CONSTRUCTOR
UNIVERSITY

**Study
Program
Handbook**

Society, Media and
Politics

Minor

Subject-specific Examination Regulations for a Minor in Society, Media and Politics (Fachspezifische Prüfungsordnung)

The subject-specific examination regulations for a Minor in Society, Media and Politics are defined by this program handbook and are valid only in combination with the General Examination Regulations for Undergraduate degree programs (General Examination Regulations = Rahmenprüfungsordnung).

Version	Valid as of	Decision	Details
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Contents

1 Program Overview

1.1 Concept

1.1.1 The Constructor University Educational Concept

Constructor University aims to educate students for both an academic and a professional career by emphasizing three core objectives: academic excellence, personal development, and employability to succeed in the working world. Constructor University offers an excellent research driven education experience across disciplines to prepare students for graduate education as well as career success by combining disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary breadth with supplemental skills education and extra-curricular elements. Through a multi-disciplinary, holistic approach and exposure to cutting-edge technologies and challenges, Constructor University develops and enables the academic excellence, intellectual competences, societal engagement, professional and scientific skills of tomorrows leaders for a sustainable and peaceful future.

In this context, it is Constructor University's aim to educate talented young people from all over the world, regardless of nationality, religion, and material circumstances, to become citizens of the world who are able to take responsible roles for the democratic, peaceful, and sustainable development of the societies in which they live. This is achieved through a high-quality teaching as well as manageable study loads and supportive study conditions. Study programs and related study abroad programs convey academic knowledge as well as the ability to interact positively with other individuals and groups in culturally diverse environments. The ability to succeed in the working world is a core objective for all study programs at Constructor University, both in terms of actual disciplinary subject matter and also to the social skills and intercultural competence. Study-program-specific modules and additional specializations provide the necessary depth, interdisciplinary offerings and the minor option provide breadth while the university-wide general foundation and methods modules, optional German language and Humanities modules, and an extended internship period strengthen the employability of students. The concept of living and learning together on an international campus with many cultural and social activities supplements students' education. In addition, Constructor University offers professional advising and counseling.

Constructor University's educational concept is highly regarded both nationally and internationally. While the university has consistently achieved top marks over the last decade in Germany's most comprehensive and detailed university ranking by the Center for Higher Education (CHE), it has also been listed by the renowned Times Higher Education (THE) magazine as one of the top 300 universities worldwide (ranking group 251-300) in 2019 as well as in 2021. Since 2022 Constructor University is considered to be among the top 30 percent out of more than 1600 universities worldwide and is ranked the most international university in Germany. The THE ranking is considered as one of the most widely observed university rankings. It is based on five major indicators: research, teaching, research impact, international orientation, and the volume of research income from industry.

1.1.2   Program Concept

The undergraduate minor program Society, Media and Politics (SMP) integrates the social sciences that are necessary to tackle the key challenges of our globalized world in a digitized context. Our students are leaders of tomorrow who want to learn to make a difference, students who want to understand societal problems, think about possible political solutions and learn how to use media to instigate change. We prepare students to apply an interdisciplinary perspective in real life problem solving as well as making use of the acquired media skills in professional contexts. Sociology, media studies and political science are learned from a problem-solving, and student-centered perspective. The study program empowers students to get hands-on practical experience with media, social intervention or academic research.

SMP students are empowered to address issues in their environment by applying their knowledge and skills in direct practice. They learn about their social environment on field excursions, discuss political conditions and possible solutions to social issues, and learn to campaign for their initiatives with the skillful use of digital media, for example by producing their own videos or animations. Innovative forms of assessment allow them to integrate these forms of activity in their curriculum.

SMP students are offered the unique opportunity to acquire a broad spectrum of media skills. They are professionally guided by our media team and provided with the necessary technical equipment by our SMP Media Center. All basic equipment for media projects, be they video, VR or animation, graphic design, creative writing or podcasts, are accessible to our students at the SMP Media Center.

Integrated Social Sciences, the former name of the study program SMP, was rated as one of the best study programs in the field of social and political sciences in Germany. The renowned CHE (Center for Higher Education Development) university ranking is based on facts pertaining studying, teaching and research, as well as on students' assessments of the study conditions at their respective universities. Our program was compared to the social sciences programs of 60 other German universities (with 46804 students enrolled). Together with International Relations: Politics, and History (IRPH), it ranks best nationwide in terms of the overall study situation and it ranks best in terms of international orientation. With respect to the courses offered it ranks "only" second for all of Germany, but we are working on that!

1.2   Specific Advantages of SMP at Constructor University

Our students advance to become socially responsible leaders because they have strong critical faculties, are trained to address societal issues in a global and digital context and are skilled problem solvers, proficient at thinking through problems from several disciplinary perspectives. The disciplinary training equips them with the tools that are most relevant in this context. And the training in media skills provides them with the power to communicate solutions. In either case, they will be best equipped for tomorrow's challenges by adding SMP to their main education.

Students minoring in SMP are able to think "to scale" – from a global and macro-perspective right down to the micro-context of our immediate neighbourhood. They know how to see global trends in local events and vice versa and they are both critical and flexible in the views they offer. As skilled problem-solvers with a broad disciplinary perspective and excellent methodological training they excel at applying their knowledge and skills to understand and address the issues surrounding us, to procure hands-on solutions and to communicate them in a powerful manner. Innovative forms of assessment allow them to train these capacities in their curriculum.

For this, SMP students are offered the unique opportunity to acquire a broad spectrum of media skills. The SMP Media Center supports students' initiatives to develop creative skills in digital media, be that the creation of videos, animations, podcasts, vlogs, or blogs. The Media Center supplies them with the professional advice and equipment that they need. SMP broadly supports media projects as form of assessment as an alternative to more traditional forms of assessment, like essays or presentations, providing them with a unique opportunity to develop practical media skills within their curriculum.[1]

These qualities are strongly in demand in top-level labor markets and are a huge advantage for any students aiming at undertaking an entrepreneurial initiative. Studying SMP as a minor also gives our graduates a decisive edge everywhere, where the capability to visualize or mediatize and a broad problem-solving oriented analytical perspective are valued. SMP provides an excellent basis for both graduate studies and the European and international job markets for the leaders of tomorrow. Our graduates are known to build successful careers in start-ups and NGOs as well as in large companies; they have moved on to the most renowned academic institutions of the world, some of them are developing impressive careers in academia; they have been successful in the most diverse branches of economy too – e.g. in finance. This is because creative problem solving, the ability to judge from a broader perspective and the capacity to think out of the box are faculties that are in very high demand in leadership positions. Our students obtain positions that cannot be substituted by machines.

1.3   Program-Specific Educational Aims

1.3.1   Qualification Aims

The Minor in Society, Media and Politics is interdisciplinary and provides critical knowledge of sociology, media studies and political science. Its focus lies on contemporary societal, media, and political issues and to address these issues practically, be it at a global or a local level. Learning is experience based, research- and problem-oriented and always student-centered.

After a thorough introduction to the concepts and schools of thought related to society, media studies, and political science in their first study year, students will deepen their disciplinary knowledge and apply their theoretical and methodological skills to specific societal, media, and political issues in their second year.

1.3.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the program, students will be able to

1. explain and critically apply key concepts of the social sciences relating to society, media and politics;
2. identify and analyze complex social issues;
3. critically analyze media content, including visual, audio and VR content;
4. critically assess and produce AI generated media content;
5. develop an interdisciplinary perspective on social issues;

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[1] Media projects draw on the support of the SMP Media Center. The grading of projects evaluates not only the academic quality of research (amount and adequacy of scientific literature used, depth of understanding and critical reception, originality of thought etc.) but also considers the appropriate use of media as taught in the introductory courses (design and originality of the media product, adequacy of visualization strategy and/or audio elements, implementation of knowledge of narrative structure etc.).

6. evaluate solutions to societal problems and communicate them effectively;
7. define research questions, select appropriate methods, collect, assess and interpret relevant data and draw scientifically-based conclusions that also consider social and ethical insights;
8. develop and advance solutions to problems and arguments in the social sciences and defend them in discussions

1.4 Contact

For more information on the study program, please contact the study program chair:

Dr. Jakob Fruchtmann

University Lecturer in Sociology

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or visit our YT channel (https://www.youtube.com/@smpmediacenter2218/featured) and Instagram account (https://www.instagram.com/smp.mc/)

2   The Curriculum Structure

2.1   General

The curricular structure provides multiple elements for enhancing employability, interdisciplinarity, and internationality. The unique CONSTRUCTOR Track, offered across all undergraduate study programs, provides comprehensive tailor-made modules designed to achieve and foster career competency. Additionally, a mandatory internship of at least two months after the second year of study and the possibility to study abroad for one semester give students the opportunity to gain insight into the professional world, apply their intercultural competences and reflect on their roles and ambitions for employment and in a globalized society.

All undergraduate programs at Constructor University are based on a coherently modularized structure, which provides students with an extensive and flexible choice of study plans to meet the educational aims of their major as well as minor study interests and complete their studies within the regular period.

The framework policies and procedures regulating undergraduate study programs at Jacobs University can be found on the website (https://constructor.university/student-life/student-services/university-policies).

2.2   The Constructor University 4C Model

Constructor University offers study programs that comply with the regulations of the European Higher Education Area. All study programs are structured according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which facilitates credit transfer between academic institutions. The three-year under-graduate program involves six semesters of study with a total of 180 ECTS credit points (CP). The undergraduate curricular structure follows an innovative and student-centered modularization scheme, the 4C Model. It groups the disciplinary content of the study program in three overarching themes, CHOICE-CORE-CAREER according to the year of study, while the university-wide CONSTRUCTOR Track is dedicated to multidisciplinary content dedicated to methods as well as intellectual skills and is integrated across all three years of study.
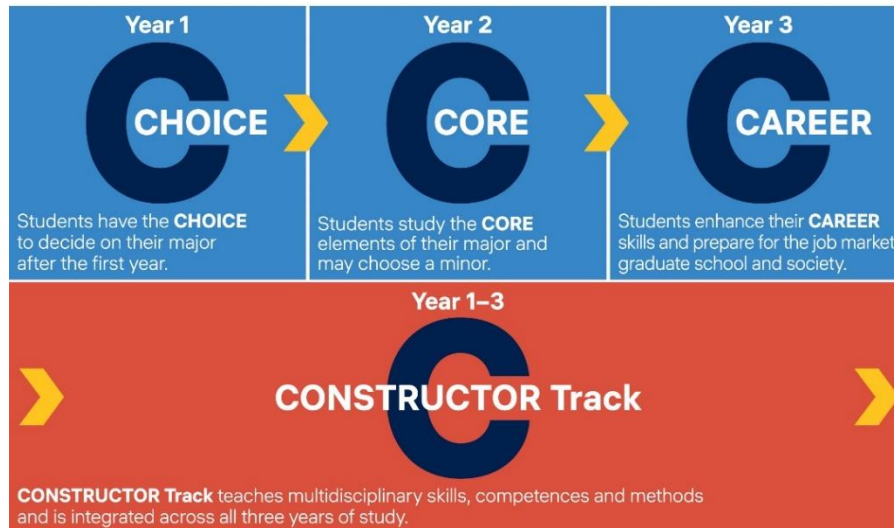
4C Curriculum

Figure 1: The Constructor University 4C-Model

3   SMP as a Minor

An SMP Minor is especially valuable in combination with other study programs of the School of Business, Social & Decision Sciences that allow for an additional minor. For example, for the Integrated Social and Cognitive Psychology (ISCP) major SMP adds a perspective on the broader societal context, while for IRPH students, it adds a focus on more contemporary issues to the broad historical and global perspectives. GEM and IBA students with a stronger sense of social responsibility or some interest in social entrepreneurship will find SMP to be a valuable complement to their studies.

Students of the School of Science or the School of Computer Science and Engineering programs can hugely benefit from minoring in SMP, as well. The risks and opportunities of technology are growing exponentially – and, with them, the political debate on their regulation is increasingly acute. At the same time, the need for mediatized and visualized communication of science and technology has become a crucial point of urgently needed qualification on all labor markets. Minoring in SMP therefore is of special interest for those students who are interested in the societal implications, opportunities and risks of the technologies they work with, for students who care about the political framework and regulations or the societal consequences of their disciplines, as well as for students who want to embrace the immense power of mediatization and visualization of science and technologies in their professional and academic future.

3.1   Module Requirements for a Minor in SMP

A minor in SMP requires 30 CP. The default option to obtain a minor in SMP is pictured in the schematic study plan in chapter 4. It includes the following CHOICE and CORE modules:

- CHOICE Module: Introduction to the Social Sciences I: Politics and Society (7.5 CP)
- CHOICE Module: Introduction to the Social Sciences II: Media and Society (7.5 CP)
- CORE Module: Systems of Democratic Governance (5 CP)
- CORE Module: Mass Beliefs and Civil Society (5 CP)
- CORE Module: Social Media Research (5 CP)

3.2   Degree

After successful completion, the minor in SMP will be listed on the final transcript under PROGRAM OF STUDY and BA/BSc – [name of the major] as "(Minor: Society, Media and Politics)."

Figure 2 shows schematically the sequence and types of modules required for the study program.

Minor in
Society, Media and Politics (30 CP)

Year 2

CORE
Mass Beliefs and Civil Society
(m, 5 CP)

CORE
Social Media Research
(m, 5 CP)

CORE
Systems of Democratic Governance
(m, 5 CP)

Year 1

CHOICE
Introduction to the Social Sciences II: Media and Society
(m, 7.5 CP)

CHOICE
Introduction to the Social Sciences I: Politics and Society
(m, 7.5 CP)

m = mandatory

Figure 2: Schematic Study Plan

5   Modules
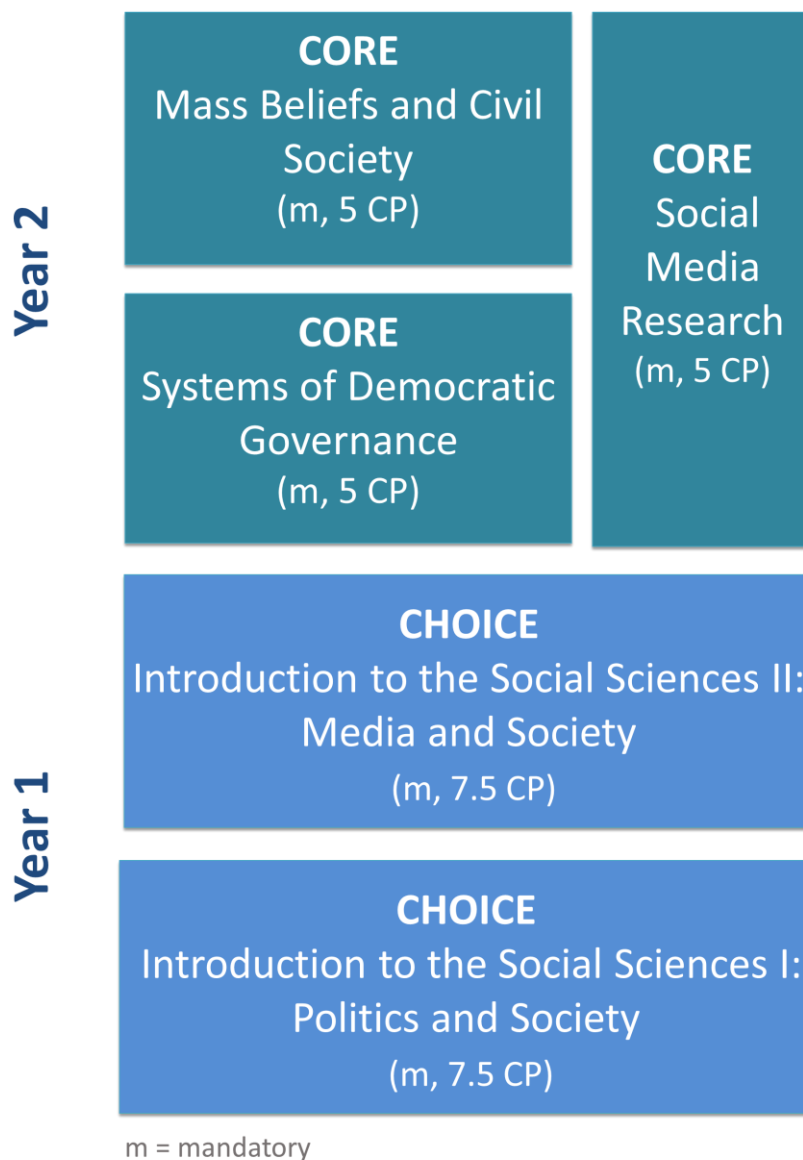
5.1.1   Introduction to the Social Sciences I: Politics and Society

Module Name	Introduction to the Social Sciences I: Politics and Society
Module Code	2025-CH-320
Module ECTS	7.5
Study Semester	Mandatory status for: - 2025-Minor-SMP 1 Mandatory Elective status for: None
Duration	1 Semester
Program Affiliation	2025-Minor-SMP ()
Module Coordinator(s)	Dr. Franziska Deutsch

Forms of Learning and Teaching	
Independent Study	135
Other	52.5
Workload Hours	187.5 hours

Module Components	Number	Type	CP
Comparing Political Systems	CH-320-A	Lecture	5
Introduction to Sociology I	CH-320-B	Lecture	2.5

5.1.1.1   Module Description

This is an introductory module that provides the essentials for understanding contemporary societies. Students will be introduced to basic concepts of political science and sociology. They will study the main differences between democracies and other kind of political regimes (the political science perspective) and how the set-up of societies changes over time and differs across different regions of the world (the sociological perspective). This module provides the basis on which students progress to the second part of the Introduction to the Social Sciences in their second semester.

Students will also develop early presentation skills and will be able to improve their grade by a voluntary presentation. The module provides an introduction to different forms of political systems and comparative analysis. The module provides an introduction to different forms of political systems and comparative analysis. Students learn about relevant theories, concepts and methods of comparative politics, which are then – during the semester – applied to the empirical study of political structures and institutions (e.g., legislative and executive branch, elections and electoral systems), political actors and processes (e.g., political parties and party systems, political participation), and (3) public policies in comparative perspective. Particular attention will be paid to the analytical differentiation and empirical comparison between and within regime types (democracy/autocracy).

Key social structures and processes in present societies will be analyzed from a macro- and a micro-perspective. The module will begin by examining the large-scale social trends and the conditions of the emergence of modern institutions. Contemporary markets, states and families will be studied in depth

with respect to their functional differentiation, social stratification, and normative integration. Special emphasis will be placed on comparing affluent and poorer societies as well as on looking into inequalities among and within them. Finally, social processes such as globalization and population aging, which challenge the social order of contemporary societies, will be focused on. The aim of the module is to find out what has changed during over the last decades and to identify what may change in the future. Throughout the module, the aim will be to strike a balance between theoretical reflection and empirical analysis.

5.1.1.2   Recommended Knowledge

Study the syllabus thoroughly, get the primary texts and take a first look at them.

5.1.1.3   Usability and Relationship to other Modules

- This module is part of the unit "Introductions", which consists of two parts – "Introduction to the Social Sciences 1" and "Introduction to the Social Sciences 2". This unit lays a solid foundation of general knowledge of basic concepts of the social sciences for the SMP minor modules offered in the second year.

- Mandatory for a minor in SMP

5.1.1.4   Intended Learning Outcomes

No	Competence	ILO
1	Explain	Explain the main types of political systems, including democracy and autocracy, and learn about diverse state structures and institutions and become familiar with important political concepts such as power, legitimacy and ideology
2	Analyze	Analyze complex, interdependent social and political structures and gain theoretical knowledge of and practical skills in comparing political systems
3	Based	Based on a general understanding of sociology – its scientific stance, its world-view, explain central social processes and structures such as family, market, stratification, state, modernization, globalization as well as some basic sociological theoretical concepts and approaches
4	Explain	Explain the range and kind of problems that sociology can address – and some of the solutions it can offer
5	Find	Find, read and understand complex, abstract scientific literature (including theoretical literature); understand, explain and critically apply key concepts of the social sciences, identify and critically analyze complex social is- sues, and develop critical faculty
6	Develop	Develop an interdisciplinary perspective on social issues, and explain real-life institutions, processes, and structures using key contemporary theories of the disciplines involved
7	Reflect	Reflect on their own behavior critically in relation to social expectations and consequences; and deal with diversity, develop communicative competence as well as cooperation and conflict skills, strengthen empathy and tolerance for ambiguity
8	Demonstrate	Demonstrate presentation skills (if voluntary presentation has been chosen)

5.1.1.5 Indicative Literature

- Caramani, D. (ed.) (2023): Comparative politics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 6th ed.
- Dahl, R. (1971). Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition, New Haven, Yale University Press
- Journal of Democracy, The Johns Hopkins University Press
- Lijphart, A. (2012): Patterns of democracy. Government forms and performance in thirty-six countries. 2nd edition. New Haven and London: Yale University Press
- Newton, K., & Van Deth, J. (2021). Foundations of comparative politics: Democracies of the modern world (4th ed., Cambridge textbooks in comparative politics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Taylor, Steven L., Shugart, M. S., Lijphart, A., & Grofman, B. (2014): A different democracy. American government in a thirty-one-country perspective. New Haven and London: Yale University Press
- Bronner, S. E. (2017). Critical theory: A very short introduction. Oxford University Press
- Giddens, A. & Sutton, P. W. (2013). Sociology. Cambridge, UK: Polity
- Thorpe, C. (2015). The sociology book. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited
- Wright, E. O. & Rogers, J. (2015). American society: How it really works. New York: W.W. Norton & Company
- Yurkivska, O. (2001). A question mark against ubuntu: Comparisons with Russian communitarians. In P. Giddy (Ed.), Protest and engagement: Philosophy after Apartheid at an historically black South African university

5.1.1.6 Entry Requirements

Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Additional Remarks	None

5.1.1.7 Assessment and Completion

Components	Examination Type	Duration/ Length	Weight (%)	Minimum	ILOs
Comparing Political Systems Introduction to Sociology I	Written Examination	180 minutes	100	45%	All

Module Achievements: None

5.1.2 Introduction to the Social Sciences II: Media and Society

Module Name	Introduction to the Social Sciences II: Media and Society
Module Code	2025-CH-321
Module ECTS	7.5
Study Semester	Mandatory status for: - 2025-Minor-SMP 2 Mandatory Elective status for: None
Duration	1 Semester
Program Affiliation	2025-Minor-SMP ()
Module Coordinator(s)	Dr. Jakob Fruchtmann

Forms of Learning and Teaching	
Independent Study	135
Other	52.5
Workload Hours	187.5 hours

Module Components	Number	Type	CP
Mass Media in Digital Contexts	CH-321-A	Seminar	5
Introduction to Sociology II	CH-321-B	Lecture	2.5

5.1.2.1 Module Description

This module continues the from the first part of the introduction to sociology and focuses on traditional and "new" mass media (e.g., mobile communication, and online social media) under the influence of convergence, hybridization, and "glocalization". It familiarizes students with the key terminology, approaches, and theories not only of general sociology but also of media-sociology and mass communication research. The diversification of mass communication is taking place at a breathtaking pace. For "traditional" mass media (print, radio, and television) these changes have led to many challenges on different levels ranging from technological to content-related issues, and particularly economic constraints that have driven several of the formerly leading and agenda setting mass media to the brink of financial ruin, and to the margins of national, regional and global communication systems.

In the second part of the introductory module to sociology we will go through some classics from a) early modern sociological theory, b) developed modernity, and c) some classical empirical studies that show, how relevant, and at times even adventurous sociology can be. Further, the lecture will look at methods of sociological field work by discussing some exciting classical studies.

Classics of sociological literature will be discussed in the light of contemporary problems of modern society. Special effort will be put into comparing affluent and poorer societies and on social differences and inequalities between and within them.

Throughout the module, we will strike a good balance between theoretical reflection and empirical analysis by always addressing practical examples and research implications of the theories discussed.

5.1.2.2 Recommended Knowledge

Study the syllabus thoroughly, get the primary texts and take a first look at them. Recap the main concepts taught in the first part of the Introduction to Sociology.

5.1.2.3 Usability and Relationship to other Modules

- Mandatory for a minor in SMP.

- This module is the second part of the unit "Introductions", which consists of two parts – "Introduction to the Social Sciences I" and "Introduction to the Social Sciences II". This unit lays a solid foundation of general knowledge of basic concepts in the social sciences for the SMP minor modules offered in the second year of study.

5.1.2.4 Intended Learning Outcomes

No	Competence	ILO
1	Discipline	Discipline Specific Skills:
2	Explain	Explain, how mass media work and which role they play in politics and society, and explain how mass media, politics and society influence each other (the mass communication perspective)
3	Explain	Explain and critically apply key concepts of social sciences relating to society and media, deepen knowledge of basic theoretical concepts of sociology and get a basic idea of the methods of sociological field work, and develop competence in reading more difficult sociological texts in their original
4	Develop	Develop an interdisciplinary perspective on social issues, explain real-life situations, organizations, and industries using key contemporary theories of the disciplines involved, and identify and critically analyze (especially media related) complex social issues
	Transferable	Transferable and Key Skills
5	Review	Critically review the role of images and the media in general
6	Develop	Develop and apply media and communication skills in diverse and non-peer social contexts
7	Reflect	Reflect on their own behavior critically in relation to social expectations and consequences
8	Work	Work in a team and deal with diversity, and demonstrating communicative competence as well as cooperation and conflict resolution skills, empathy, and tolerance for ambiguity

5.1.2.5 Indicative Literature

- McQuail, D. (2010). McQuail's mass communication theory. London et al: Sage
- Lule, J. (2014). Understanding media and culture: An introduction to mass communication, v. 1.0. Flat World Knowledge and licensed as CC-BY-NC-SA
- Marcus, O.R. & Singer, M. (2017). Loving Ebola-chan: Internet memes in an epidemic. Media, Culture & Society, 39(3), 341-356
- Berger, J. & Milkman, K. L. (2013). Emotion and virality: What makes online content go viral? GfK Marketing Intelligence Review, 5(1), 18-23

- Müller, M. G. (2011). Iconography and iconology as a visual method and approach. In E. Margolis & L. Pauwels (Eds.), The SAGE handbook of visual research methods (pp. 283-97). London et al: Sage
- Bronner, S. E. (2017). Critical theory: A very short introduction. Oxford University Press
- Giddens, A. & Sutton, P. W. (2013). Sociology. Cambridge, UK: Polity
- Thorpe, C. (2015). The sociology book. London: Dorling Kindersley Limited
- Wright, E. O. & Rogers, J. (2015). American society: How it really works. New York: W.W. Norton & Company
- Yurkivska, O. (2001). A question mark against ubuntu: Comparisons with Russian communitarians. In P. Giddy (Ed.), Protest and engagement: Philosophy after Apartheid at an historically black South African university

5.1.2.6   Entry Requirements

Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Additional Remarks	None

5.1.2.7   Assessment and Completion

Components	Examination Type	Duration/ Length	Weight (%)	Minimum	ILOs
Mass Media in Digital Contexts	Poster Presentation	30 min	100	45%	All
Introduction to Sociology II					

Module Achievements: Assessment type: Students can choose their preferred type among different forms of assessments offered. These choices are either a poster presentation (30 min) or a project assessment (media project; such as a production of a video, a website, or animation etc.). Media projects draw on the support of the SMP Media Center. The grading of projects evaluates not only the academic quality of research, but also considers the intelligent use of media as taught in the introductory courses (adequacy of visualization strategy and/or audio elements, implementation of knowledge of narrative structure etc.).

5.1.3 Systems of Democratic Governance

Module Name	Systems of Democratic Governance
Module Code	2025-CO-647
Module ECTS	5
Study Semester	Mandatory status for: - 2025-Minor-SMP 3 Mandatory Elective status for: None
Duration	1 Semester
Program Affiliation	2025-Minor-SMP ()
Module Coordinator(s)	Prof. Dr. Marco Verweij

Forms of Learning and Teaching	
Independent Study	90
Other	35
Workload Hours	125 hours

Module Components	Number	Type	CP
Systems of Democratic Governance	CO-647	Seminar	5

5.1.3.1 Module Description

In this course we first learn to distinguish what democracy is from what it is not. We then consider the pros and cons of different types of democracy on the basis of a debating competition that follows the 'World Schools Style'. We also look at what an 'ideal' democracy may entail. Subsequently, we critically discuss the most influential explanations of why authoritarian populism has resurfaced in recent decades. Thereafter, we build an alternative explanation of the resurgence of authoritarian populism. We do so by introducing the concept of wicked problems, the importance of democratising technological choice, and the theory of sociocultural viability pioneered by Dame Mary Douglas. Thus, we also learn how, why and when democratic governance at times fails to meet its goals, and how this might be remedied in part.

5.1.3.2 Recommended Knowledge

- Ability to read primary political science literature

- Basic familiarity with key concepts of political science and politics (e.g., "parliament", "totalitarianism")

- Willingness to engage in constructive debate

- John Keane, The Life and Death of Democracy (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

5.1.3.3 Usability and Relationship to other Modules

- Mandatory for a minor in SMP

- The first-year-unit "Introductions" provides a useful basis of knowledge for successful participation in this module.

5.1.3.4 Intended Learning Outcomes

No	Competence	ILO
1	Discipline	Discipline Specific Skills:
2	Ability	Ability to explain and critically apply key concepts of political science and their knowledge of a wide range of theories of democracy and concepts from political philosophy
3	Critical	Critical insight into what policy-makers do (and how they do it), and identify and critically analyze complex issues of democratic governance using key contemporary theories of political science
	Transferable	Transferable and Key Skills:
4	Strengthen	Strengthen the ability to creatively analyze highly complex problems, think about solutions to the related issues and communicate them appropriately
5	Critically	Critically reflect upon their own political behavior

5.1.3.5 Indicative Literature

- Schmitter, P. C. & Karl, T. (1991). What democracy is … and is not. Journal of Democracy, 2(3), 75-88.
- Foa, R. S. & Mounk, Y. (2017). The signs of deconsolidation. Journal of Democracy, 28(1), 5-15.
- Bell, D. A. (2006). Taking elitism seriously: Democracy with Confucian characteristics. In Beyond liberal democracy: Political thinking for an East Asian context (pp. 152-179). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Elster, J. (1998): Introduction. In J. Elster (Ed.), Deliberative democracy (pp. 1-18). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Hendriks, F. (2023). Rethinking democratic thinking. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

5.1.3.6 Entry Requirements

Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Additional Remarks	None

5.1.3.7 Assessment and Completion

Components	Examination Type	Duration/ Length	Weight (%)	Minimum	ILOs
Systems of Democratic Governance	Written Examination	Take Home Exam	100	45%	All

Module Achievements: In the exam, students are confronted with four-wide-ranging questions about theories and themes central to democratic governance and have to answer three of these questions in the form of a short, coherent essay. This type of exam encourages the analytical, critical, creative,

and writing skills of the students. It thus helps fulfil all the intended learning outcomes, except for those pertaining to leading and participating in class debates. Finally, the module helps students prepare for their future graduate studies.

5.1.4 Mass Beliefs and Civil Society

Module Name	Mass Beliefs and Civil Society
Module Code	2025-CO-642
Module ECTS	5
Study Semester	Mandatory status for: - 2025-Minor-SMP 4 Mandatory Elective status for: None
Duration	1 Semester
Program Affiliation	2025-Minor-SMP ()
Module Coordinator(s)	Dr. Franziska Deutsch

Forms of Learning and Teaching	
Independent Study	90
Other	35
Workload Hours	125 hours

Module Components	Number	Type	CP
Mass Beliefs and Civil Society	CO-642	Seminar	5

5.1.4.1 Module Description

The module addresses the cultural basis of politics and discusses the determinants and effects of mass beliefs on conflict and crisis. Students in the seminar will discuss fundamental cultural transformations in the belief systems of modern societies as well as their impact on mass political behaviour and the development of democratic institutions. Special attention is given to the role of civil society as a link between the people and the state. Drawing on milestone studies on civic culture as well as recent empirical evidence from cross-national surveys, the seminar takes a comparative perspective.

In their own small research projects, students are encouraged to empirically explore universal and culture-specific factors that structure mass beliefs and to address and analyze the implications of their findings with regard to potential solutions for conflict and crisis

5.1.4.2 Recommended Knowledge

Study the syllabus thoroughly and take a first look at the main reading material.

5.1.4.3 Usability and Relationship to other Modules

Mandatory for a minor in SMP

5.1.4.4 Intended Learning Outcomes

No	Competence	ILO
1	Discipline	Discipline Specific Skills:
2	Explain	Explain and critically apply key concepts of political culture and civil society research as well as theories of value change, and cultural and political

		transformations; identify and critically analyze political culture and civil society from an interdisciplinary perspective, develop critical faculty, especially concerning media, and reflect on their own behavior critically
3	Apply	Apply basic quantitative and/or qualitative methods, differentiate between advanced quantitative and qualitative methods of empirical research and evaluate an appropriate choice for their application in the given field, develop adequate research designs; and train skills to critically discuss empirical findings
4	Transferable	Transferable and Key Skills:
5	Enhance	Enhance problem solving skills by creatively and analytically addressing an empirical problem, formulating and implementing the necessary research steps to solve it
6	Develop	Develop communicative competence as well as cooperation and conflict resolution skills, strengthen empathy and tolerance for ambiguity

5.1.4.5   Indicative Literature

- Dalton, R. J. & Klingemann, H.-D. (Eds.) (2007). The Oxford handbook of political behavior. New York: Oxford University Press
- Inglehart, R. (1977). The silent revolution. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, R. & Norris, P. (2017). Trump and the populist authoritarian parties: The silent revolution in reverse. Perspec- tives on Politics, 15(2), 443-454.
- Putnam, R. (1993). Making democracy work. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Theocharis, Y. & van Deth, Jan W. (2018). The continuous expansion of citizen participation: A new taxonomy. European Political Science Review, 10(1), 139–163.

5.1.4.6   Entry Requirements

Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Additional Remarks	None

5.1.4.7   Assessment and Completion

Components	Examination Type	Duration/ Length	Weight (%)	Minimum	ILOs
Mass Beliefs and Civil Society	Term Paper	3.500 words	100	45%	All

Module Achievements: Assessment Type: Term Paper (research paper) or project assessment (media project; such as a production of a video, a website, or animation etc.). Media projects draw on the support of the SMP Media Center. The grading of projects evaluates not only the academic quality of research, but also considers the intelligent use of media as taught in the introductory courses (adequacy of visualization strategy and/or audio elements, implementation of knowledge of narrative structure etc.).

5.1.5 Social Media Research

Module Name	Social Media Research
Module Code	2025CO-641
Module ECTS	5
Study Semester	Mandatory status for: - 2025-Minor-SMP 3 - 2025-Minor-SMP 4 Mandatory Elective status for: None
Duration	1 Semester
Program Affiliation	2025-Minor-SMP ()
Module Coordinator(s)	Dr. Jakob Fruchtmann

Forms of Learning and Teaching	
Independent Study	90
Other	35
Workload Hours	125 hours

Module Components	Number	Type	CP
Social Media Research I	CO-641-A	Seminar	2.5
Social Media Research II	CO-641-B	Laboratory	2.5

5.1.5.1 Module Description

This social science module will span both semesters of the second year and will provide advanced training with particular respect to the relationship among communication, culture and consumption. Current developments such as "prosumerism/prosumption/prosumers/produsage" at a convergence of mostly online consumer behavior that merges with production patterns, particularly in new mobile media settings will be part of the module that offers many specific and current examples of the interaction of communication, media and culture, and vice versa. Among the many recent developments especially in digital media, including the growing relevance of the implementation of AI, the focus of this module will be on social media. During the fall semester, we will take an in-depth look at relevant media theories as well as topics in social media-related research such as online presentation of the self, the Internet as a public sphere, and online activism.

During the spring semester, we will concentrate on implementing some of the research ideas and proposals developed in the first part of the module. This part of the module will be taught as a lab with a strong self-study component. A particular focus on qualitative research designs and mixed-method designs including "big data" research will provide students with 'hands-on' experience. They will be engaged in working on a self-developed research project in their second year, which will demonstrate the diversity of methodological approaches in the social sciences (e.g., experimental, discourse, content, and text analysis, visual analysis, as well as text mining and visualization), and their application to particular research questions and research designs.

5.1.5.2 Recommended Knowledge

- Read Chapter 1 ("Digital society") from: Lindgren, Simon (2017). Digital media & society. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

- Watch this TED talk by Jaron Lanier titled "How we need to remake the Internet":

https://www.ted.com/talks/jaron_lanier_how_we_need_to_remake_the_internet

5.1.5.3 Usability and Relationship to other Modules

- Mandatory for a minor in SMP

- The module "Social Media Research" focuses on a media perspective.

- The first-year-unit "Introductions" provides a useful basis of knowledge for a successful participation in this module.

5.1.5.4 Intended Learning Outcomes

No	Competence	ILO
	Discipline	Discipline Specific Skills:
1	Explain	Explain and critically apply key concepts of theories of consumerism and mass communication; apprehend how mass media systems and communication work, and to what effect; be familiar with core research topics and findings relating to social media
2	Identify	Identify and critically evaluate advantages and disadvantages of mass consumption and consumerism
3	Critically	Critically reflect on social media, and own media consumption behavior in relation to social expectations and consequences
4	Apply	Apply empirical tools for analyzing social media communication, apply qualitative research methods suitable for studying social media, differentiate between advanced quantitative and qualitative methods of empirical re- search and evaluate an appropriate choice for their application; develop research designs, and design and carry out a study on social media
	Transferable	Transferable and Key Skills:
5	Apply	Apply media and communication skills in diverse and non-peer social contexts
6	Work	Work in a team (if students choose to work in teams) and deal with diversity, develop communicative competence as well as cooperation and conflict resolution skills, strengthen empathy and tolerance for ambiguity

5.1.5.5 Indicative Literature

- Davidowitz, S. (2017). Everybody lies: Big data, new data and what the internet can tell us about who we really are. New York: Harper Collins.
- Fuchs, C. (2021). Social media. A critical introduction. Third Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Lindgren, S. (2021). Digital media and society. Second Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- O'Neill, C. (2017). Weapons of math destruction. London: Penguin Books.

5.1.5.6 Entry Requirements

Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Additional Remarks	None

5.1.5.7 Assessment and Completion

Components	Examination Type	Duration/ Length	Weight (%)	Minimum	ILOs
Social Media Research I	Research Proposal		50		All
Social Media Research II	Research Report		50		All

Module Achievements: Assessment Type: Research Proposal.

In the first semester, students will hand in a mock research grant proposal, choosing a topical field and discussing its societal relevance, presenting the theoretic context, discussing their choice of a research question and of their specific methods as well as research design. These elements will be developed over the semester and can be handed in the form of social media posts, if students so wish. In this case, they will be supported by the SMP Media Center. Assessment Type: Research Report.

In the second semester, students will hand in a research report of the completed project. This involves the following elements, which will, again, be spread out over the entire second semester: An extended abstract, an ethics statement and a report on the data collection as well as the data analysis. Students receive feedback on every element and have the opportunity to work this into the full research report they hand in at the end of the second semester of this course. Report length: appr. 3.500 words Alternative Form of assessment: Media Project. Media projects draw on the support of the SMP Media Center. The grading of projects evaluates not only the academic quality of research, but also considers the intelligent use of media as taught in the introductory courses (adequacy of visualization strategy and/or audio elements, implementation of knowledge of narrative structure etc.).

6 Appendix

6.1 Intended Learning Outcomes Assessment-Matrix

Minor in Society, Media and Politics (SMP)					Introduction to the Social Sciences 1: Politics and Society	Introduction to the Social Sciences 2: Media and Society	Social Media Research	Mass Beliefs and Civil Society	Systems of Democratic Governance
Semester					1	2	3+4	4	3
mandatory (m)/ mandatory elective (me)					m	m	m	m	m
Credits					7.5	7.5	5	5	5
	Competencies*								
Program Learning Outcomes	A	E	P	S					
explain and critically apply key concepts of the social sciences relating to society, media and politics;	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
identify and analyze complex social and political issues;	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
critically analyze media content, including visual, audio and VR content;	x	x		x	x	x	x		
critically assess and produce AI generated media content;	x	x		x	x	x	x		
develop an interdisciplinary perspective on societal issues;	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
evaluate solutions to social and political problems and communicate them effectively;		x	x	x				x	x	x
define research questions, select appropriate methods, collect, assess and interpret relevant data and draw scientifically-based conclusions that also consider social and ethical insights;	x	x		x			x	x	x
develop and advance solutions to problems and arguments in the social sciences and defend them in discussions;	x	x	x	x			x	x	x
Assessment Type									
Oral examination									
Written examination	**x**: mandatory				x				x
Project assessment	form of					c	x	c	
Essay	assessment							c	
Poster presentation						c			
Presentation	**c**: choose								
Portfolio	preferred form								
Thesis	of assessment								
Module achievment or bonus points									
*Competencies:									
A-scientific/academic proficiency; E-competence for qualified employment; P-development of personality; S-competence for									