Belarusian State University

APPROVE
Vice Rector

___________А.В. Danilchenko
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Registration № УД-1597/уч.

Political System Theory

The curriculum of institutions of higher education in academic discipline for the specialty: 1-23 01 06 Political Science

2015 г.
SYLLABUS

Description of the Teaching Course

Political Systems Theory

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Introduction

«Political system» is an integrated category of the modern Political Science. The system approach allows:
to analyze political reality in interactions with other spheres of social life;
to classify political systems,
to rank states.

Systems theory in political science as a macro-analysis of a policy has heuristic potential for studying of decision-making processes, political stability/instability, efficiency and effectiveness.

System approach is useful for analyzing political system in development, for political systems comparison as well as for analyzing the System of international relations.

«Political system» is actual in light of transformational processes and formation of information society.

The aims of the course:
To create basis of studying of a political reality as a system;
To analyze basic concepts and models of political system existing in modern political science;
To classify political systems;
To learn how to use system theory for decision-making processes, evaluation of the political stability/instability, efficiency and effectiveness.
To generate skills of analyzing political systems, carrying out of their typology;
To gain skills of applying the political systems theory in policy analysis.

Upon completion the course students expected to:
Describe main concepts of social and political system theory,
Define political system nature, structure and functions,
Define main approaches in political systems typology and classify political systems,
Specificity political systems in their transformation,
Analyze factors of an environment of political system, impulses of "input" and "output".
Apply system approach to analyzing current political processes at both national and world politics levels,
Interpret major Indexes (state ranking) as the measuring tool and typology of political systems,
Explain critical factors defining the dynamic, equilibrium, stability and instability of political systems.
Apply system theory to understand modern International relations.

Learning outcomes
Studying of the political systems theory allows students to raise level of knowledge in the field of political sciences, and also creates bases for the further application in another training courses. The knowledge can be used in public policy analysis.

Students expected to implement written and oral participation in the course (attendance, class assignments, participation in the thematic discussions). Students are expected to do advance reading for discussions in class and be able to answer the questions of the lecturer. Students are to make article revues, as well as PTT class presentations on topics suggested by the lecturer. The exam will include test exercises (multiple choice questions) and problem questions.

Academic hours for the teaching course in the class: 20 h. lec., 22 h. sem. Final exam. Total Academic hours – 174 h.
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**Total:** 20 22
Course content

Topic 1. The Social systems theories


Topic 2. Political system: concept and the basic approaches. Classical models of political system

Political system definitions. Institutional approaches to the analysis of political system. Structure of political system.
K. Deutsch’s cybernetic model of political system. Political process as informational processing. The decision-making centre’ scheme. "Memory" and "values" in political system.
Cultural model of political system (G. Almond, S. Verba about political orientations). The political environment as the determinant of political system.

Topic 3. Political systems’ classifications

Historic Typologies by Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli. Comparative analysis and political systems classifications. Criteria for typology of political systems.
Linear and coordinate typology (L. Smorgunov).
Classification of political systems by the types of political regime. Authoritarianism, Post-totalitarianism, Sultanism (J. Linz, A. Stephan).
Coordinate comprehensive typology of political systems (R. Dahl, A. Lijphart, J. Linz).
Ch. Andrain's, V. Gel’man’s complex typologies.
Concept of “Managed Democracy”.

**Topic 4. Political systems in Transition. Problems of democratic transit**

Macro-level (structural) factors of democratization and Micro-level (Individual) factors.
The basic contradictions and modernization stages (D.Rastow, A. Przeworski).
Problems of transitive political processes, stages of transition. Waves of democratization (S.Huntington).
Crisis of transition paradigm (T.Carothers).
The models of transitions: reforms, pacts, revolutions, enforcement.
The outcomes of democratic transitions: consolidated and nonconsolidated democracies, hybrid regimes; reverse toward authoritarian regime.
The distinctive futures of the post-communist transformations.

**Topic 5. Indexes as tool for the countries ranking and measuring political systems**

Concept and types of indexes in political science.
*Indices of democracy and political freedom*: Freedom in the World index (Freedom House), Polity democracy index (Polity IV).
*Quality of Governance Indices*: Human Development index (UN), E-government readiness index (UN), Worldwide Governance Indicators (the World Bank), Index of Economic Freedom, Global Competitiveness index (World Economic Forum), Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International).
*Unstable states Indices*: Failed States Index, State Fragility Index, Political Instability Index.

**Topic 6. Factors of political systems stabilization and destabilization.**

Concept «political stability». Effective public policy implementation; the basic government functions performance.
Stability as dynamic process. Human rights and a political stability problem.
Legitimacy as justifications of the political power.
Systems destabilization: political and economic crises, cultural and ethnic cleavages; elite cleavages, elite separation from masses, atomized party system.
Modern political crises: crises of legitimation, participation, distribution, identification.
Political conflict’s role in functioning of political systems. Revolutions and reforms.

**Topic 7. System research of the International Relations**

System of the International relations: concept and history of formation.
Political realism as a principle of International relations. M.Kaplan’s hypothetical typology of the International systems.
I.Wallerstein’s world-system theory. Globalisation as the tendency of world development. Glocalization.
Basic parameters of the modern system of International relations.
MANDATORY AND RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

Mandatory literature


Jankauskas Algimantas, Gudžinskas Liutauras. Reconceptualizing transitology: Lessons from Post-communism // Institute of International Relations and Political
Recommended literature


Blokker P. Post-Communist Modernization, Transition Studies, and Diversity in Europe // www.eui.eu/Personal/Researchers/pblokker/CEUEUI.pdf (diversity and enlargement in EU)


Quade E.S. The systems approach and public policy, 1969. // www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P4053

Zinecker, Heidrun DEMOCRACY, DIVERSITY, AND CONFLICT. Regime-Hybridity and violent civil societies in fragmented societies – conceptual considerations. Peace Research Institute Frankfurt


**Online resources**

Belarus https://www.belarus.by/en/

Internet-portal of the President of the Republic of Belarus http://president.gov.by/


Questions to Exam

1. The social systems theory: basic elements
2. Three stages in Social Theory Development according to N. Luhman. Open and close systems.
3. Classics of Social System Theory: structural functionalism. Durkheim: types of cohesion (solidarity), mechanical and organic solidarity
4. R. K. Merton: Middle-range theory, types of systems functions.
5. T. Parsons: Action Systems and Social Systems. Four primary functions for all systems.
7. The Political system: definitions and approaches.
8. The Institutional Approach to the Political system.
10. Structural Functionalist Political System Model (G. Almond, B. Powell).
13. Political systems concept evaluation. “Failures” in the political system (Сбои в работе политической системы).
15. Political systems typology: by Ch. Andrain.
17. Political systems typology: hybrid systems.
20. Democratization stages by D. Rustow and by S. Huntington.
22. Indexes (state ranking) as the measuring tool in political science.
23. Classification of indexes.
24. «Государственная состоятельность» и индекс государственности (по А. Мельвилю).
25. The effectiveness of the political system. Performance criteria of the political system as a political system’s capacity. Internal and External efficacy. Political Support (trust).
26. Factors of political system’s stabilisation and destabilization. How to measure stability.
27. Public policy definitions and the policy process stages.
28. Оценка эффективности государственного управления по А. С. Ахременко.
30. World-System Theory I. Wallerstein.