



## Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Autumn Semester 2024

### 5,310: Spring Project: Citizen Support for Liberal Democracy

ECTS credits: 4

#### Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

decentral - Written work, Digital, Group work individual grade (100%)

Examination time: Term time

#### Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[5.310.1.00 Spring Project: Citizen Support for Liberal Democracy](#) -- English -- [Bertsou Eri](#)

#### Course information

##### Course prerequisites

Basics in political science, democratic politics, and social science methodology. Working knowledge of statistical methods and data handling.

##### Learning objectives

The students can successfully carry out their own small collaborative research project. In particular, they achieve the following:

- give an overview of existing scientific literature on a topic;
- formulate a research question;
- develop their own research design;
- use quantitative social science methods to answer the research question;
- adequately select and analyze data;
- embed their research in the respective body of literature.

Students can also present the results of their analysis in a clear, logical, structured and precise way. Students will have in-depth knowledge of an issue related to support for democracy, including the relevant scientific literature.

##### Course content

In this course, students will conduct their own research project on the topic of democracy, specifically, citizen support for liberal democracy. To this end, they form groups in which they formulate a research question, develop a research design suitable to answer it, and implement it. The course leads the students step by step through this work process and provides for close supervision and support.

Recent trends of undermining liberal democratic principles or "democratic backsliding" in newer and more established democracies alike, raises the question: is there widespread support for liberal democracy today? Are citizens ready to defend liberal democratic ideals from external and internal threats or do they support different types of political arrangements.

The large literature of the 1990s and early 2000s that focused on the rise of "critical citizens" and "dissatisfied democrats" assured that citizens around the world remained committed to democratic governance as the best form of governing their countries. However, a series of financial, social and geopolitical crises coupled with the rise of authoritarianism and populism among even the most established democracies, warrants a revision of citizens' support for liberal democracy.

Given this context, this course will guide students in engaging with a range of questions relevant for understanding democracy and its many dimension, as well citizen trust and support towards their political systems, including:



- How can we operationalize and measure liberal democracy?
- What are other democratic and non-democratic alternative political arrangements?
- How can we measure citizen support for liberal democracy?
- Why is support for democracy important and what are the implications of waning citizen support?

## Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course takes place as a weekly seminar for the first six weeks of the term. The focus is on a regular exchange of ideas between the working groups with the lecturer on questions and challenges that arise when working on the chosen topics. Questions about the general steps in a research project are discussed in plenary sessions. The second part of the term is dedicated to small group work and supervision online. We meet in small groups to facilitate discussion and check the progress of each student. Students are expected to read each other's writing and be ready to give feedback to their peers.

The first part of the course until the break is dedicated to the development of the research design (research question, theory, method, data). The second part of the course deals with the empirical implementation of the analysis (application of methods, presentation and discussion of the results).

Students are expected to participate in the weekly sessions and to be actively involved. This includes the reading of literature, the regular elaboration of the planned research steps, the active exchange with the lecturer as well as constructive participation in plenary discussions and feedback to other groups.

## Course literature

The literature which serves as a basis for the formulation of research questions will be made available on Canvas. The specific literature for the seminar papers is to be researched by the students themselves.

## Additional course information

Eri Bertson is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of St. Gallen (HSG), School of Economics and Political Science. She received her PhD in Government from the London School of Economics in 2016. Her work focuses primarily on political behaviour and comparative politics. She is interested in studying societal challenges to democratic systems, in particular, citizen attitudes towards experts, technocratic politics, rising political distrust, populism and democratic backsliding.

## Examination information

### Examination sub part/s

#### 1. Examination sub part (1/1)

##### Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Group work individual grade
Weighting	100%
Duration	--

##### Examination languages

Question language: English  
Answer language: English

##### Remark



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## Examination-aid rule

### Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

### Supplementary aids

Written work must be written without outside help according to the known citation standards, and a declaration of authorship must be attached, which is available as a template on the StudentWeb.

The use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and LLM (Large Language Model) aids must be clearly documented and attached to the submitted written work, along with a reflection on the experience, usefulness and pitfalls of using AI and LLM programs (max 2 pages).

Documentation (quotations, bibliography, etc.) must be carried out universally and consistently according to the requirements of the chosen/specified citation standard such as e.g. APA or MLA.

The legal standard is recommended for legal work (cf. by way of example: FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R., SCHINDLER B., Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende (the latest edition in each case), or according to the recommendations of the Law School).

The reference sources of information (paraphrases, quotations, etc.) that has been taken over literally or in the sense of the original text must be integrated into the text in accordance with the requirements of the citation standard used. Informative and bibliographical notes must be included as footnotes (recommendations and standards e.g. in METZGER, C., Lernund Arbeitsstrategien (latest edition)).

For all written work at the University of St.Gallen, the indication of page numbers is mandatory, regardless of the standard chosen. Where page numbers are missing in sources, the precise designation must be made differently: chapter or section title, section number, article, etc.

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## Examination content

Each group develops a research paper related to Citizen Support for Liberal Democracy, which includes an empirical analysis as well as the discussion thereof. The research design and findings must be presented.

## Examination relevant literature

Compulsory literature is provided on Canvas at the beginning of the semester. The search for suitable literature for the research projects is mainly done by the students themselves and is part of the examination. In case of problems the lecturer provides assistance.



## Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW51) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 42 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 34 (Thursday, 22nd August 2024);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 18 March 2024);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 14 October 2024);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 45 (Monday, 04 November 2024).