History of Political Institutions (with Workshop on Italian Constitutional History)

Prof. Cristina Bon; Prof. Mario Scazzoso

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide the elements to understand the forms of political power and the institutional and constitutional mechanisms through which history is steered, with a particular focus on Western Europe and the North-Atlantic context. A special workshop on the Italian political and institutional system will explore the transition from constitutional monarchy to republic, reflecting particularly on the achievements of the Constituent Assembly. Ultimately, the course aims to provide students with useful tools for a diachronic analysis of both the evolution of organised forms of exercising power and the relationship between permanence and institutional change.

***INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

***Knowledge and understanding:***

At the end of the course, students will be able to: understand the dynamics that have been regulating the relationship between rulers and the ruled until the present day; interpret the main political and institutional issues (also the contemporary ones) of the Western society in a specific historical context; use proper terminology from the field of political and social sciences.

***Ability to apply knowledge and understanding:***

At the end of the course, students will be able to use their historical skills to interpret the main contemporary political and constitutional phenomena, with a focus on the Italian and the Western North Atlantic contexts. This will help them successfully attend the courses of their Master’s degree, especially the ones on compared history of public administration, and the history of military institutions.

The knowledge acquired will also support any form of professional activity that requires an ability to understand organisational forms and the exercising of both public and private leadership, as well as central-peripheral relations.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course content is arranged as follows:

**First module**

**Institutional origins**

1. The concepts and methods of the history of political institutions
2. From the Germanic kingdoms to the Carolingian Empire
3. The feudal system, the feudal monarchy
4. The municipal movement
5. From the Modern State to the absolute State
6. The institutional features of French absolutism
7. The clash between the Crown and the parliament in England

**Contemporary history**

1. The American constitutional revolution

2. The French constitutional revolution and the Napoleonic era

3. Constitutional monarchies of the 1800s

4. The crisis of the liberal institutions and the authoritarian turn

5. Totalitarian states: Fascism and Nazism

**Second Module**

**Workshop on Italian Constitutional History (Prof. Mario Scazzoso)**

1. The transition from Fascist monarchy to the Republic

2. The years of the Constituent Assembly (1944-1948)

3. Republican Italy: the new constitutional agreement.

4. The new regional system.

5. From ministries to public agencies

***READING LIST***

**For the final exam, students attending classes will have to study their notes and the following reading list:**

F. Bonini, *Lezioni di Storia delle Istituzioni Politiche*, Turin, G. Giappichelli, 2010 (chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

C. Bon, *Alla ricerca di una più perfetta Unione. Convenzioni e Costituzioni negli Stati Uniti della prima metà dell’800,* Milan, FrancoAngeli, 2012 (part I, chapters 1-2; part II, ch. 1)

One of the following:

P. Colombo, *Storia costituzionale della monarchia italiana,* Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2001

P. Colombo, *Governo,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2003

**For the final exam, students not attending classes will have to study the following reading list:**

F. Bonini, *Lezioni di Storia delle Istituzioni Politiche*, Turin, G. Giappichelli, 2010

V. Onida, *La Costituzione. La legge fondamentale della Repubblica,* Bologna, Il Mulino, 2017

One of the following:

P. Colombo, *Storia costituzionale della monarchia italiana,* Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2001

P. Colombo, *Governo,* il Mulino, Bologna, 2003

One of the following texts, if not chosen from the list above:

P. Colombo, *La monarchia fascista. Storia costituzionale della Corona durante in Ventennio (1922-1940),* Bologna, Il Mulino 2010

P. Colombo, *Storia costituzionale della monarchia italiana,* Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2001

P. Colombo, *Governo,* Bologna, Il Mulino, 2003

C. Bon, *Alla ricerca di una più perfetta Unione. Convenzioni e Costituzioni negli Stati Uniti della prima metà dell’800,* Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2012

G. Abbattista, *La rivoluzione americana*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1998

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course is divided into two modules: the first one (duration: 40 hours) will be focused on the “origins of institutions” and “contemporary history” (please see the section: *Course content*), and it will take place during semester 1. This module consists of frontal lectures, 4 hours per week (students are invited to check the timetable on the lecturer’s webpage). The second module (duration: 20 hours), instead, will be a “workshop on Italian constitutional history”, and it will take place during semester 2 (2 hours per week; students are invited to check the timetable on the lecturer’s webpage). This module too consists of frontal lectures. Depending on the number of students attending classes, during the course there will be the possibility to carry out group research works. In addition, during semester 2, students may be invited to attend optional practical classes on a specific topic linked to the course programme. Further information will be made available on Blackboard.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

***Assesment method:***

Oral exam. The questions are designed to assess students’ ability to express themselves dialectically, accurately and appropriately, and to demonstrate secure knowledge of the chronology of events. Students are assessed by an examining board headed by the course lecturer.

**Students who have the opportunity to regularly attend the course** may take two interim tests aimed at assessing the level of knowledge acquired during the year and from lecture notes, Power Point presentations available on Blackboard, texts indicated in the reading list section and materials indicated during lessons. The first (written) test will be held during the winter exam session and will assess students’ knowledge of the first module, while the second (oral) test will be scheduled for the end of May 2024, before the opening of the summer session.

*Assesment criteria*

The exams, in the oral or written modalities mentioned above, will require answers to a series of questions. These questions will be aimed at ascertaining the student's ability to correctly and confidently express himself/herself dialectically as well as to demonstrate a command of the chronological successions. The acquisition of a correct technical terminology and an adequate ability to politically contextualise the contents will also be evaluated. The relevance of the answers given, the reasoned and coherent structuring of the discourse, and the ability to identify conceptual connections and open questions will also be important.

Official exams

The exam mark is out of thirty: a pass will equate to a mark equal to or higher than 18/30. The maximum mark is 30/30: to this mark the Examination Committee may add, in deserving cases, a distinction. **Students who have the opportunity to attend the course continuously** will have to answer several questions proportionally covering the topics of the two course modules. The assessment of each question will be decided according to the type of topic. The total thirty marks will then be distributed according to the degree of difficulty of each question, with the possibility of a distinction being awarded should the Commission consider the student's performance exemplary. **For students who do not have the opportunity to attend continuously,** the questions will also be appropriately distributed across the course texts, and assessed according to the same criteria already described.

Partial tests

**Partial tests are reserved for attending students**.

The first test consists of five open-ended questions. Each open-ended question may be assigned a maximum of six marks out of a total of thirty. The second test will be oral in nature.

Students will be asked to answer three questions and, as for the oral exams, the thirty points available will be distributed among the questions according to the degree of difficulty of each question. The possibility of awarding students’ excellent performances with honours (*lode*) is at the lecturer’s discretion. The final mark will be the weighted average between the mark of the first interim test (60%) and the second one (40%). Only students who have obtained a minimum mark of 18/30 in the first test will have access to the second test. Students who for justified reasons cannot take the second oral exam on the date indicated will be allowed to complete the exam on one of the three dates of the 2024 summer session.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Notes:*

Course attendance, although not compulsory, is strongly recommended.

Teaching material useful for course attendance and exam preparation will be made available online, through the course's Blackboard page.

Erasmus students who need specific clarifications, even after consulting with the faculty representatives for the Erasmus project, can contact Professor Cristina Bon by sending a specific email clarifying the nature of their requests.

*Prerequisites*:

Being introductory in nature, there are no particular prerequisites for attending the course.

However, sufficient preparation is required on the essential features of the history of Western civilisation (presumed to be at an upper secondary school level) as well as an ability to orient oneself chronologically between the main historical eras. Students are also expected to be curious and intellectually interested in the historical-political forms of power and their historical development, so as to adopt a proactive attitude (strongly recommended) aimed on the one hand at filling any previous gaps while attending lectures or during individual study and, on the other, at consolidating their own preparation continuously throughout the academic year.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.