling students to understand the foundations of democratic political culture and compare them with the realities of contemporary

political societies. Each session will focus on proposing analytical frameworks to develop practical activities that allow students to reflect critically on each topic.

Likewise, the course pretends to develop guided debates and case studies that foster critical thinking, reasoned exchange, and the ability to listen to diverse perspectives. The activities will be designed so that each student can connect the content with their daily experience and current political phenomena.

Finally, the course will incorporate simulation exercises on political deliberation processes that allow students to experience the importance of collective decision-making, negotiation as a means of solving common problems, and consensus-building. These activities aim to ensure that democracy is not studied merely as theory, but as a living practice that reinforces essential civic skills, such as cooperation, empathy, and public responsibility, which will be useful in their professional lives. This approach focuses on training future professionals and citizens to develop their capacity for dialogue, deliberation, and action in favor of a solid and plural democracy.

Description

Course contribution to program

The course aims to analyze and reflect on the relevant transformations occurring in the political culture of contemporary democratic societies, as well as the influence of culture on sociopolitical processes, given its symbolic importance and its role in fostering a sense of belonging within society.

It seeks to incentivize a critical and reflective understanding of the relationship between political culture and democracy in future professionals, analyzing contemporary transformations that affect citizen trust, political identities, and the quality of public dialogue to promote attitudes and practices that strengthen democratic resilience.

Furthermore, the course aims to provide a space for critical reflection on how to address the transformations affecting democratic political culture and how to strengthen or generate democratic resilience through education, deliberation, and collective action.

Bibliography

Levitsky and Ziblatt., How Democfracies Die, Crown Publishing Group (Book)
J. Engels, The age of resentment: Politics, culture amd the rise of populism, Penn State University Press (Book)

Maya Tudor, What Democracy does...and what does not do, Journal of Democracy, Vol. 36, Issue 4, Pp. 5-19 (Article)

Diana Owen, Political Socialization in the Twenty-first Century: Reccomendations for Researhcs, Georgetown University (Working Paper)

Activities

Teamwork

Understand the application of the democratic models.

Analyzing the political culture of developed and developing countries.

Understanding the importance of social actors in politics.

Analyzing the importance of digitalization in democratic political culture.

Analyze the obstacles facing democratic political culture

Simulating a democratic deliberative political process

A group project to develop a concrete proposal to improve the democratic political culture of a specific country with concrete strategies for promoting democratic resilience.

Essays

A critical essay based on one of the topics covered in the course, analyzing it and using your country of origin as a case study.

Content

#	Topic
1	The Importance of Democracy Objective: To understand why democracy is important for public life and to identify its essential principles and different models
2	Political Culture Objective: To introduce basic concepts to understand the importance and function of political culture.
3	Political Socialization Objective: To reflect on how democratic values are transmitted and to examine the role of socialization agents in politics.
4	Contemporary Transformations Affecting Democratic Societies Objective: To identify and analyze the contemporary transformations affecting current democratic societies.
5	Factors Weakening Democratic Political Culture Objective: To identify the obstacles that affect the democratic political culture and their consequences.
6	Democratic Resilience Objective: To explore strategies for strengthening democracy.

Assessment

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
Individual or team exercises	Teamwork: Understand the application of the democratic models.	Retake and ordinary round	5.00%
Individual or team exercises	Teamwork; Understanding the importance of social actors in politics.	Retake and ordinary round	5.00%
Individual or team exercises	Teamwork: Analyzing the importance of digitalization in democratic political	Retake and ordinary round	10.00%

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
	culture.		
Individual or team exercises	Teamwork: Analyze the obstacles facing democratic political culture.	Retake and ordinary round	10.00%
Individual or team exercises	Teamwork: Simulating a democratic deliberative political process	Retake and ordinary round	10.00%
Individual or team exercises	Teamwork: Analyzing the political culture of developed and developing countries.	Retake and ordinary round	10.00%
Individual or team exercises	Essays: A critical essay based on one of the topics covered in the course, analyzing it and using your country of origin as a case study.	Retake and ordinary round	10.00%
Individual or team exercises	Teamwork: A group project to develop a concrete proposal to improve the democratic political culture of a specific country with concrete strategies for promoting democratic resilience.	Retake and ordinary round	20.00%
Participation in program activities	Attitude and Participation in class	Retake and ordinary round	20.00%

PROGRAMS

G114-Global Governance Exchange Program (Undergraduates: Law)
- G114 Year 1 (Optative)

GEL25-Bachelor in Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
- GEL25 Year 4 (Optative)
- GEL25 Year 2 (Optative)
- GEL25 Year 3 (Optative)
- GEL25 Year 1 (Optative)