



SELF PROGRAM

2026/2027

Comparative Constitutional Law

Dr Andrew Baldwin

Contact: andrew.baldwin@univ-lyon3.fr

Course information

Number of credits: 6 credits

Contact hours: 30 hours

Hours taught per week: 3 hours

Teaching period: Fall Semester 2026

Course description

This course provides a thorough introduction to the ideas and institutions that differentiate constitutional systems in today's world. Participants will learn about the regulation of legislative, executive and judicial power as well as the variety in approaches to the role and extent of state authority. Fundamental to the course will be an appreciation that differences in constitutional rule and practice derive not simply from texts but equally from the historical and social experience of individual countries. Although the course content will draw mostly on the example of certain prominent democratic states, each topic will include reference to as wide a range of countries as possible, as well stress the extent to which constitutional models have inherited and borrowed from each other.

Course outline

- Class 1:* Introduction to Constitutional History and Diversity
- Class 2:* Legislative-Executive Relations
- Class 3:* Executive Power
- Class 4:* Judicial Review
- Class 5:* Protection of Rights
- Class 6:* Religion and the State
- Class 7:* Federalism
- Class 8:* Emergency Powers
- Class 9:* International Obligations in Constitutional Law

Prerequisites

No previous study of the topic is required. The course may well be of particular interest to those with a background or career ambition in law, politics or even history or philosophy, but the only prerequisite is simply an interest in how countries are governed and in issues surrounding the use of power.

Course objectives

This course aims at providing students with the following:

- Awareness of the traditions and influences that account for the diversity of constitutional models in existence
- Knowledge of the constitutional precepts, structures and processes of a variety of regimes drawn from these traditions
- Appreciation of key ongoing constitutional debates around the world, such as the extent of fundamental rights, and acceptable degrees of state power in times of crisis

Assessment

30% – in-class assessment of knowledge comprehension

70% – final in-class written examination

Attendance

In order to participate, students must be present. Nevertheless, a maximum of 2 (two) unexcused absences will be allowed; otherwise, no mark will be given. An unexcused absence at a test (final test or continuous assessment) means no credits for the course.

Bibliography

Heringa, A.W. & Kiiver, P., *Constitutions Compared: An Introduction to Comparative Constitutional Law* (2nd edition, Antwerp & Oxford: Intersentia, 2009)

Koopmans, T., *Courts and Political Institutions: A Comparative View* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Further reading will be provided relating to each of the weekly themes as the course progresses.