

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT OF THE SUBJECT

Comparative Politics (KAP/1CP)

Department of Politics and International Relations

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KAP/1CP: Comparative politics

Basic outline of the subject:

The aim of the course is to introduce students into key starting points of Political Science, its basic issues, concepts, notions, and ideologies. The basic aim is to identify the place of Political Science among other social sciences, sketch out the developments of Politics as an independent scientific discipline, define the objects of its explorations and explain crucial concepts which define the modern area of the political and stand in the center of attention of political research. At the same time, the course treats the way political ideologies approach these concepts. The course constructs a ground for further deeper analysis of subdisciplines such as political philosophy, theory of democracy, research of non-democratic political systems, governments, political actors, parties and party systems and electoral systems.

Structure of the lectures:

Individual meetings are organized as seminars or discussions rather than standard lectures. Each of them is divided into several parts. First, political news from all of Europe and beyond is discussed. Second, the topic of the lecture is presented in the form of a discussion, especially based on the compulsory reading. The teacher helps to place the reading in a broader context of the topic. Third, the student's presentation on a topic related to the lecture is delivered.

To successfully accomplish the subject, students are obligated to fulfill following duties:

The students are evaluated based on activities during the semester, no final exam is needed. The students don't have to attend all the lectures and participate in each scheduled activity (except the presentation which is obligated), however, they need to get enough points for activities. The detailed list of activities including points will be presented at the first lecture. To accomplish the course, the students need **to get at least 51 out of 100 points**. In general, the activities are as follows (but there may be some additional activities that will be presented at the beginning of each semester):

1. **Discussing compulsory reading** during individual lectures (see the schedule below); there are two articles/chapters for each lecture. All the papers/chapters will be sent to the students before the semester. The questions or discussion points for each paper will be sent before the specific lecture.
2. **Presenting political news** from the country of your origin or elsewhere in or out of Europe at the beginning of individual lectures (approx. 2 minutes for each student).
3. **Delivering a presentation** (approx. 20 to 25 minutes) related to the field of comparative politics. The students are encouraged to use PPT or another similar tool. There must be a list of relevant academic sources used in the presentation at the end of each presentation. Please bear in mind that each student is obligated to deliver this presentation. The schedule of individual topics and dates will be discussed in the very first meeting of the semester.

The detailed subject structure:

Below, you can find a brief description of an individual topic discussed in the framework of this subject. Anyway, each semester is a little bit different, which means that the specific order of the topics and detailed schedule including the dates for each lecture as well as possible irregularities (i.e. possibly replacing some topic with a lecture on some specific theme delivered by a guest scholar, etc.) will be communicated to students at the beginning of the semester (on the very first lecture at the latest).

Week 1

Title of the lesson:

Introductory meeting

Topics and main goal:

This meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss the detailed structure and schedule of the whole semester, and to explain requirements for successful completion of the subject. Also, Comparative Politics as a scientific field will be introduced and contextualized in the broader meaning of social sciences.

Compulsory reading:

There is no reading for the very first meeting, instead, the students should prepare a short introduction about themselves, their fields of interest, and their motivations for choosing Comparative Politics.

Additional reading:

- Pzeworski, A. 2007. "Is the science of comparative politics possible?" Pp 147–172 in C. Boix, S. C. Stokes (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. What is the main aim of political science/comparative politics and what is its place among other social sciences?

They should also know:

2. What are their duties in this subject; how and based on what they will be evaluated; when and on which topic they should deliver their presentations; how to prepare for the individual lectures; where to find compulsory reading and questions for discussion?

Week 2

Title of the lesson:

Contemporary democracy and democratic political regimes

Topics and main goal:

Democracy can be defined as the rule of the people. Obviously, very different democratic models can be found under this vague statement. What does the people mean? And what is the rule of the people? It is certain, however, that liberal democracy, which we most often associate with the term democracy, is only one of its forms. At the same time, it is clear that the different political regimes that meet the criteria of liberal democracy are also different from each other. Their difference lies, among other things, in the different relations between the various branches of power - i.e. the legislative, executive and judicial branches. In this respect, we can speak of parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential regimes. In this lecture, we will focus on how democracy can be understood with an emphasis on the liberal democratic model. We will discuss what conditions are generally conducive to the democratization of hitherto undemocratic systems. And we will explain the differences between the basic types of democratic regimes and compare their advantages and disadvantages.

Compulsory reading:

- Geddes, B. 2007. "What Causes Democratization?" Pp 317–339 in C. Boix, S. C. Stokes (eds.). [*The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Samuels, D. 2007. "Separation of Powers." Pp 703–726 in C. Boix, S. C. Stokes (eds.). [*The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Additional reading:

- Canovan, M. 1999. "Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy." *Political Studies* 47 (1): 2–16.
- Dahl, R. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Elstub, S., O. Escobar, eds. 2019. *Handbook of Democratic Innovation and Governance*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Kubát, M., M. Brunclík. 2018. *Semi-presidentialism, Parliamentarism and Presidents: Presidential Politics in Central Europe*. Routledge.
- Levitsky, S., D. Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. Crown.
- Lijphart, A. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. What is democracy? How differently might be democracy understood and which different democratic models have occurred in the World?
2. What are the main characteristics of liberal democracy?
3. What are the main factors causing democratization?
4. Are populism and democracy in the strict opposition?
5. What are the main differences between the main types of democratic political regimes (presidential, parliamentary, and semi-presidential)? What are their strong and weak features?

Week 3

Title of the lesson:

Forms of contemporary non-democracy

Topics and main goal:

Liberal democratic regimes are a minority in the world. More often we find regimes that are authoritarian or lie somewhere between democracy and authoritarianism. Many concepts have been coined for these so-called hybrid regimes, often understood as 'incomplete democracy' or 'incomplete authoritarianism'. If we look at the changing quality of regimes over time, we find that democracy has in many cases declined and often been replaced by some form of non-democracy. What is the cause? In this lecture, we will focus primarily on explaining the differences between democracy, authoritarianism, and the "in-between". We will introduce various concepts of hybrid regimes (especially Levitsky and Way's concept of "electoral/competitive authoritarianism"), discuss the causes of the decline of democracy, and show how contemporary non-democratic regimes differ from the non-democracies that existed earlier (e.g. during the Cold War or even before).

Compulsory reading:

- Bustiková, L., P. Guasti. 2017. "[The Illiberal Turn or Swerve in Central Europe?](#)" *Politics and Governance* 5 (4): 166–176.
- Gerschewski, J. 2013. "[The three pillars of stability: legitimization, repression, and co-optation in autocratic regimes.](#)" *Democratization* 20 (1): 13–38.

Additional reading:

- Dawson, J., S. Hanley. 2016. "What's wrong with East-Central Europe? The Fading Mirage of the "Liberal Consensus"." *Journal of Democracy* 27 (1): 20–34.
- Hanley, S., M. A. Vachudova. 2018. "Understanding the illiberal turn: democratic backsliding in the Czech Republic." *East European Politics* 34 (3): 276–296.
- Levitsky, S., D. Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. Crown
- Levitsky, S., L. Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism*. Cambridge University Press.

- Schedler, A. 2006. *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Zakaria, F. 2007. *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (Revised Edition). New York: Norton and Company.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. Why do democracies sometimes fail? What are the main factors and main ways of this process?
2. What is “competitive/electoral authoritarianism” and how does it differ from “full authoritarianism”?
3. What is the “democratic backsliding” thesis?
4. How do different types of authoritarian or hybrid regimes gain legitimacy and support (from both its citizens as well as foreign regimes)?

Week 4

Title of the lesson:

COVID-19 and its impact on contemporary democracies

Topics and main goal:

In the period of the global COVID-19 pandemic, many states have taken measures to mitigate the virus's further spread. The most commonly accepted policies include limitations on public movement, home quarantines for the ill, and the wearing of face masks among the healthy population in public. The rules of executive power and the application of crisis measures are different in individual cases, but they always have to agree with the institutionalized principles of the exercise of bureaucratic power. This is not always the rule. Some regimes have openly used the pandemic to suppress democracy. Other states have not done so in such an open manner, but several problematic and potentially dangerous aspects may still be found in this respect. Considering this, the lecture aims to discuss the linkage between pandemic measures and the quality of the democratic process as well as the impact of the pandemic situation on elections (turnout, results, etc.).

Compulsory reading:

- Naxera, V., O. Stulík. 2022. "[‘I will handle it personally’: The neo-patrimonial rhetoric of the Czech Prime Minister in the times of COVID-19.](#)" *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 30 (3): 474–486.
- Guasti, P., J. Bílek. 2022. "[The demand side of vaccine politics and pandemic illiberalism.](#)" *East European Politics* 38 (4): 594–616.

Additional reading:

- Buštíková, L., P. Baboš. 2020. "Best in Covid: Populists in the Time of Pandemic." *Politics and Governance* 8 (4): 496–508.
- Engler, S. et al. 2021. "Democracy in times of the pandemic: explaining the variation of COVID-19 policies across European democracies." *West European Politics* 44 (5-6): 1077-1102.
- Landman, T., L. di Dennaro Splendore. 2020. "Pandemic democracy: elections and COVID-19." *Journal of Risk Research* 23 (7-8): 1060-1066.

- Rapeli, L., I. Saikkonen. 2020. "How Will the COVID-19 Pandemic Affect Democracy?" *Democratic Theory* 7 (2).

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. What are the main challenges of a crisis such as a pandemic for liberal democratic regimes?
2. What characteristics should measures applied in such a pandemic or other crises have?
3. What was the effect of the pandemic situation on elections worldwide? (in the meaning of party support, turnout, etc.)
4. What were the main points in the political discussions on vaccination? (in the meaning of the obligation of vaccination, import of Sputnik V, etc.)

Week 5

Title of the lesson:

Corruption as a problem of democracy?

Topics and main goal:

Throughout the 1990s (that is, from the “defeat of communism” to the advent of the “global war on terror”), corruption was universally perceived as one of the most significant threats to the global spread of democracy. According to an oft-quoted definition, corruption is a behavior that deviates from the formal obligations of the (corrupt) individual’s public role for the sake of private gain. In other words, corruption from this perspective is the abuse of public position (or resources) for self-enrichment, or the particularistic (i.e., non-universal) allocation of public resources through the abuse of influence. Under this broad definition, however, many specific types of behavior may be found. In this lecture, we will focus on several issues, such as the problematic (positivist) definitions of corruption, possible classifications of corrupt behavior, and the impact of corruption on politics, economy, and society.

Compulsory reading:

- Baez-Camargo, C., A. Ledeneva. 2017. “[Where does the Informality Stop and Corruption Begin? Informal Governance and the Public/Private Crossover in Mexico, Russia and Tanzania.](#)” *Slavonic and East European Review* 95 (1).
- Kajsiu, B. 2021. “[Public or private corruption? The ideological dimension of anti-corruption discourses in Colombia, Ecuador and Albania.](#)” *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 5 (2): 27–51.

Additional reading:

- Anderson, Ch. J., Z. V. Tverdova. 2003. “Corruption, Political Allegiances, and Attitudes toward Government in Contemporary Democracies.” *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (1): 91–109
- Engler, S. 2020. “‘Fighting Corruption’ or ‘Fighting the Corrupt Elite’? Politicizing Corruption within and beyond the Populist Divide.” *Democratization* 27 (4): 643–661.
- Heidenheimer, A. J., M. Jonston, V. T. LeVine, eds. 1989. *Political Corruption: A Handbook*. New Brunswick: Transition Publishers.

- Holmes, L. 2015. *Corruption. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Karklins, R. 2005. *The System Made Me Do It. Corruption In Post-Communist Societies*. Armonk and London: M. E. Sharpe.
- Ledeneva, A., R. Bratu, P. Köker. 2017. "Corruption Studies for the Twenty-First Century: Paradigm Shifts and Innovative Approaches." *Slavonic and East European Review* 95 (1): 1-20.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. What is corruption? Which problems are related to its mainstream definition? Why do we need to bear in mind specific cultural, historical, and political contexts when labeling something corruption?
2. Which specific behaviors are covered by the umbrella term "corruption"?
3. What are the main consequences of corruption for democracy, economics, and social/political trust?
4. Why we should study and analyze also informal level of political regime and informal practices?

Week 6

Title of the lesson:

Political parties as main actors in contemporary democratic regimes

Topics and main goal:

Political parties are undoubtedly the most important type of political actor in liberal democratic regimes, in which they have specific functions different from the functions of other actors (for example, interest organizations). Due to their importance, political parties are among the most researched areas within comparative politics. Many political scientists have created diverse classifications of political parties based on a variety of criteria - the way they were created, through internal party organization, position in the party system or represented ideology, etc. In this lecture, we will focus primarily on the discussion of the definition and functions of a political party (in democracy and non-democracy), the possible classification of political parties with an emphasis on party models summarized by A. Krouwel and the question of so-called "new" political parties.

Compulsory reading:

- Krouwel, A. 2006. "Party models." Pp 249–269 in R. S. Katz, W. J. Crotty (eds.). [*Handbook of Party Politics*](#). Sage.
- Hanley, S., A. Sikk. 2016. "[Economy, corruption or floating voters? Explaining the breakthroughs of anti-establishment reform parties in Eastern Europe.](#)" *Party Politics* 22 (4): 522–533.

Additional reading:

- Bolleyer, N., C. Little, F. C. Von Nostitz. 2015. "Implementing democratic equality in political parties: Organisational consequences in the Swedish and the German pirate parties." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 38 (2): 158–178.
- Duverger, M. 1954. *Political Parties. Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State*. London: Methuen.
- Hloušek, V., L. Kopeček, P. Vodová. 2020. *The Rise of Entrepreneurial Parties in European Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hopkin, J., C. Paolucci. 1999. "The business firm party model of party organisation: Cases from Spain and Italy." *European Journal of Political*

Research 35 (3): 285–305.

- Katz, R. S., W. J. Crotty, eds. 2006. *Handbook of Party Politics*. Sage.
- Sartori, G. 2005. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. ECPR Press.
- Sikk, A. 2012. "Newness as a winning formula for new political parties." *Party Politics* 18 (4): 465-485.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. How we can define a political party? What are its main features and differences compared to other political actors? What are its main functions in a democratic political system?
2. According to which criteria can parties be classified?
3. What are the differences between a mass party, elite party, catch-all party, cartel party, and business-firm party?
4. What is a "new" political party? Which types of these parties do you know? Which conditions are favorable for their success?

Week 7

Title of the lesson:

Party systems

Topics and main goal:

A party system is a system of political parties and their mutual relations (these relations are, according to many authors, more important than the parties themselves) existing at different levels (most often we are interested in the party system at the national level, but there are also regional, local, etc.). Various criteria are used to characterize party systems, most notably the number of relevant political parties and their ideological distance (i.e., how polarized the system is). Nevertheless, typologies of party systems in competitive political regimes have been created by different authors on the basis of different criteria (in the case of M. Duverger, it was only a numerical aspect, i.e. the number of relevant parties in the system; in the case of J. Blondel, the number and size of parties; in the case of G. Sartori, the number of parties and their ideological distance). In this lecture we will mainly focus on defining the party system and other important concepts (e.g. relevant party or polarization) and on presenting the typologies of party systems of the above mentioned authors.

Compulsory reading:

- Kitschelt, H. 2007. "Party Systems." Pp 522–544 in C. Boix, S. C. Stokes (eds.). [*The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Casal Bértoa, F. 2023. "[The problem of party system change revisited: the 2022 Peter Mair Lecture](#)." *Irish Political Studies* 38 (4): 438–466.

Additional reading:

- Deegan-Krause, K., T. Haughton. 2018. "Surviving the Storm: Factors Determining Party Survival in Central and Eastern Europe." *East European Politics and Societies* 32 (3): 473–492.
- Duverger, M. 1954. *Political Parties. Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State*. London: Methuen.
- Haughton, T., K. Deegan-Krause. 2015. "Hurricane Season: Systems of Instability in Central and East European Party Politics." *East European*

Politics and Societies 29 (1): 61–80.

- Katz, R. S., W. J. Crotty, eds. 2006. *Handbook of Party Politics*. Sage.
- Sartori, G. 2005. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. ECPR Press.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. What is the party system? Why are the relationships between parties often more important to understanding it than the parties themselves?
2. How can we define Sartori's term relevant political party?
3. What types of party systems and on the basis of what criteria were presented by M. Duverger, J. Blondel and G. Sartori present?

Week 8

Title of the lesson:

Elections and electoral systems

Topics and main goal:

Like political parties, elections are one of the most frequently researched topics in comparative politics. Elections are a key instrument of democratic political regimes. It is true that political power is legitimized in a democracy only through free and fair elections. Elections are seen as such an important tool that they are held (but often only to fake legitimacy) even in most non-democratic regimes. Elections can be classified according to the order (first-order and second-order elections), the institution elected (presidential, parliamentary, etc.) or the electoral system. Especially these electoral systems will be the main focus of this lecture, in which we will explain the nature of majority, proportional and mixed electoral systems, their differences, advantages, disadvantages and examples of their use. We will also focus on the relationship between electoral and party systems (the so-called Duverger's and Sartori's electoral law) and other phenomena.

Compulsory reading:

- Taagepera, R. 2007. "Electoral systems." Pp 678–702 in C. Boix, S. C. Stokes (eds.). [*The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Maškarinec, P., V. Naxera. 2022. "[The Pirates of Czechia: The Curse of Preferential Vote](#)." *Slovak Journal of Political Sciences* 22 (1): 5–24.

Additional reading:

- Charvát, J. 2023. *The Politics of Electoral Reform in Central Europe since 1989*. Cham: Springer.
- Evans, G., P. Norris, eds. 1999. *Critical Elections: British Parties and Voters in Long-Term Perspective*. London: Sage.
- Farrell, D. M. 2001. *Electoral Systems. A Comparative Introduction*. New York: Palgrave.
- Fisher, J. et al., eds. 2018. *The Routledge Handbook of Elections, Voting Behavior and Public Opinion*. Routledge.

- Herron, E. S. et al., eds. 2017. *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems*. Oxford University Press.
- Maškarinec, P. 2017. "Testing Duverger's law: strategic voting in Mongolian elections, 1996–2004." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 33 (2): 145-160.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of majority, proportional and mixed electoral systems? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each type?
2. Which of these types do you prefer for the election of parliament and why?
3. What is the relationship between the form of the electoral system and the party system?
4. What tend to be the main reasons for electoral reform?

Week 9

Title of the lesson:

Populism as main research topic of contemporary comparative politics

Topics and main goal:

Populism has been, without any doubt, a very prominent theme in world political science for the last ten or fifteen years at least. The multitude of conferences and workshops on populism, panels on the topic at major global conferences, the number of special issues of prestigious journals, and the number of texts across journals attest to this. In particular, the British referendum on remaining in the EU and Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential elections (in the Czech case, this may be the electoral successes of Miloš Zeman, Andrej Babiš, and Tomio Okamura) have been the impetus for a significant increase in interest in the study of populism and the number of texts on the topic. This lecture will focus on questions such as "What is populism?" and "What actors can be considered populist?" The lecture introduces dominant approaches to populism (with a strong emphasis on the so-called ideational approach which understands populism as a set of ideas, especially people-centrism and anti-elitism) and highlights the main points and specific topics of contemporary populism studies.

Compulsory reading:

- Rooduijn, M. 2019. "[State of the field: How to study populism and adjacent topics? A plea for both more and less focus.](#)" *European Journal of Political Research* 58 (1): 362–372.
- Mudde, C. 2014. "[The Populist Zeitgeist.](#)" *Government & Opposition* 39 (4): 541–563.

Additional reading:

- Aalberg, T. et al. 2017. *Populist political communication in Europe*. London: Routledge.
- Hawkins, K. A., C. Rovira Kaltwasser. 2017. "The Ideational Approach to Populism." *Latin American Research Review* 52 (4): 513–528.
- Hunger, S., F. Paxton. 2022. "What's in a buzzword? A systematic review of the state of populism research in political science." *Political Science Research and Methods* 10 (3): 617–633.

- Moffitt, B. 2016. *The global rise of populism: Performance, political style and representation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Mudde, C., C. Rovira Kaltwasser. 2017. *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Naxera, V., V. Kaše, O. Stulík. 2023. “‘The more populism types you know, the better political scientist you are?’ Machine-learning based meta-analysis of populism types in political science literature.” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* (on-line first).
- Schwörer, J. 2021. *The Growth of Populism in the Political Mainstream. The Contagion Effects of Populist Messages on Mainstream Parties' Communication*. Cham: Springer Nature.
- Zulianello, M. 2020. “Varieties of Populist Parties and Party Systems in Europe: From State-of-the-Art to the Application of a Novel Classification Scheme to 66 Parties in 33 Countries.” *Government and Opposition* 55: 327–347.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. How can be populism defined? What are the main conceptual approaches to populism? What is the so-called ideational approach?
2. What is the difference between an actor-centered and a communication-centered approach?
3. What is the “populist Zeitgeist” thesis?
4. What is the relation between populism and other concepts such as nativism, technocratism, and Euroscepticism?
5. Are populism and democracy in strict opposition?

Week 10

Title of the lesson:

Illiberalism and culture wars

Topics and main goal:

Culture wars, defined some thirty years ago in the context of American society and politics, have become a significant factor in political development. Generally speaking, the term “culture wars” refers to political conflicts fought over the irreconcilability of opposing positions on moral, cultural, and social values. Culture wars then serve as an instrument in political struggles, which are often framed as a struggle against “moral decay” (however vaguely defined), as well as an attempt to exaggerate “the right values”. They can take place on several different levels – from the local level, through argumentation at the level of political elites, to the level of a society-wide conflict having a high polarising potential. These struggles are mainly associated with three areas – identity politics (mainly about migration), moral politics (primarily the topics of gender or sexual minorities), and memory politics (in the context of Central Europe mainly, though not exclusively, about the Second World War and the former communist regime). This lecture will be focused on these three specific areas of culture wars, their ideological dimensions, and their impact on contemporary politics, especially in the region of Central Europe. The major attention is paid to memory politics, so-called “places of memory” and political struggles over the interpretation of history.

Compulsory reading:

- Hesová, Z. 2021. “[Three Types of Culture Wars and the Populist Strategies in Central Europe](#).” *Czech Journal of Political Science* 28 (2): 115–135.
- Naxera, V., P. Krčál. 2022. “[Post-Socialist Political Necromancy: Weaponization of Dead Bodies in Czech Culture Wars](#).” *Nationalities Papers*, online first.

Additional reading:

- Barša, P., Z. Hesová, O. Slačálek, eds. 2021. *Central European Culture Wars: Beyond Post-Communism and Populism*. Prague: Charles University, Faculty of Arts.
- Chlup, R. 2020. “Competing myths of Czech identity.” *New Perspectives* 28

(2): 179–204.

- Fukuyama, F. 2018. *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux..
- Graff, A., K. Elżbieta. 2021. *Anti-Gender Politics in the Populist Moment*. London: Routledge.
- Guasti, P., L. Bustikova. 2020. "In Europe's Closet: the rights of sexual minorities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia." *East European Politics* 36 (2): 226-246.
- Guasti, P., L. Bustikova. 2023. "Varieties of Illiberal Backlash in Central Europe." *Problems of Post-Communism* 70 (2): 130-142.
- Holy, L. 1996. *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-Communist Social Transformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hunter, J. D. 1991. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Nora, P. 1989. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations* 26: 7–24.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. What are so-called culture wars? Why they are called "wars"?
2. What are the main areas of these struggles?
3. What is the role of collective memory and places of memory in contemporary politics?
4. Which historical events are the main subject of political struggles over the interpretation of history in different European countries?

Week 11

Title of the lesson:

Contemporary Czech politics

Topics and main goal:

In this lecture, we will apply theoretical and conceptual knowledge from the previous meetings to the political reality of contemporary Czechia. We will thus discuss topics such as a classification of the Czech political regime (as a consequence of institutional changes such as the adoption of the direct presidential election), the quality of Czech democracy, the main characteristics of the Czech party system and its main actors, electoral system and its consequences, main corrupt cases, the rise of populist actors as well as ideological disputations over identity, morality, and history.

Compulsory reading:

- Hloušek, V., L. Kopeček. 2014. "[Caretaker Governments in Czech Politics: What to Do about a Government Crisis](#)." *Europe-Asia Studies* 66 (8): 1323–1349.
- Buben, R., K. Kouba. 2023. "[How Czech Democracy Defies the Illiberal Trend](#)." *Current History* 122 (842): 108–114.

Additional reading:

- Hanley, S. 2014. "Two Cheers for Czech Democracy." *Czech Journal of Political Science* 16 (3): 161–176.
- Havlík, V. 2019. "Technocratic Populism and Political Illiberalism in Central Europe." *Problems of Post-Communism* 66 (6): 369–384.
- Lorenz, A., H. Formánková, eds. 2020. *Czech Democracy in Crisis*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Naxera, V. 2023. *Anti-Corruption and Populism. The Czech Experience*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Roberts, A. 2019. "Czech Billionaires as Politicians." *Problems of Post-Communism* 66 (6): 434–444.
- Roberts, A. 2020. *Czech Democracy in the New Millennium*. Routledge.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. What are the main topics discussed within contemporary Czech political debates?
2. How we can characterize the contemporary Czech party system, its structure, cleavages, and main actors?
3. What are the main illiberal tendencies in Czech politics?
4. What are the main consequences of adopting a direct presidential election?

Week 12

Title of the lesson:

Movie projection & discussion

Topics and main goal:

During this lesson, the Czech documentary movie “[Left, Right, Forward](#)” (2006) will be watched and discussed. The movie is devoted to the members (and their motivations) of the Union of Communist Youth and the Youth Conservatives, two youth political organizations linked to two Czech political parties – Civic Democratic Party and Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. Discussion on this movie will serve also as a basis for a broader discussion on the political participation of youths.

Compulsory reading:

There is no compulsory reading for this lecture, instead, students prepare basic information about the political participation of youths (i.e. political preferences, electoral participation, party membership, etc.) in their countries.

Additional reading:

- Benevento, A. 2023. “In search of an appropriate channel for voicing political concerns: political participation among radicalised youth in Europe.” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, on-line first.
- Kitanova, M. 2020. “Youth political participation in the EU: evidence from a cross-national analysis.” *Journal of Youth Studies* 23 (7): 819–836.
- Soler-i-Martí, R. 2015. “Youth political involvement update: measuring the role of cause-oriented political interest in young people's activism.” *Journal of Youth Studies* 18 (3): 396–416.
- Zulianello, M. 2018. “Mobilizing young voters? A cross-national analysis of contextual factors in pirate voting.” *European Politics and Society* 19 (3): 282–298.

Based on this lecture, students should be able to discuss these questions:

1. What are the main determinants of the political participation of youths?
2. Why do political parties establish youth political organizations?

Week 13

Title of the lesson:

Final discussion and evaluation

Topics and main goal:

We will discuss a whole semester, students will get their overall evaluation and final grades (based on the activity during the semester) and have the possibility to provide a teacher with their reflection on the semester (what to change and/or improve in the future) - this reflection is much appreciated.