Outline of the Course

The undergraduate course “Comparative Local Governments” has an interdisciplinary nature combining empirical and theoretical approaches on local governments from the fields of political science, public administration and public policy studies. We will analyze local governmental systems, local government typologies and inter-governmental relations in political-administrative systems. Local politics composes a new research field in comparative political science since issues such as decentralisation, local governance and democracy, grassroots democracy movements, locality, participatory administration and reform, local cultures and communities gained greater demand from individual actors and, thus, increased attention from the scientific community in the last decades. In the last 30 years, large states experienced intensive political and administrative reforms, and such reformation highly influenced local governments and local politics at every instance. Thus, we will focus on sub-national administrative systems in a sample of states, which are generally European but also from Asia, Africa and Latin America, explore the variation in administrative systems and examine differences in outcome of the administrative reformation processes.

The first part of the seminar discusses scope, aims, method and components of the comparative perspective on local governments, approaching the field with a variety of theoretical frameworks which lead the scientific debate. The second part of the seminar introduces specific country studies from several continents, with a focus on European and developed countries. In this context, we discuss normative values and the basis of local governments. Subsequently, we will investigate milestones of local authorities development, the legal basis of local entities and decentralization reforms, and the roles played by local governments in overall public administration. We further explore the functions and competences of local governments, differentiating different types and models of local governments and place particular emphasis on consequences of managerial reforms on local governments, which have recently gone through new trends and developments regarding
structure, process and policy making. In the last part of the seminar we will select particular country case to apply new approaches for local governmental reforms, before we move to the analysis of the relationship between local governments and the central unit and competing organs of local governments. This involves studying the effects of administrative reform on local governments’ duties, authorities, responsibilities and resource distribution between central and local government. The course also considers global actors, institutions and dynamics of local governments and draws on examples from the European Union in order to develop a comparative perspective.

**Learning Goals**

In this class, students will learn about the normative basis and historical developments of local governments in a nutshell and will be equipped with definitions of specific features of different traditional systems of local governments. By comparing basic characteristics of local governments (institutions, functions, competences, governmental models, governance, etc.) and by evaluating diverse patterns of their organization, students will strengthen their analytical skills. Building on the main theories on local governments learned in this course, students will be able to discuss the challenges of political, administrative, financial, economic, socio-cultural and technological changes and transformations in the field of local governments. The course develops a more genuine understanding of the effects of local, regional, national and international dynamics which shape local governments and administrative reform.

**Prerequisites**

A general knowledge of main political science and public administration concepts, theories and basic methods is required. The course language is English. Therefore, students should be able to understand, write and articulate themselves in English. Perfection is not required - you only need to able to follow and to make yourself understood.

**Course Assessment and Grading**

Student assessment is based on regular attendance and active class participation, presentation, and a term paper. Students are expected to regularly attend the classes, complete the assigned required readings before class and actively contribute to class discussions. After the fifth week, each student or a group of students is required to give a presentation on the review of local governments and politics in a country case study. They should summarize the main characteristics of the local governments and politics, outcomes of the administrative and political reform and current discussions in their presentations. The presentations should be submitted to the course lecturer one week before the beginning of each class.

The term paper should bear on the themes discussed in class and contain no more than 5.000 words (approximately 15-20 pages). You should be clear about your theory, data and methodological approach. It is vital to develop a clear research design that supports your analytical interest. The paper is due on **February 18th 2016** (24:00).

The grading of the course has the following components and weights:

- In-class participation: 20%
- Presentation: 30%
- Term paper: 50%
Registration

Please register via KLIPS. If you cannot use KLIPS, please register by sending me an email (usadiogl@uni-koeln.de).

Course Material

At the beginning of October a reader with the required texts for the sessions of the seminar can be bought at Copy-Star (Zülpircher Straße 184, 50937 Köln).

Academic Support

I am committed to assisting you in excelling in this course. Please do not hesitate to consult with me if you experience difficulty with this course for any reason. I am available for appointments throughout the week. You can request an appointment by sending me an email at usadiogl@uni-koeln.de.

Weekly Course Outline and Basic Reading Recommendations

Week 1: 22 October 2015
First Meeting and Introduction

Required readings:


Optional readings:


Week 2: 29 October 2015
Evolution of Local Government through ages and learning about historical background of the local governments.

**Required readings:**


**Optional readings:**


**Week 3: 05 November 2015**

Theoretical Framework and New Approaches for Comparative Local Governments

**Required readings:**


**Optional readings:**

- Alderfer, Harold F. (1964), Local Government in Developing Countries, USA: McGraw-Hill. (Chapter 1, Chapter 11, Chapter 12)

**Week 4: 12 November 2015**

Theoretical Framework and New Approaches for Comparative Local Governments

**Required readings:**

- Denters, Bas and Rose, Lawrence E. (eds.) (2005), Comparing Local Governance: Trends and Developments, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapter 1, Chapter 14, Chapter 15)
- Kuhlmann, Sabine and Wollmann, H. (2014), Introduction to Comparative Public Administration, UK: Edward Elgar. (Chapter 2, Chapter 4)

**Optional Readings:**

- Grindle, Merilee S. (2009), Going Local – Decentralization, Democratization, and The Promise of Good Governance, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. (Chapter 1, Chapter 8)

Berg, Rikke and Rao, Nirmala (2005), Transforming Local Political Leadership, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapter 1, 14)

Heinelt, Hubert, Sweeting, D. and Getimis, Panagiotis (2006), Legitimacy and Urban Governance – A cross-national comparative study, Oxon: Routledge. (Part I)

**Week 5: 19 November 2015**


**Required Readings:**

- Alderfer, Harold F. (1964), Local Government in Developing Countries, USA: McGraw-Hill. (Chapter 1)

**Optional readings:**

- Kuhlmann, Sabine and Wollmann, H. (2014), Introduction to Comparative Public Administration, UK: Edward Elgar. (Chapter 3)

**Week 6: 26 November 2015**

Case Studies – 1. United Kingdom

**Required readings:**

- Wilson, David and Game, Chris (2011), Local Government in the United Kingdom, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapter 5, Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 9, Chapter 15, Chapter 16, Chapter 19)

**Optional readings:**

- Leach, Steve (2006), The Changing Role of Local Politics in Britain, Bristol: University of Bristol The Polity Press.
Week 7: 03 December 2015
Case Studies – 2. France

Required readings:

Optional readings:

Case Studies – 5. Spain

Optional readings:
Agranoff, R. (2010), Local Governments and their Intergovernmental Networks in Federalizing Spain, Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen’s University Press. (Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4)

Week 8: 10 December 2015
Case Studies – 3. Germany

Required readings:

Optional readings:
**Week 9: 17 December 2015**

**Case Studies – 4. Sweden**

**Required readings:**


**Optional readings:**


**Week 10: 24 December 2015; Christmas Holiday**

**Week 11: 07 January 2016**

**Case Studies – 6. Central and Eastern Europe**

**Required readings:**


**Optional readings:**

Lankina, Tomila V., Anneke Hudalla and Hellmut Wollmann (2008), Local Governance in Central and Eastern Europe: Comparing Performance in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Russia, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.


**Week 12: 14 January 2016**

**Case Studies – 7. USA**

**Required readings:**


Optional readings:


Week 13: 21 January 2016

Case Studies – 8. South Africa

Required readings:

Villiers, Bertus De (2008), Review of Provinces and Local governments in South Africa: Constitutional Foundations and Practice, South Africa: Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung. (Chapter 5, Chapter 8)

Optional readings:


Week 14: 28 January 2016

Case Studies – 9. China

Required readings:


Optional readings:


Week 15: 04 February 2016

Case Studies – 10. India

Required readings:


Optional readings:


Week 16: 11 February 2016

Case Studies – 11. South America: Brazil and Argentina

Require readings:
