

## **POL 372E Contemporary Spanish Politics**

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**Office Hours:** Appointment by email preferred

**Course information:**  
Spring 2022  
Mondays and Wednesdays  
4:00pm-5:20pm

### **Course Description**

This course will introduce students to the most important historical, social, and economic aspects of contemporary Spanish politics. Firstly, it will examine the legacy of the Franco regime and the transition to democracy after 1975. Secondly, it will focus on the new political, social and economic institutions of the democratic regime. Thirdly, structural dynamics of Spanish politics will be assessed. Lastly, a number of particular public policies in Spain will be discussed.

### **Course Goals and Methodology**

The aim of this course is to introduce the students to the main debates surrounding Spanish politics and its political system. This course will question the historical roots of the current political system in Spain. Features like the Second Republic, the Civil War, Francoism and the Transition to democracy will be analyzed in order to stress their relevance on current Spanish contemporary politics. Also, this course aims to understand the different actors that structure Spanish politics. The role and structure of core institutions, political parties, social movements, lobbies, bureaucracy, mass media and political elites will be assessed. Likewise, this course will focus on the dynamics structuring the political system. Those dynamics include the processes of decentralization, Europeanization and internationalization. The rise of the Spanish welfare state, the state and nation building process, the new developments affecting the political culture, or the effects of the electoral system will be tackled. Finally, this course will take a look at certain public policies that will help students understand the nature of contemporary Spanish politics.

Each session will be based on a fundamental topic or question (e.g., Spanish Public Administration: Reformism or Inertia?). The professor will provide quantitative and qualitative data about that issue, and an open discussion will conclude each session. Different educational methods and techniques will be applied: debates, presentations, readings, videos, films, quizzes and exams will help students to get acquainted with the Spanish political system.

### **Learning Objectives**

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

1. Understand the recent developments in Spanish politics.
2. Debate about the current state of Spanish politics.
3. Recognize different concepts regarding Spanish political system (state, nation, power, public policies, institutions, social movements...).

## Required Texts

Required textbooks:

- Aguilera Vaqués and Serra Cristobal (2015). *Rights and Freedoms in the Spanish Constitution*. Tirant lo Blanch.
- Ferreres Comella, V. (2013). *Constitution of Spain: a contextual analysis*. Hart Publishing.
- Magone, J. M. (2018). *Contemporary Spanish politics*. Routledge.

The instructor will post other class material on Blackboard, which is accessible both on campus and off campus. To log in, you need to sign in on <https://campusvirtual.upo.es> using the username and password you received in your orientation folder.

The contents of the course are mainly but not only based on the following sources:

- Aguilera Vaqués and Serra Cristobal (2015). *Rights and Freedoms in the Spanish Constitution*. Tirant lo Blanch.
- Balfour, S. (Ed.). (2005). *The politics of contemporary Spain*. Routledge.
- Casanova, J. (2010). *The Spanish Republic and Civil War*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ferreres Comella, V. (2013). *Constitution of Spain: a contextual analysis*. Hart Publishing.
- Magone, J. M. (2018). *Contemporary Spanish politics*. Routledge.
- Ruiz Robledo, A. (2012). *Constitutional Law in Spain*. Wolters Kluwer.
- Townson, N. (Ed.). (2010). *Spain transformed: the late Franco dictatorship, 1959 - 75*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tusell, J. (2007). *Spain: from dictatorship to democracy: 1939 to the present*. Blackwell Pub.

## Course Requirements and Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Midterm exam: 25%
- Final exam: 25%
- Final project group presentation: 30%

### *Participation*

In-class discussions will be encouraged at all sessions. Class participation will therefore be graded according to the students' previous work and reflections about the provided material. Active participation means not only attendance (being there  $\neq$  participation) but discussion with relevant basis (text-based and not just random personal experience and background), asking and answering questions in class, engaging in class discussions and conversations with classmates, questioning information presented and discussed. Students are also expected to actively participate in in-class exercises and to do some homework. Participation points will be assigned based on the following criteria:

	<b>Exemplary (9-10)</b>	<b>Proficient (8-9)</b>	<b>Developing (7-8)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (0-7)</b>
<b>Frequency of participation in class</b>	Student initiates contributions more than once in each class.	Student initiates contribution once in each class.	Student initiates contribution at least in half of the classes.	Student does not initiate contribution & needs instructor to solicit input
<b>Quality of comments</b>	Comments always insightful & constructive; uses appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions.	Comments mostly insightful & constructive; mostly uses appropriate terminology. Occasionally comments are too general or not relevant to the discussion.	Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Student does not use appropriate terminology; comments not always relevant to the discussion.	Comments are uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, e.g., "I love it", "I hate it", "It's bad" etc.
<b>Listening Skills</b>	Student listens attentively when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others' remarks, i.e., student hears what others say & contributes to the dialogue.	Student is mostly attentive when others present ideas, materials, as indicated by comments that reflect & build on others' remarks. Occasionally needs encouragement or reminder from T.A of focus of comment.	Student is often inattentive and needs reminder of focus of class. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking.	Does not listen to others; regularly talks while others speak or does not pay attention while others speak; detracts from discussion; sleeps, etc.

### *Exams*

Two examinations will be given (midterm and final), which will cover the topics and questions seen in the course and will test conceptual and critical-thinking skills. Both exams will consist of multiple-choice, short answer, essay and/or case analysis/reflection questions.

### *Final project group oral presentation*

Students are required to prepare a 30-minute oral presentation (in pairs or small groups) on a public policy issue (which will be assigned by the instructor as soon as the add/drop period ends). This presentation will be graded on evidence of preparation (organized presentation, presentation/discussion flows well, no awkward pauses or confusion, evidence you did your own research), content (accurate & relevant information, appeared knowledgeable about the case study and the topic discussed, offered strategies for dealing with the problems identified in the case study), delivery (clear and logical organization, effective introduction and conclusion, creativity, relevant transitions between the different parts of the presentation, oral communication skills—eye contact, well-designed presentation slides, use attractive, relevant and illustrative images), and discussion (presenter initiates and maintains class discussion concerning the reading, use of visual aids, good use of time, involves classmates). On your day to present, please arrive on time (or early, if possible) and prepared with your presentation (Google Slides preferred, so that you can access it from the classroom computer). All members of the group should be involved, both in preparing and in delivering the presentation. Students will be graded both individually and as a group.

Final Grade Expectations: The instructor will use the Spanish 10-point grading scale. The grades that will appear on your final transcript are also Spanish grades.

- Grade A/A- (9-10) — Outstanding performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course. The best possible grade.
- Grade B+/B (8-9) — Remarkable performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics. Next highest.
- Grade B/B- (7-8) — Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics. Indicates high average performance.
- Grade C+/C (6-7) — Fairly good performance showing an understanding of the course on a basic level. Indicates low average performance.
- Grade C/C- (5-6) — Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course's topics. Lowest passing grade.
- Grade F (0-5) – Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Failing grade.

Please be aware that anything below a 5 (i.e., a C- on the U.S. scale) is a failing grade. There is no pass/fail option at UPO. If you do not officially withdraw from a class by the withdrawal deadline, a failing grade will appear next to the course name. Check out the Student Handbook for the grade conversion table (some universities may use a slightly different scale).

### **General Course Policies**

Each student is expected to be familiar with the course syllabus. Students are expected to focus their full attention on the class, arrive on time, and stay until class ends. Leaving the classroom on repeated occasions is disturbing to both your professor and your classmates and may adversely affect your participation grade. Please make use of the 10-minute breaks in between classes to fill up your water bottle, use the restroom, etc.

Students are expected to listen and respect other points of view. Phone calls, social media, email, or Internet browsing at any time during class are not acceptable during class except for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor. You are responsible for any and all course material covered in class, announcements, and/or handouts if you are not present for any reason. Students will be held responsible to be up to date by attending class regularly and checking both email and the Blackboard site of the course frequently (monitor your email and Blackboard announcements at least once every 24 hours).

Communicating with instructor: Please allow at least 48 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails. The weekend is not included in this timeframe. If you have an urgent request or question for your professor, be sure to send it during the week. Emails sent on Friday will be answered the following Monday.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance is mandatory at all classes. As we understand that you might fall ill or be unable to come to class (e.g., due to a religious holiday, a flight delay, a family wedding/reunion, a graduation, a job interview, etc.) at some point during the semester, you are allowed up to 4 absences. You will be responsible for the material covered and any work missed. You will not need to justify your absences (up to 4) in any way unless you miss an exam, a presentation, a quiz, etc. In this case, you must present a doctor's note (signed, stamped and dated) to be able to reschedule the exam, etc. It will still count as an absence, but you will be allowed to retake the exam, etc. We don't encourage you to use all 4 days unless you really need them as your participation grade may suffer if you are not in class. If used unwisely and you get sick late in the semester, the following penalties will apply:

- On your 5th absence, 1 point will be taken off of your final Spanish grade
- On your 6th absence, 3 points will be taken off of your final Spanish grade
- On your 7th absence, you will automatically fail the course

For classes that meet once a week, each absence counts as two. For classes that meet daily, the penalties outlined above apply if you go over 6 absences (7th absence=5th absence above). Exams missed due to an excused absence must be made up within a week of returning to classes. Talk to your professor immediately after your return.

### **COVID-19**

Regarding any changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the procedure to follow will be in accordance with the current legislation in the region of Andalucía, Spain.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Pablo de Olavide University. Cheating on exams and plagiarism (which includes copying from the Internet) are clear violations of academic honesty. A student is guilty of plagiarism when he or she presents another person's intellectual property as his or her own. The penalty for plagiarism and cheating is a failing grade for the assignment/exam and a failing grade

for the course. The International Center may also report this to your home university. Avoid plagiarism by citing sources properly, using footnotes and a bibliography, and not cutting and pasting information from various websites when writing assignments.

### Learning Accommodations

If you require special accommodations or have any other medical condition you deem may affect your class performance, you must stop by the International Center to speak to the Faculty Coordinator to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it. The deadline is February 6. The Faculty Coordinator will explain the options available to you.

### Behavior Policy

Students are expected to show integrity and act in a professional and respectful manner at all times. A student's attitude in class may influence his/her participation grade. The professor has a right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is unruly or appears intoxicated. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, that day will count as an absence regardless of how long the student has been in class.

### Course Contents

1. The Historical Roots of Current Spanish Politics.
2. Political structure of the Spanish constitutional system.
3. International relations and implications. EU and the Council of Europe.
4. Spain and the protection of fundamental rights.

### Class schedule

Date	Topic	Reading/Screening	Discussion/Assignment
<b>1. The Historical Roots of Current Spanish Politics</b>			
Jan, 25	Course presentation. The Civil war and Franco's dictatorship.	<i>The Truth About Franco: Spain's Forgotten Dictatorship</i> (Episode 5)  Magone (2018), Ch. 1 Ferrerres (2013), Introduction	
Jan, 30	The position of the Catholic Church.	Magone (2018), Ch. 1	
Feb, 1	The territorial issue		



Feb, 6	Political actors in the transition. Agreeing upon a new Constitution.	Ferreres (2013), ch. 1	
Feb, 8	Revisiting the transition to democracy in Spain: amnesty as oblivion?	Junquera (2021). <a href="#">Spain drafts more ambitious historical memory bill amid wave of revisionism</a>	Discussion: Memory politics in Spain
<b>2. Political structure of the Spanish constitutional system</b>			
Feb, 13	Head of State: the position of the Crown and the rebirth of republicanism.	Magone (2018), Ch. 3 Ferreres (2013), ch. 4	
Feb, 15	Division of powers I: the judiciary controversy.	Magone (2018), Ch. 3 Ferreres (2013), ch. 8	
Feb, 20	Division of powers II: political corruption.	Magone (2018), Ch. 3	
Feb, 22	The territorial structure of Spain: from autonomy to federalism?	Magone (2018), Ch. 5 Ferreres (2013), ch. 7	Discussion: The 2017 Catalan independence referendum
Feb, 27	Political representation in Spain: electoral system and its consequences	Magone (2018), Ch. 4 Ferreres (2013), ch. 5	
<b>3. International relations and implications. EU and the Council of Europe</b>			
Mar, 1	The legal nature of the EU	Ferreres (2013), ch. 3	
Mar, 6	Opening the borders. Migration policies		
Mar, 8	Liberalism over State intervention: some constitutional consequences	Ferreres (2013), ch. 2	Discussion: Walls?
Mar, 13	Mid-term exam		
<b>4. Spain and the protection of fundamental rights</b>			
Mar, 15	Religion and rights I: the right to life.	Aguilera and Serra (2015), ch. 7	
Mar, 20	Religion and rights II: education in Spain.	Aguilera and Serra (2015), ch. 11 Magone (2018), Ch. 4	

Mar, 22	Political rights I: freedom of expression.	Aguilera and Serra (2015), ch. 9 Digital News Report (Spain, 2021)	
Mar, 27	Political rights II: assembly and association	Aguilera and Serra (2015), ch. 10	Discussion: restriction of political participation. Press Freedom in Spain: 2021 World Press Freedom Index
Mar, 29	Due process of law I: detention and the police.	Aguilera and Serra (2015), ch. 8	
<b>Sunday, April 2 - Sunday, April 9 - Semana Santa (Holy Week)</b>			
Apr, 10	Due process of law II: violations of the fair trial.	Aguilera and Serra (2015), ch. 6	
Apr, 12	Equality: gender in Spain.	Aguilera and Serra (2015), ch. 5	
Apr, 17	Equality: sexual diversity.	Aguilera and Serra (2015), ch. 5	Discussion: guarantees of fundamental rights.
<b>Groups final project presentations</b>			
Apr, 19	Group final project presentation	-	Discussion
<b>Saturday, April 22 - Saturday, April 29 - Feria de Abril (Seville's April Fair)</b>			
<b>Monday, May 1 - Workers' Day (no classes will be held)</b>			
May, 3	Group final project presentation	-	Discussion
May, 8	Group final project presentation	-	Discussion
May, 10	Group final project presentation	-	Discussion

**NB: The class schedule may be subject to change, depending on the direction of class conversations. Changes, if any, will be announced in class. Students will be held responsible to be up to date by attending class regularly and checking the Blackboard site of the course frequently.**