# History of Political Institutions

## Prof. Paolo Colombo

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

Course aims

The course aims to provide the fundamental elements for understanding the forms that political power assumes and the institutional, constitutional and, essentially, administrative mechanisms through which power is exercised within various societies throughout western history. The course aims to provide students with useful tools for a diachronic analysis both of the evolution of organised forms of how to exercise power and of the relationship between permanence and institutional change.

Expected learning outcomes

*Knowledge and understanding:*

At the end of the course, students will have gained the knowledge and competences necessary for fully developing awareness of the dynamics that regulate relations between governors and the governed, up to the contemporary era; they will also be able to interpret current essential political and institutional problems of Western society in light of the analysed historical background; they will have acquired a fundamental technical terminology in the field of political and social sciences.

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding:*

This knowledge will facilitate access to graduate degree programmes, particularly in relation to the history of comparative public administration and the history of military institutions. It will give students access to professional activities which involve the ability to understand both public and private organisational forms and exercise of leadership.

*Autonomy of judgement, communication skills and ability to learn:*

Students will be able to manage historical information and data useful to form autonomous judgement, interpretations and associations with implications of a social, political, economic, and juridical nature. They will be able to communicate both the information and data they have mastered along with the associated problems, to both specialists and non-specialists. They will have developed learning abilities and intellectual coordination of the topics covered in the course, enabling them to undertake further studies with a high degree of autonomy.

 ***COURSE CONTENT***

The course programme is structured as follows:

Part 1

* Method issues.
* The primordial roots of power.
* Classical ancient times.
* Barbarian kingdoms.
* Society and the feudal monarchy.
* Councils and dominions.
* From the Modern State to the Absolute State
* The origins of English constitutional history: the concept of representation.
* Conflict between the Crown and parliament in England.
* The American constitutional revolution.

Part 2

* The French constitutional revolution and the Napoleonic period.
* Nineteenth-century constitutional monarchies.
* The European democratic roots.
* The issue of parliamentary government.
* The Albertine Statute.
* Fascist institutions.
* The French Third Republic.
* Nazi totalitarianism.
* The transition from a fascist monarchy to the republic.
* The constituent assembly and the republican constitution.

***READING LIST***

The exam syllabus includes:

1. Lecture notes.

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

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

Students not attending lectures – and who therefore do not have lecture notes- will study the following books:

1. J. Ellul, *Storia delle istituzioni,* Mursia, Milan, 1981 (voll. II e III).

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

3. One of the following books to be chosen by the student:

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

– P. Colombo, *Con lealtà di Re e con affetto di padre. Torino,* *4 marzo 1848: la concessione dello Statuto albertino*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2003.

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

– M. Fioravanti, *Appunti di storia delle costituzioni moderne. Le libertà fondamentali,* Giappichelli, Turin, 1995.

– V. Villa, *The Crown is a living bond*. *L'attività pubblica all'estero della monarchia britannica (1952-1972)*, Aracne, Rome, 2018.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will mainly be taught – with no obstructing conditions – through lectures with support from slides; experts will give talks on special topics. Depending on the number of students attending, there may be individual or group research projects. Further support materials may be made available on the course Blackboard page.

In addition to lectures, a cycle of practical exercises will be carried out – generally during the second semester - aimed at deepening a specific case study.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

*Assessment method:*

The student’s learning outcomes are assessed by means of an oral exam. The oral test may be preceded by a written test immediately preceding, consisting of closed questions (multiple choice). In this case, access to the oral exam will depend on passing the preliminary written test. All the information about it will be communicated in time through the Blackboard and web pages of the lecturer.

Only *attending* students may take a written test at the end of the course, aimed at assessing the knowledge they acquired during the year.

*Assessment criteria:*

Questions will be aimed at verifying the candidates’ ability to express themselves dialectically, with accuracy and relevance, as well as their ability to demonstrate mastery of the chronological sequence of events. The evaluation will take into consideration appropriate use of technical terminology and adequate ability in the political contextualisation of issues.

Students will be examined - with no obstructing conditions - by a Commission whose President is the Professor holding the chair. The mark is out of 30. A passing mark is equal to or above 18/30. The maximum mark is 30/30. The Commission may decide to award deserving students with a *‘cum laude’*.

Further information or clarifications in this regard will be provided by the lecturer during the course, and the answers to the most frequently asked questions are available in the ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ (FAQ) section on the lecturer’s webpage.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Notes:*

Although not mandatory, attendance is strongly recommended.

Material useful for attending the course and preparing for the exam will be made available online on the Blackboard page of the course.

Erasmus students who need specific clarifications, after having previously consulted with the Faculty representatives for the Erasmus project, can contact the lecturer by sending a specific email clarifying the nature of their requests.

*Prerequisites:*

As an an introductory course, there are no content-related prerequisites to attend it.

However, sufficient preparation is required on the essential features of the history of Western civilisation (as provided by a course of upper secondary studies) and students’ ability to orientate chronologically between the main historical periods. Students are also expected to show curiosity and intellectual interest in the historical-political reflection on the forms of power and their historical development. Therefore, students should, on one hand, behave proactively (strongly recommended) in order to bridge any past gaps in course attendance or thanks to individual study and, on the other hand, to consolidate their own preparation 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.