

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

Department of Political Science



Annual Alumni Talks “Political Institutions and Systems Matter”

Report

on the results of the academic courses “Comparative Political Science: Political Institutions and Systems in Western Europe” and “Comparative Analysis of Political Institutions and Systems in Central-Eastern Europe” and the student team game “Let’s create liberal democracy together” in 2024

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<https://projects.lnu.edu.ua/pise-cefu/en/>

Call: ERASMUS-JMO-2023-HEI-TCH-RSCH

Topic: ERASMUS-JMO-2023-MODULE



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Lviv – 2024

About the Project

The Jean Monnet Module “Political Institutions and Systems in Europe: Comparison and Experience for Ukraine” aims to research and compare knowledge about the central (national, supranational, and subnational) political institutions and systems in European countries and the EU. It also aims to raise awareness among students, educators, experts, politicians, civil servants, media representatives, and the public in Ukraine. This is especially relevant after Ukraine obtained a candidate status for EU accession, as it can contribute to Ukraine’s progress towards European integration and democratization through the experience of Western and Central-Eastern European countries. This is crucial practically because political institutions and systems matter; therefore, their choice leads to different outcomes that are visible in comparison.

Lviv University recognizes the importance and diversity of European political institutions, systems, and practices. Therefore, it is committed to acquiring new knowledge in this area and disseminating it among students and other stakeholders, including for practical implementation in Ukraine. The study and comparison of European political institutions and systems by target groups primarily occur through developing, modifying, and implementing two educational courses (for Western and Central-Eastern Europe, respectively). Attention is also given to a multi-purpose platform for research, debates, and interactions among scholars, students, government representatives, and civil society, including through conferences, workshops, meetings, competitions, and publications (particularly within the framework of courses). Thus, the University aims to become a center for studying European political institutions and systems in Ukraine. All relevant information about the project is posted on appropriate internet resources and promoted among target groups. This contributes to the development of Political Science in Ukraine and helps bring the country closer to the political and institutional framework of the EU.

Therefore, the Jean Monnet Module encompasses the overview, study, research, and comparison of the central political institutions and systems in the European Union and its member states. Specifically, it aims to consider their experience in European integration progress and political modernization in Ukraine and increase awareness of the EU among students, researchers, media, politicians, and civil society in Ukraine.

Project official website: <https://projects.lnu.edu.ua/pise-cefu/en/>

Project team:

Vitaliy Lytvyn – Doctor of Political Science, Professor, Project Coordinator
Anatoliy Romaniuk – Doctor of Political Science, Professor

A Multi-Purpose Platform of the Project

The project is implemented by a team based on a multi-purpose platform, which includes the Department of Political Science at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, the NGO “Center for Political Studies. Lviv”, the student scientific society “Polis: Center for Politics and Analytics”, as well as experts, scholars, politicians, and public figures both from Ukraine and abroad. The multi-purpose platform constantly expands within the Jean Monnet Module and its project tasks.

The multi-purpose platform serves as an arena for education, practice, research, debates, and interaction among the academic community, students, government, and active civil society. Research and analytics are conducted based on the multi-purpose platform; periodic formal and informal meetings are organized, including the annual Alumni Talks “Political Institutions and Systems Matter”, student debates and other team competitions. Moreover, the multi-purpose platform provides a forum for discussing and potentially implementing the best practices of European political institutions, systems, and practices, aiming to adopt their experience primarily for further democratization and European integration of Ukraine. Finally, the platform serves as a venue for students to undergo internships and acquire new skills, knowledge, and abilities. One of the main tasks of the multi-purpose platform is to develop ideas and implement measures to increase awareness of European political institutions and systems, the progress of European integration of Ukraine, and the development of Ukraine’s relations with the EU.

The Department of Political Science at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv:

- [The official website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)

The NGO “Center for Political Studies. Lviv”:

- [The official website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Facebook \(group\)](#)

The student scientific society “Polis: Center for Politics and Analytics”:

- [Facebook](#)

The Curriculum for the Academic Course “Comparative Political Science: Political Institutions and Systems in Western Europe” for Fourth-Year Bachelor Students (2023-2024 Academic Year: First Semester)

Titles of Content Modules and Topics	Number of Hours					
	Full-Time Education					
	Total	Including				
L.		P./S.	Lab.	Ind.	IW.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Topic 1. Theoretical and methodological principles of comparative analysis of political institutions and systems	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 2. Formation of the model of a modern state, development of the political process, political systems, and institutions in the region of Western Europe	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 3. Socio-political cleavages and multiculturalism in countries of Western Europe	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 4. Comparative analysis of the positions and roles of the heads of state in countries of Western Europe	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 5. Comparative characteristics and structuring of parliaments and parliamentary procedures in Western European countries	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 6. Comparative analysis of the positions of the heads of cabinets and the institutions of cabinets in Western European countries	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 7. The institution of elections and electoral systems in Western European countries	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 8. The institution and role of political parties in political systems of Western European countries	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 9. The institution of citizen participation in the political life of Western European countries	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 10. Comparative analysis of territorial systems of Western European countries	8	2	2	-	-	4
Topic 11. Multi-level governance in countries of Western Europe	9	2	2	-	-	5
Topic 12. European supra-national institutional and political system	8	2	2			4
Topic 13. National and supra-national institutions of the judiciary and arbitration and their political consequences in countries of Western Europe	8	2	2			4
TOTAL	105	26	26	-	-	53

The actual number of participants in the academic course was 37 students.

Course official webpage: https://filos.lnu.edu.ua/course/comparative_politics_pis_we

The Curriculum for the Academic Course “Comparative Analysis of Political Institutions and Systems in Central-Eastern Europe” for First-Year Master Students (2023-2024 Academic Year: First Semester)

Titles of Content Modules and Topics	Number of Hours					
	Total	Full-Time Education				
		L.	P./S.	Lab.	Ind.	IW.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Content Module 1. Political Transformation, Socio-Political Cleavages, Political Systems, and Central Political Institutions in Central and Eastern European Countries						
Topic 1. The factors and consequences of the political transformation of Central-Eastern European countries	8	2	1	–	–	5
Topic 2. Specific cases of political systems in Central and Eastern European countries	8	2	1	–	–	5
Topic 3. Peculiarities of the formation of socio-political cleavages and their influence on political systems of Central-Eastern European countries	15	4	2	–	–	9
Topic 4. The institution of presidency in countries of Central-Eastern Europe	9	2	2	–	–	5
Topic 5. The specifics of the functioning of parliaments in countries of Central-Eastern Europe	15	4	2	–	–	9
Total: Content Module 1	55	14	8	–	–	33
Content Module 2: Specifics of Governance, Party-Electoral Life, Citizen Participation, and Euro-Atlantic Integration in Central and Eastern European Countries						
Topic 6. Peculiarities of formation and functioning of cabinets in countries of Central-Eastern Europe	15	4	2	–	–	9
Topic 7. Specifics of elections and electoral systems in countries of Central-Eastern Europe	15	4	2	–	–	9
Topic 8. Peculiarities of functioning political parties and party systems in Central-Eastern European countries	15	4	2	–	–	9
Topic 9. Forms of citizen participation in the political life of Central-Eastern European countries	15	4	2	–	–	9
Topic 10. The Process and Results of Integration of Central and Eastern European Countries into the European Union and NATO	5	2	–	–	–	3
Total: Content Module 2	65	18	8	–	–	39
TOTAL	120	32	16	–	–	72

The actual number of participants in the academic course was 12 students.

Course official webpage: https://filos.lnu.edu.ua/course/polit_institutions_and_systems_cee

Student Team Game “Let’s Create Liberal Democracy Together” as Part of the Academic Courses

On December 6, 2023, the Department of Political Science held a team student game, “Let’s create liberal democracy together”, as part of the Jean Monnet Module “Political Institutions and Systems in Europe: Comparison and Experience for Ukraine” under the “Erasmus+ program”. This activity aimed to improve and consolidate the learning skills acquired during the academic courses. Students had the opportunity to reanalyze and deepen their knowledge of systems of government, inter-institutional relations, and the regimes of political power functioning. Additionally, all participants had the chance to practice public speaking and delivering their messages to the audience.

Three teams participated in the game, consisting of representatives from the fourth year of the BA program and the first year of the MA program at the Department of Political Science. All game participants had previously completed academic courses in comparative politics (including the courses on Western and Central-Eastern European countries) authored by the professors of the team as part of the Jean Monnet Module. Based on the knowledge gained during these courses, players were required to present the organization of the institutional design, the political processes, and the structures of their respective countries, depending on the conditions assigned to them through a draw.

Student teams A, B, and C were assigned as follows: a federative centralized presidential republic, a federative decentralized semi-presidential republic, and a unitary decentralized parliamentary republic. According to the legend, all these states were previously non-democratic or belonged to other autocratic state formations. Now, they were presented with the opportunity and task of constitutional/institutional engineering and democratization. The teams were required to design solutions based on the initial conditions and ultimate goals. The ultimate goals were defined as achieving democratic development, thus determining whether the doors to prestigious international or supranational organizations, akin to the EU, would open for the state or remain closed.

Initially, the students had to specify to the expert jury, public attendees, and all visitors of the game the parameters of their state – such as territory, population, ethnic composition, neighboring states, etc. – which became the defining background for the further work of the state builders and “founding fathers”. After this, each team presented the parameters of their state, considering and developing criteria such as inter-institutional relations in the triangle of “the head of state – government – parliament”, the powers of political institutions and their relations, party-electoral issues regarding the functioning of parties and the development of an appropriate electoral system, the role of civil society,

local politics, and citizens in the democratization of socio-political life. Questions from the audience, the professional jury, and interested parties followed this.



As a result of the game, some mistakes made by each team were analyzed, and triumphant moments of adapting institutional and political conditions to the parameters of the development of various states formed as an outcome of the draw were highlighted. Overall, it was exciting, and a competitive atmosphere prevailed. All participants concluded that it is crucial to pay attention to the balance of power within the framework of inter-institutional relations in the triangle of “the head of state – government – parliament”. However, the expert judges also recommended that players pay more attention to the phenomenon of liberal democracy, as its difference from electoral democracy is significant. Especially considering that liberal democracy is one of the fundamental goals of the European Union’s development, and democratization is a condition for membership in it.

Annual Alumni Talks “Political Institutions and Systems Matter” Based on the Results of the Academic Courses

On April 16, 2024, the Department of Political Science, the NGO “Center for Political Studies. Lviv”, and the student society “Polis: Center for Politics and Analytics” organized the annual strategic Alumni Talks on the topic “Political institutions and systems matter”. During the talks, the peculiarities, results, and prospects for further development, as well as possible shortcomings of the educational process regarding the political institutions and systems of the EU and European countries, were discussed. This included topics covered in academic courses within the Jean Monnet Module “Political Institutions and Systems in Europe: Comparison and Experience for Ukraine” under the “Erasmus+ program”.

The agenda of the meeting was divided into two thematic blocks:

The focus of the first block was on discussing the academic courses “Comparative Political Science: Political Institutions and Systems in Western Europe” (for BA students majoring in Political Science) and “Comparative Analysis of Political Institutions and Systems in Central-Eastern Europe” (for MA students majoring in Political Science). These courses are implemented within the framework of the Jean Monnet Module “Political Institutions and Systems in Europe: Comparison and Experience for Ukraine” and allow students to study, research, and compare each political institution in European countries and the European Union separately, consider successful practices and shortcomings of different political systems, institutions, and processes, as well as various models of interaction in the triangle of “the head of state – government – parliament”, and so on. Such discussions aimed to ensure effective communication between students and teachers, which will help improve academic disciplines in the future, taking into account students’ feedback and recommendations.

The crucial aspect of the second thematic block was the discussion process among all participants, which focused on exploring various options and prospects for further developing Ukraine’s political system, institutions, and processes. Notably, this discussion considered the positive or critical experiences of various Western and Central-Eastern European countries, already members of the European Union. Such collaborative work is significant both in the educational process and worldview-relatedly, as it occurs against the backdrop of Ukraine’s progress towards European integration and the recognition of the need for further democratization and reform of the country’s political institutions. During the discussion block, a lively and engaging debate ensued as participants’ opinions diverged significantly regarding their vision for Ukraine’s future political system and political development.



Following the annual Alumni Talks, recommendations will be developed further to improve the academic courses within the Jean Monnet Module “Political Institutions and Systems in Europe: Comparison and Experience for Ukraine”. To achieve this, all the participants shared their thoughts. They completed relevant printed or electronic evaluation forms on the quality of teaching of the respective academic courses (their form and content are provided below).

Example of a Printed Evaluation Form for Assessing the Quality of a Course



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Анкета оцінки якості викладання навчального курсу

1. Чи задоволені Ви рівнем викладання навчального курсу?

- Так, повністю
- Скоріше, так
- Важко оцінити
- Не зовсім задоволений
- Не задоволений

2. Чи теми лекційного курсу та семінарських занять були Вам цікаві?

- Так, повністю
- Переважно (понад 50 %)
- Частково (менше 50 %)
- Не цікаві
- Важко відповісти

3. Що найбільше сподобалося під час вивчення навчального курсу?

4. Що найбільше не сподобалося під час вивчення курсу?

5. Які з опрацьованих тем, на Вашу думку, потребують додаткового висвітлення?

6. Які питання не були висвітлені, а для Вас вони є цікавими?

7. Скільки часу на тиждень Ви використовували для підготовки до занять (в год):

- 1-2; 3-4; 5-6; понад 7

8. Які матеріали Ви переважно використовували під час підготовки до занять (може бути не одна відповідь):

- Вікіпедія
- Лекція
- Монографії
- Підручники
- Першоджерела
- Інше (вказіть) _____

Інші Ваші рекомендації щодо курсу і організації навчального процесу:

Організовано за підтримки Європейського Союзу у рамках "Програми Еразмус+" за напрямком "Жан Моне для вищої освіти" (Модуль "Політичні інститути та системи в Європі: порівняння і досвід для України", № 101126702)
<https://projects.lnu.edu.ua/pise-cefu/>

Example of an Online Evaluation Form for Assessing the Quality of a Course

Анкета оцінки якості викладання навчального курсу "Порівняльний аналіз політичних інститутів і систем країн Центрально-Східної Європи"

B *I* U ↪ ~~X~~

Опис форми



Назва зображення



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Jean Monnet Module

Political Institutions and Systems in Europe:
Comparison and Experience for Ukraine

within the EU program "Erasmus+"

1. Чи задоволені Ви рівнем викладання навчального курсу? *

Так, повністю

5. Які з опрацьованих тем, на Вашу думку, потребують додаткового висвітлення? *

Текст запитання з довгими відповідями

6. Які питання не були висвітлені, а для Вас вони є цікавими? *

Текст запитання з довгими відповідями

7. Скільки часу на тиждень Ви використовували для підготовки до занять (в год.)? *

- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- понад 7

8. Які матеріали Ви переважно використовували під час підготовки до занять (може бути не одна відповідь)? *

- Вікіпедія
- Лекція
- Монографії
- Підручники
- Першоджерела
- Інше...



[Questionnaire for the course “Comparative Political Science: Political Institutions and Systems in Western Europe”](#)

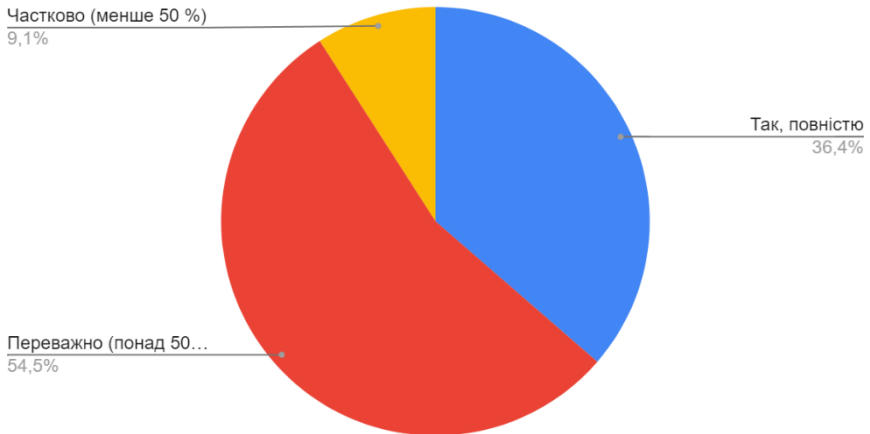
[Questionnaire for the course “Comparative Analysis of Political Institutions and Systems in Central-Eastern Europe”](#)

Assessment and Survey Results

Кількість значень для "1. Чи задоволені Ви рівнем викладання навчального курсу?"

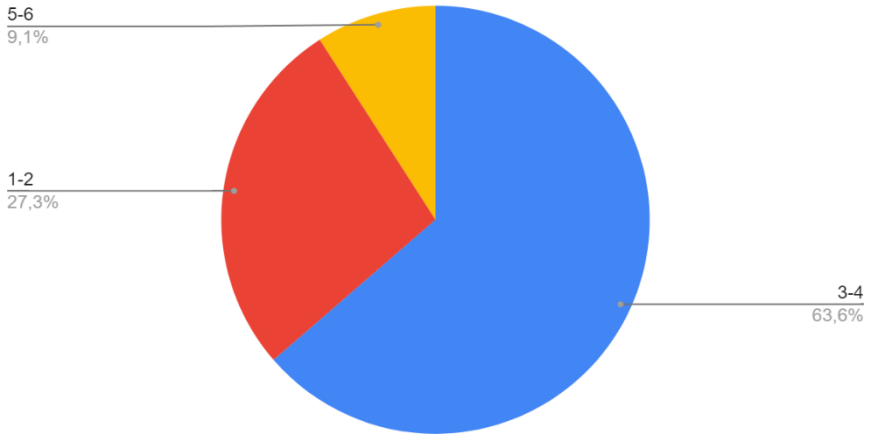


Кількість значень для "2. Чи теми лекційного курсу та семінарських занять були Вам цікаві?"

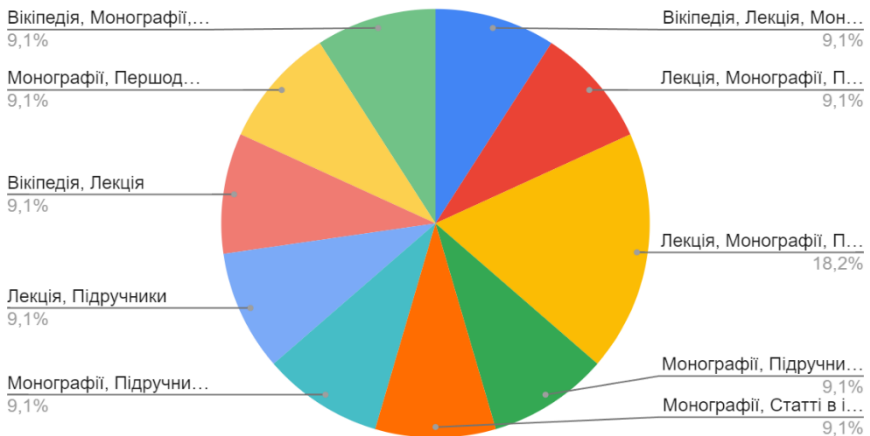


Assessment and Survey Results

Кількість значень для "7. Скільки часу на тиждень Ви використовували для підготовки до занять (в год.)?"



Кількість значень для "8. Які матеріали Ви переважно використовували під час підготовки до занять (може бути...)"



Recommendations for Further Development of Academic Courses

The survey results demonstrated that students particularly appreciated the following aspects of the courses: interesting, relevant, and substantive lectures and seminars; accessibility and professionalism in delivering the material; novelty and relevance of information and quality educational material; detailed analysis and comparison of the case studies of political institutions and systems of European countries. Overall, it provided an understanding of how foreign countries' political institutions operate. However, specific issues raised concerns among students, including partial inconsistency and disjointedness of lecture and seminar topics (which occurred occasionally), incomplete structuring of materials on specific issues, and sometimes tricky access to sources for preparation for some seminars or the complexity and research nature of the sources themselves. Some students suggested that increasing the number of seminar sessions would be beneficial for academic courses.

Students noted that specific topics require more detailed coverage, including government stability and institutional/constitutional engineering, the social-cultural component of politics, the relationship between political culture and political institutions, local government, and real-life case studies of elections and electoral campaigns at various levels of politics and governance in Western and Central-Eastern European countries. Additionally, students suggested that within the problematic issues discussed during the courses, it would be beneficial to include and devote special attention to the political systems of Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Norway, Sweden, and the Baltic countries.

Moreover, students emphasized the importance of continuing to address issues such as political transformations and the formation of modern state models in "old" and "new" Europe, socio-political cleavages and multiculturalism, the roles and positions of the head of state institutions in monarchies and republics, the structuring of parliaments and parliamentary procedures, the roles and positions of the head of government and cabinets, the institution of elections and electoral systems, the role of political parties in political systems, citizen participation in political life, the nature and types of territorial systems and multi-level governance, the EU supranational institutions and the political system, national and supranational judicial institutions and arbitration in the EU and European countries, and the process and results of integration into the EU and NATO.

In the future, the academic courses "Comparative Political Science: Political Institutions and Systems in Western Europe" (for BA students) and "Comparative Analysis of Political Institutions and Systems in Central-Eastern Europe" (for MA students) will be partly modified to meet the student's needs better.