

Module Code: POU44112

Module Name: Topics: Political Parties 2025-26

ECTS Weighting: 5

Semester/Term Taught: Semester 2

Contact Hours: One 90-minute seminar per week

Module Personnel: Dr Emanuel Coman

Office Hours: TBA

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

- Understand the meanings of the main dimensions of political conflict in modern democracies and their relationships with the social cleavages in the electorate
 - Understand the origins of party systems in modern democracies, as well as their continuous transformations throughout time
 - Familiarise themselves with the main party families in Western Europe and Eastern Europe.
 - Identify the ways in which dimensions of political conflict in the new democracies of Eastern Europe differ from those in the older democracies, as well as the potential reasons for these differences.
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Module learning aims

The aim of the module is to ensure that students who complete it successfully will have an enhanced understanding of the ideological conflicts among parties in various party systems, as well as the way in which these ideological conflicts reflect social cleavages within the electorate.

Module content

The module will focus on what parties stand for. As such, it will start with defining the meanings of the left–right spectrum in both economic and social terms while emphasising the role played by new issues (such as immigration and EU) in the articulation of the left-right continuum. Then the module will give a historical perspective of how our understanding of this left-right continuum has changed and continues to change. The final part of the module will discuss the main party families (Christian Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives, Social Democrats, Greens, the Far Right) with examples from Western democracies as well as Eastern Europe.

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Assessment details

Essay (40%)

90 minutes Exam (60%)