COURSE DETAIL

COMPARATIVE JUDICIAL POLITICS: GOVERNING WITH JUDGES
Country France
Host Institution Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po)
Program(s) Sciences Po Paris
UCEAP Course Level Upper Division
UCEAP Subject Area(s) Political Science Legal Studies
UCEAP Course Number 114
UCEAP Course Suffix J
UCEAP Official Title COMPARATIVE JUDICIAL POLITICS: GOVERNING WITH JUDGES
UCEAP Transcript Title COMP JUDICIAL POLIT
UCEAP Quarter Units 4.50
UCEAP Semester Units

3.00

Course Description

This course examines core political science questions concerning judicial decision making and judicial power: What explains the judicialization of politics? To what extent do ideological and strategic considerations influence how judges decide cases? Under what conditions are courts able to constrain other political actors? What is the policy impact of judicial decisions and what can judges do to increase their impact? This is not a course on constitutional adjudication, and the focus is not on doctrinal analysis or close reading of cases (though cases are discussed to illustrate and examine the topics of the course). Instead, courts are conceptualized as political institutions and judges as political actors. The course covers topics such as the government of judges, constraints on judicial power; conflicts between constitutional courts and the other branches of government; decision making within the judicial hierarchy; judicial appointments. After having examined the fundamentals of constitutional courts, the course compares models of judicial review through various case studies: the USA strong model; the Kelsenian model as applied in France, Italy, Germany and Spain; the Commonwealth and the Nordic weak models; the Irish hybrid model; the Latin America model(s); the Canadian and Israeli activist models; the new democracies model(s). The course finally addresses contemporary challenges to judicial review such as popular constitutionalism and the lack of diversity on the bench.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
DDRO 25A42

Host Institution Course Title
COMPARATIVE JUDICIAL POLITICS: GOVERNING WITH JUDGES

Host Institution Course Details
https://syllabus.sciencespo.fr/en/?202520/291233

Host Institution Campus
Host Institution Faculty
Host Institution Degree Seminar
Host Institution Department Law
Course Last Reviewed 2025-2026

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