The pre-Master’s course in Political Science provides a comprehensive preparation for the Master’s in Political Science. It is meant for those students who must complete additional course work before they can proceed to the Master’s programme proper. The substantive subjects - Comparative Politics, International Relations and EU Politics – provide students with the proper background. The other courses train students in the necessary methodological skills and research techniques required for an academic graduate programme. The thesis, finally, enables the student to demonstrate s/he is ready for the advanced level of the Master’s programme.

Overview of the programme: Year schedule Political Science.
Inhoudsopgave

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</table>
Course objective
- To train basis academic skills for doing political science;
- to train writing skills as well as oral presentation skills;
- to train basic research skills (such as finding and using social scientific literature).

Course content
This short course of eight weekly meetings introduces Pre-Master students to the basics of political science research by training basic research, writing and presentation skills. Above all, the aim is to train students in academic critical thinking and praxis. This will be done through a number of small assignments and in-class discussions. Special attention is devoted to basic rules of academic research and writing such as correct referencing and documentation.
Form of tuition
Tutorial

Type of assessment
Participation and assignments: Graded on a Pass/ Fail basis

Course reading
- FSW Writing Guide (available online)
- Selection of articles (to be made available through Blackboard)

Target group
Students of the PMC Political Science

Remarks
Passing the Academic skills workshop is an entry requirement for the PMC Reading Course Political Science.

Crossnational Comparative Research

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<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>prof. dr. J.E. Keman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
<td>prof. dr. J.E. Keman, prof. dr. B. Vis, B.H. Neudorfer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching method(s)</td>
<td>Lecture, Study Group</td>
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Course objective
- This course teaches students the basic skills of doing comparative research across a number of political systems (or cases, often countries).
- To this end, it introduces students to key issues of research designs, such as conceptualization, case-selection, working with “mixed-data” (qualitative and quantitative) and “mixed methods” (e.g. statistical, descriptive, historical and inferential logic).
- Teaches students core topics of comparative politics by learning to interpret comparative differences and similarities of political and social actors in institutional settings;
- And offers students hands-on experience in applying their knowledge to those topics by doing a (limited) comparison which is reported in a final report (paper).

Course content
- The course is structured by introducing the substance and methods of comparative political science. Thereafter a series of topics will be presented from which the students pick one to work on individually and in small groups and on which they will write their final paper. The format of instruction will be one lecture – one tutorial each week.
- The first two weeks serve to provide the students with basic knowledge about the field of cross-system comparative research, particularly the methodology regarding analysing institutions, actors and policymaking in a comparative perspective.
- Topics include regime types (autocracy vs. democracy), patterns of democracy (Lijphart), electoral and party systems (Mair), supranational
polities: multi-level governance (Hooghe, Marks and Schakel), and the analysis of democracies as a political system in particular Keman and Pennings).

- After the students have been familiarized with the field of study and selected one of the topics, in the second part of the course the basics of doing small-n comparative research are taught and practiced. In the former, the lecturer introduces and elaborates the theme; in the latter, the students are instructed and work in small groups on the theme to practice.

- In the final two weeks of the course, students work on their individual final paper – for which they have already completed some smaller assignments throughout the course – with the help of the lecturers.

Form of tuition
Lectures and tutorials

Type of assessment
Students need to be present at the tutorials and are only allowed to miss out twice maximum. Students must pass satisfactorily all 3 assignments individually. Students must also deliver a final paper (1,500 words max.). Finally, students must pass a written test.

Presence = 20%; Assignments = 30%; Paper = 25%; Test = 25%

Course reading
• Additional literature: downloadable (via JStore, E-book or provided thru BlackBoard).

Target group
Bachelor students Politicologie and Students of the Pre-Master Course Political Science.

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics

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<tr>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
<td>dr. D. Pavlopoulos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching method(s)</td>
<td>Lecture, Practical</td>
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Course objective
After this course a student knows how to:
- use the appropriate descriptive statistic given the available data (in SPSS);
- apply several elaboration models;
- use statistical techniques to test the difference between two groups (i.e. t-test), and to apply them in SPSS;
- use statistical techniques to test the association between variables
Course content
This course offers an overview of techniques to describe quantitative data. Topics are, among others, mean, variance, correlation and regression. Using the elaboration model students learn to interpret the relation between two variables controlling for the effects of a third (such as the mediation model and the moderation model). This course also offers an overview of statistical techniques how to analyze collected data in order to test hypotheses. Afterwards a student is able to formulate hypotheses, to test them, to draw correct conclusions, to show the relation between levels of significance, p-values, statistical power, and statistical errors. During this course students have the opportunity to use MyStatLab, an online learning environment that contains all kinds of tests about the statistical material. During SPSS tutorials all techniques will be applied. Whenever possible and advisable from a didactic point of view, examples from Political Science will be used.

Form of tuition
Lectures and practical tutorials (attendance is mandatory).

Type of assessment
Written examination (multiple choice) (about 70%), Online Statlab assignments (about 15%), and SPSS assignment(s) (15%).

Course reading
- Grotenhuis & Matthijsen. Basiscursus SPSS. Koninklijke Van Gorcum. (Or an English equivalent: on the internet numerous free introductions in English can be found.)
- Software-package SPSS, for instance via Surfspot (https://www.surfspot.nl/). It is always possible to use SPSS at the VU, but there are not that many public computers and often these computers are booked. In these cases SPSS can not be used.
- Recommended literature: Grotenhuis & Visscher. SPSS met syntax. Koninklijke Van Gorcum. (Or an English equivalent: on the internet numerous free introductions in English can be found.)

Target group
PMC PS

Remarks
- It is not allowed to keep the exam after you have taken it.
- It is absolutely necessary to buy ‘Descriptive and Inferential Statistics’ and to install SPSS. The book is delivered with a code that is needed to use the online learning system which will be used intensively during the course. The assignments often require this system and SPSS.
- ‘Social Research Methodology’ can only be bought at the VU bookstore. In other bookstores it is not for sale.
- Non mandatory literature: Grotenhuis & Visscher. SPSS met syntax. Koninklijke Van Gorcum. (Or a substitute In English.)

History of Political Thought
Course objective
- Provide an understanding of basic concepts in political theory, like democracy, legitimacy, liberty and justice;
- Give insight in the history of political thought and the relation between political theories and the historical contexts in which they have arisen;
- Familiarize students with the different approaches in political theory: historical, descriptive-analytical and normative;
- Demonstrate the contemporary relevance of the history of political thought;
- Analyse historical texts carefully and respectfully and to report on that in a clear and articulate way.

Course content
Political thought is about ideas and concepts and the influence they exert on political practice. Led by a selection of key political concepts and thinkers, this course traces the social and historical roots of these concepts and their underlying logic. The main focus of attention is the concept of ‘democracy’ and the many conceptions of democracy that exist and have existed. Other key concepts to be analysed besides democracy are justice, liberty, equality and legitimacy. The course literature consists of excerpts from classical texts as well as secondary literature that serves to understand these texts and to position them in relation to each other. In the written assignment(s) students are to report on the close analysis of selected texts and to articulate their findings in their own words.

Form of tuition
2 lectures per week + 1 reflection class

Type of assessment
Written exam + written assignment(s)

Course reading
- Additional texts to be made available on Blackboard.

Target group
Bachelor 2 Politicologie students; Pre-Master Course students; Minor students; Exchange students.

International Relations and Global Governance
Course objective
- Acquiring knowledge of and insight into contemporary world politics, in particular the relationship between interstate relations and the evolving system of global governance;
- Introduction to rival theories and concepts of International Relations and their application to contemporary international and global affairs;
- Understanding how and why international and global politics affects national states and societies and thus acquire insight into the international and transnational dimension of the domestic and the European politics studied in other courses of the curriculum.

Course content
This course offers students an introduction to the subject of International Relations (IR). Throughout, the course will be guided by the question to which extent, and how, the current process of globalization is changing the nature and content of world politics, approaching this question from the various competing theoretical perspectives that IR has to offer. Traditionally, the object of study for IR has been the conflict between and co-operation of sovereign states. This model is, however, increasingly regarded as outdated inasmuch as more and more non-state actors such as multinationals, NGOs and transnational social movements and groups appear to play a prominent role in world politics. In addition, we can also observe transnational forms of regulation through international organisations and emerging structures of what is called ‘global governance’. Within this possible shift from international to transnational relations, new issues such as the environment and human rights have come to the surface. At the same time, as globalization is also about the integration of markets through global trade, production and finance, issues of international political economy have also gained new prominence. The question has been raised whether in the face of these processes of globalization and transnationalisation, states have lost the sovereignty that used to be the basis of the international system. On the other hand, there are still many instances where state power is very visible. Indeed, recent geopolitical developments and events have also once more brought home the message that the ‘classical theme’ of war and peace has not lost its relevance in this new era of globalised world politics.

Form of tuition
Lectures

Type of assessment
Written Exam

Course reading
PMC Reading Course Political Science

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<tr>
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<td>Meeting</td>
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**Course objective**
The PMC Reading Course allows students to catch up on and/or deepen their knowledge of selected sub-fields in Political Science.

**Course content**
In this course students are expected to study a literature selection (± 500pp) on selected issues in one of the sub-fields of Political Science and to report on this in a paper. To this aim, they can choose from two literature lists with instructions that will be made available.

**Form of tuition**
Self study

**Type of assessment**
Paper

**Course reading**
Reading lists will be made available on Blackboard ahead of the start of the course.

**Entry requirements**
PMC Academic skills workshop must have been passed.

**Target group**
Students in the PMC Political Science

**Pre Master's Thesis in Political Science (incl. Research Seminar)**

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<th>Course code</th>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>dr. J.J. Woldendorp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
<td>dr. J.J. Woldendorp, dr. A.P.M. Krouwel-Moreda Laguna, M. Stepan MSc, J.P. Schafer MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching method(s)</td>
<td>Study Group</td>
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**Course objective**
In the thesis the student must show her/his ability to develop an academic discourse, to critically engage with political science literature, to assess the accuracy, validity and applicability of
political science research findings, and to collect, analyse and interpret politically relevant data. In the thesis, students must demonstrate their knowledge of core theories and approaches in the chosen sub-field (comparative politics or international relations) and integrate this knowledge in their own research and argumentation. Finally, the thesis must demonstrate the student's critical attitude and intellectual integrity.

**Course content**
The thesis is an individual paper that builds on the course work in the first 4 weeks and the 4 weeks of subsequent individual research executed by the student. Based on intensive tuition, students will be introduced to the empirical cycle of research in their particular topic and to the core literature and research puzzles of that topic. Subsequently, students are required to execute an individual research project related to the general topic. Finally, in the last 4 weeks students write their thesis, guided by detailed instructions, in which they report on their research project. The thesis includes a research question (of an empirical or conceptual nature), an appropriate research design, and a research report based on the data collected in their research project that answers the research question. The length of the thesis is about 40 pages double spaced (8,000 words), excluding bibliography and annexes.

**Form of tuition**
Tutor groups

**Type of assessment**
Assessment and grading is based on participation and a mark for the thesis. Participation is compulsory, students may miss a maximum of 2 sessions. The marks for the thesis range from 1 (completely failed) to 10 (excellent).

**Course reading**
Literature depends on the topics.

**Entry requirements**
Students in the PMC need to have attained at least 24 EC of the PMC-program.

**Target group**
PMC PS students

Social Research Methodology

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<tr>
<td>Teaching method(s)</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
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**Course objective**
After this course a student knows:
- The most important social scientific approaches and is able to relate these approaches to how social scientific research is done;
- How to translate a research problem into a research question, and decide on the appropriate research design;
- The theoretical and practical considerations in order to make the step from a research design to the collection and analysis of data;
- The most important data collection methods and analytical methods and can decide which one or which combination to use in order to answer a given research question.

Course content
This course is an introduction to the social scientific research process.

On the one hand it shows that a researcher's scientific approach often coincides with the choice of an appropriate research design and accompanying data collection methods and analytical methods. A clear line can be drawn from problem, via research question, research design, data collection, data analysis, to the interpretation of the results (the empirical cycle). This course shows the implicit dependency in this cycle. During this course the role of knowledge, theories, and research paradigms when setting up a research question (exploratory, descriptive, confirmatory) will be explained. Given a research question insights are offered on how to come to an answer. It will be made clear that several approaches exist. The two most important ones are the interpretative approach (often related to so-called qualitative research) and the positivist approach (often related to so-called quantitative research). These approaches may complement each other, but often this is not the case.

On the other hand, this course provides an overview of several data collection techniques and analytical methods. Data collection methods that will be discussed are the use of questionnaires (nowadays often online), keeping interviews (structured, open, using focus groups), a study of texts and images, observation methods, experiments, et cetera. Important issues before, during and after the collection of data such as operationalization, reliability, validity, the order of data, subjectivity, causality, generalization, ethics, reflection, extreme cases will be dealt with. A next step in the empirical cycle is how to analyze the given data (although in some instances data collection and the analysis of data can not easily be separated). Methods that will be discussed are statistical analysis, discourse analysis, content analysis, the analysis of secondary data, network analysis, etc. Based on the analysis, the results and its interpretation have to be described such that it does justice to the research problem, the data collection method, and analytical method.

Form of tuition
Lectures

Type of assessment
Written examination (multiple choice)

Course reading
Target group
PMC PS, PMC SCA and exchange students

Remarks
- It is not allowed to keep the exam after you have taken it.
- It is absolutely necessary to buy ‘Social Research Methodology’. The book is delivered with a code that is needed to use the online learning system which will be used intensively during the course.
- ‘Social Research Methodology’ can only be bought at the VU bookstore. In other bookstores it is not for sale.

State, Power and Conflict

Course code
S_SPC ()

Period
Period 1

Credits
6.0

Language of tuition
English

Faculty
Faculteit der Sociale Wetenschappen

Coordinator
prof. dr. H.W. Overbeek

Teaching staff
dr. A.P.M. Krouwel-Moreda Laguna, prof. dr. H.W. Overbeek

Teaching method(s)
Lecture

Course objective
This course aims to introduce students to the foundations of political science. After completing the course they will have an overview of the discipline and will be able to apply some basic concepts to contemporary issues.

Course content
The course covers the broad field of political science: it provides a basic overview of basic concepts (state, power, conflict, cooperation), key approaches (liberalism, realism, institutionalism, historical materialism) and sub-disciplines (political thought, national and comparative politics, international relations).

Form of tuition
Lectures

Type of assessment
Written examination

Course reading

Target group
Bachelor students; Pre-Master Course students; Exchange students.

Remarks
The course consists of three two-hour meetings per week: two lectures (in English) and one interactive review session (in Dutch and English).