



Module Descriptor

Title	Democracy and European Political Parties		
Session	2025/26	Status	
Code	PLTC09020	SCQF Level	9
Credit Points	20	ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)	10
School	Education and Social Sciences		
Module Co-ordinator	M McNally		
Summary of Module			
<p>This module will introduce students to some of the most important debates on democracy and the role of political parties in contemporary European politics. The first part of the course will explore the role of political parties in modern liberal democracy and their internal organizational structures. This provides the context for examining the role of political parties in a so-called 'crisis of democracy,' considering</p> <p>(a) to what extent they have contributed to this 'crisis';</p> <p>(b) or if have the capacity to provide solutions to the current difficulties of liberal democratic governance and are changing and adapting to do so.</p> <p>The second part of the module will provide students with an opportunity to study a number of specific political parties across European democratic systems within the above framework of analysis (for example, in the UK, the Republic of Ireland, France and the Netherlands). Key questions for consideration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How successful is the relevant party at fulfilling its democratic functions in its particular representative system?• Has this party contributed to democratic crisis in its particular national context?• How coherent, practical and sincere are its ideas for democratic reform and transformation and how successful has it been at achieving these?• To what extent are the party's ideological commitments undermine or even threaten democratic governance? <p>The module concludes by considering, in light of the course, whether political parties can continue to make meaningful contributions to democracy and its revitalization today.</p>			

Module Delivery Method	On-Campus¹ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hybrid² <input type="checkbox"/>	Online³ <input type="checkbox"/>	Work -Based Learning⁴ <input type="checkbox"/>
Campuses for Module Delivery	<input type="checkbox"/> Ayr <input type="checkbox"/> Dumfries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lanarkshire <input type="checkbox"/> London <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paisley	<input type="checkbox"/> Online / Distance Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)	
Terms for Module Delivery	Term 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Term 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Term 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Long-thin Delivery over more than one Term	Term 1 – Term 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Term 2 – Term 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Term 3 – Term 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	

Learning Outcomes	
L1	Explain the theory and institutions of liberal democracy and evaluate the democratic functions assigned to political parties;
L2	Communicate effectively in oral form using appropriate technology the role of political parties in the crisis of democracy;
L3	;Conduct an inquiry-based project into a political party, analyzing and evaluating its contribution to democratic politics;
L4	Communicate effectively in written form complex ideas related to the course content.
L5	

Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills	
SCQF Headings	During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	SCQF 9 Developing an understanding of the relationship between the theory and institutions of liberal democracy and political parties; Exercising critical understanding of the crisis of liberal democracy and the role of political parties in it; Demonstrating a detailed and in-depth critical understanding of one political party and its contribution to democratic politics.
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	SCQF 9 Articulating well-sourced interpretations and evaluations of complex ideas related to democracy and political parties;

¹ Where contact hours are synchronous/ live and take place fully on campus. Campus-based learning is focused on providing an interactive learning experience supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

² The module includes a combination of synchronous/ live on-campus and online learning events. These will be supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus and online contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

³ Where all learning is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies and the participants can engage in all learning activities through these means. All required contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

⁴ Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace. All required contact hours, whether online or on campus, will be clearly articulated to students

	<p>Applying acquired concepts to explain, generalize and evaluate the crisis of liberal democracy;</p> <p>Applying acquired concepts and principles to interpret and evaluate the practices, proposals and policies of one political party in terms of its contribution to democracy;</p> <p>Retrieving, interpreting, analyzing and organizing information acquired through library and online sources.</p>
Generic Cognitive skills	<p>SCQF 9</p> <p>Defining and synthesizing complex ideas and their realization in institutional form;</p> <p>Critical evaluation of political parties in relation to the democratic quality of their practice;</p> <p>Reasoned and well-sourced argument informed by a variety of academic sources.</p>
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	<p>SCQF 9</p> <p>Effective oral and written communication skills;</p> <p>The formal presentation of interpreted and critically analyzed information;</p> <p>The use of IT systems (hardware and software) to interpret, evaluate and present information in a suitable form.</p>
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	<p>SCQF 9</p> <p>Working independently towards specified targets and deadlines;</p> <p>Working effectively on group tasks and taking responsibility for a specified role;</p> <p>Demonstrating initiative and leadership in collective tasks;</p> <p>Exercising autonomy and initiative in the conduct of a clearly-defined project.</p>

Prerequisites	Module Code	Module Title
	Other Social Science Programme study at L8, or equivalent.	
Co-requisites	Module Code	Module Title

Learning and Teaching	
In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 20-credit module includes 200 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 36 contact hours and maximum of 48 contact hours.	
Learning Activities	Student Learning Hours
During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	(Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)

Lecture / Core Content Delivery	24
Tutorial / Synchronous Support Activity	12
Asynchronous Class Activity	58
Independent Study	106
Please select	
Please select	
TOTAL	200

Indicative Resources

The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:

Aylott, N. and Bolin, N. (2020) *Managing Leader Selection in European Political Parties*. London: Palgrave.

Carter, N., Keith, D., Sindre, G.M. and Vasilopoulou, S. (eds.) (2023) *The Routledge Handbook of Political Parties*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Stoker, G. (2017) *Why Politics Matters: Making Democracy Work*. 2nd Edition. London: Palgrave.

Dalton, R. (2013) *Political Parties and Democratic Linkage: How Parties Organize Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dalton, R. (2019) *Citizen Politics - International Student Edition: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. 7th Edition. Washington: CQ Press.

(N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)

Attendance and Engagement Requirements

In line with the [Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure](#), Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to the following:

For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to university regulations on attendance and the following:

Attendance at all on-campus and online sessions; completion of module-related reading and tasks; submission of assessments.

Equality and Diversity

The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: [UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code](#).

Aligned with the overall commitment to equality and diversity stated in the Programme Specifications, the module supports equality of opportunity for students from all backgrounds and with different learning needs.

(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Supplemental Information

Divisional Programme Board	Social Sciences
Overall Assessment Results	<input type="checkbox"/> Pass / Fail <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graded
Module Eligible for Compensation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If this module is eligible for compensation, there may be cases where compensation is not permitted due to programme accreditation requirements. Please check the associated programme specification for details.
School Assessment Board	Undergraduate Social Science
Moderator	A McKeever
External Examiner	J Halsall
Accreditation Details	
Module Appears in CPD catalogue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Changes / Version Number	

Assessment (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)

Assessment 1

Assessment 1 Audio-visual Presentation 30%

Assessment 2

Assessment 2 Case Study 70%

Assessment 3

(N.B. (i) Assessment Outcomes Grids for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed.
(ii) An indicative schedule listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

Component 1

Assessment Type	LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4	LO5	Weighting of Assessment Element (%)	Timetabled Contact Hours
Audio-visual Presentation 30%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	30	1

Component 2

Assessment Type	LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4	LO5	Weighting of Assessment Element (%)	Timetabled Contact Hours
Case Study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	70	2

Component 3							
Assessment Type	LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4	LO5	Weighting of Assessment Element (%)	Timetabled Contact Hours
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Combined total for all components						100%	hours

Change Control

What	When	Who
New template, no changes 25/26	Mar 25	M McNally