

Current Political Problems (K001053)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 4.0

Study time 120 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (Year)

Dutch

Gent

group work

independent work

lecture

seminar

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Haesebrouck, Tim

PS03

lecturer-in-charge

Bouteca, Nicolas

PS03

co-lecturer

De Cordier, Bruno

PS05

co-lecturer

Goeminne, Gert

PS03

co-lecturer

Van Poeck, Katrien

PS03

co-lecturer

Verhelst, Tom

PS03

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

[Bachelor of Science in Political Science](#)

crdts

4

offering

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Current political problems, national politics, European politics, international politics
Conflict and Development, academic writing, negotiation, debate and discussion

Position of the course

In this course, students are introduced to the sub-domains of political science and the related academic research by means of a topical political problem. The course has an activating and cooperative set-up.

Contents

This course examines a number of contemporary political issues in the various sub-domains of the political science programme. It wants to indicate how political science knowledge can contribute to insight and/or policy regarding these issues. The emphasis is on problem-oriented thinking and an active participation of and cooperation between the students that takes shape through interaction with the lecturers. Besides the generic parts, the course consists of a modular structure in which different teams of lecturers work from their field of specialisation. In a first phase, students receive information about all modules, but in a second phase, they choose one module, around which they will perform some assignments. However, the approach in the modules is common along the following lines.

1 Semester 1: in an introductory lecture, the responsible teacher and his co-teachers explain the goal, the means and the evaluation of this course unit.

2 Semester 1: Students are introduced to a current political problem or issue from the five distinct sub-domains via plenary lectures, focusing on how political science deals with the problem or issue. (All students attend all lectures and then choose a module that coincides with the respective sub-domain).

3 Semester 1: In small groups, students discuss a topical political issue, moderated by the lecturer. Students do this 2 times, from 5 subdomains, the students choose 2:

- a) National politics
- b) European politics
- c) International politics
- d) Conflict & Development
- e) Sustainability

4 Semester 2: Students are introduced to academic writing in political science. They are introduced to the principles of looking up academic information (incl. e-library), managing and referring to sources and academic writing. These principles are first explained to all students in a combination of lecture and tutorial. Studenten get an assignment to apply these principles. Then, for each module, the students write a paper a controlled setting, without AI: students read an article and answer some questions about it. There is also a second paper, also in a controlled setting, in in which students show, with correct references, how the processed sources broaden the insight concerning the studied current political problem.

5. Semester 2: The students participate in a workshop set up by the respective modules and related to the current political problem they are studying. Students are assessed on their participation in the workshop and their interaction with their peers and tutors.

Initial competences

None

Final competences

- 1 - Understanding of the current political issues dealt with and the mechanisms underlying them and/or determining their further development
- 2 - Understanding the contribution of political science knowledge to the definition and explanation of addressed current political issues
- 3 - Understanding the policy relevance of political science knowledge to addressed current political issues
- 4 - Be able to correctly process academic literature on current political issues addressed
- 5 - Knowledge and understanding of the principles of scientific information retrieval, management of and reference to sources and academic writing
- 6 - Be able to apply these principles to additional academic literature on current political issues addressed
- 7 - Being able to participate in working groups and interact with fellow students and lecturers on current political issues dealt with

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: Een GPS voor de politieke wetenschapper

Indicative price: € 25

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

Oldest Usable Edition : 2023

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : Yes

References

Course content-related study coaching

interactive support via Ufora + by appointment

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

- Semester 1. The students debate in small groups about current political topics in 2 of the 5 sub-domains

- Semester 2. The students submit an assignment on citing and referencing

- Semester 2. The students write 2 papers for this course, without AI:

Paper 1: Answering some questions about an article that is read in advance.

Paper 2: Students are given a keyword and answer questions about it on the basis of solid and diverse sources, to which they refer correctly.

- Semester 2. The students participate in an interactive workshop on the topical political problem dealt with.

Calculation of the examination mark

To pass this course unit, the student must participate in 2 debates in the first semester. When not participating in the 2 debates, a final score of 10 or more out of 20 is reduced to a 9/20.

For the final score calculation, the following counting rules apply:

- Attendance at the debates: 2 x 1 points (total 2 points)

- Assignment on citing and referencing: 1 point

- paper 1: 6 points

- paper 2: 6 points

- Participation in the interactive workshop: 5 points

The second examination opportunity is possible in a modified form.

Facilities for Working Students

Working students can make a substitution task for the sessions for which attendance is required, if they cannot attend these sessions.