

*University of Georgia, Globis Verona Program*  
*Political Science 4330, Spring 2007*

**Post-Industrial Democracies: Italy**  
**Prof. Maurits van der Veen**

**Course description**

What is a post-industrial democracy? First of all, it is a democracy, which means that its leaders are (or should be) accountable to the public and are (or can be) replaced at regular intervals through elections. Second, it is a country which has moved beyond the stage in economic development where industrial production is the main focus of the economy.

As a group, the post-industrial democracies are among the richest countries in the world today. The United States is one obvious example, but the largest group of post-industrial democracies can be found in Western Europe today. In our course we will focus specifically on Italy, but we will make frequent comparisons to the United States, as well as to other Western European countries.

This course is not, therefore, a survey course giving a bit of information on each post-industrial democracy. Our focus on Italy will allow us to gain insights into the various factors that make post-industrial democracies often quite similar in the problems they face, but quite different in the way they address these problems. Such factors include the political system and its workings, but also the way people organize and get together outside politics, in civil society.

This course is divided into three units, or one unit per week. In the first, we cover the basics of recent Italian history and politics, by way of orientation. In the second week, we examine the factors that shape how well a democracy works in providing its citizens with the things they expect from their government. In the third week, finally, we will study the influence of media, money, and celebrity on politics in post-industrial democracies.

**Course goals**

The goal of the course is three-fold: first, to provide a solid overview of Italian society and politics today; second, to think more broadly about the factors that shape the successes and failures of different post-industrial democracies; and third, to get a sense of what lies in store for these societies in the near future.

**Course policies and assignments**

This course will run as a seminar, not a lecture course. This makes it particularly important for you to do the assigned reading before class, and to arrive prepared to contribute intelligently to the class discussion. Part of your grade (20%) is based on class participation, which will be judged in terms of the quality, not just the quantity, of your contributions.

Since a solid understanding of the first week's material will be essential for having good discussions in the two subsequent weeks, we will have a brief multiple choice quiz at the start of each day the first week. Each quiz is worth 5% of your total grade.

Near the end of the second and third weeks, we will have in-class debates on some of the core issues discussed in class that week. You will sign up to argue a particular position in groups of 3-4 students. Your performance in each debate will account for 15% of your grade.

The final component of your grade is a final exam, on the last day of class. The final will consist of two essays to be written in class. A list of essay questions will be made available ahead of time, so you can prepare what you plan to write ahead of time.

To summarize: your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation: 20%

Quizzes:  $4 \times 5\% = 20\%$

Debates:  $2 \times 15\% = 30\%$

Final exam: 30%

### **Office hours &c**

I will not have official office hours, but I'll be around much of the time, so just ask before or after class if you'd like to meet with me. We can have a coffee at the bar or meet in a café somewhere in the center of the city. We're in Italy — we might as well take advantage of it!

### **Books**

You will need to buy three books for the course. They are:

- Ginsborg, Paul. 2006. *Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civil Society, State*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. ISBN: 1403973946.
- Putnam, Robert. 1994. *Making Democracy Work (new edition)*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. ISBN: 0691037388.
- Stille, Alexander. 2006. *The Sack of Rome: How a Beautiful European Country with a Fabled History and a Storied Culture Was Taken Over by a Man Named Silvio Berlusconi*. London: Penguin Press. ISBN: 159420053X

These were selected not only because they are good, but also because they are well-written and should be fun to read. Nevertheless, they are not short books, especially the one on Berlusconi. If you are usually a slow reader, you will probably find it helpful not to leave your reading until the night before class.

## Calendar

### I. Modern Politics & Society in Italy

- Feb. 19     *Economy & Society*  
• Ginsborg, chapters 1-3
- Feb. 20     *Mass Culture & Politics*  
• Ginsborg, chapters 4-5
- Feb. 21     *Corruption in Politics & Society*  
• Ginsborg, chapters 6-7
- Feb. 22     *Attempts at reform in the 1990s*  
• Ginsborg, chapters 8-9

### II. Making Democracy Work

- Feb. 26     *Institutional Performance & Reform*  
• Putnam, chapters 1-2
- Feb. 27     *Measuring & Explaining Institutional Performance*  
• Putnam, chapters 3-4
- Feb. 28     *Civic Community & Social Capital*  
• Putnam, chapters 5-6
- Mar. 1      *Debating Institutional Performance*  
• In-class debates

### III. Silvio Berlusconi

- Mar. 5      *The Rise of Berlusconi*  
• Stille, chapters 1-5  
• Movie: Il Caimano
- Mar. 6      *Berlusconi Enters Politics*  
• Stille, chapters 6-10  
• In-class debates
- Mar. 7      *The One-Man Government*  
• Stille, chapters 11-14  
• In-class debates
- Mar. 8      **Final Exam**