Vorlesung/Lecture course

Comparative Political Institutions (in English)

Time: Tuesdays, 16.00-18.00  
Venue: F21/02.31  
Start date: 14 April 2015  
Registration in FlexNow!: 01.04.-20.06.2015 (Deregistration until 20.06.2015)  
Instructor: Prof. Dr. Thomas Saalfeld

Prerequisites/ Zulassungsvoraussetzungen  
BA in Political Science, Vordiplom/Zwischenprüfung in Political Science, or equivalent qualification in Political Science/ Politikwissenschaft

Assessment/ Erwerb eines Leistungsnachweises  
Sixty-minute open-book examination in English in the last week of term (option 1) or towards the end of the vacation (option 2). ECTS credits: 5

Programme  
“The proper study of politics is not man but institutions.” (John Plamenatz) – A defining element of Political Science, the study of institutions has experienced a spectacular revival since the 1980s. This lecture course will be delivered in English and is designed, firstly, to introduce students of Political Science at Masters, advanced Diplom/ MA or equivalent international levels to the different varieties of “old” and “new” institutionalisms. Secondly, it will discuss some crucial descriptive concepts that have shaped the discussion on institutional design in contemporary political research. It will, thirdly, apply these concepts to a number of examples to demonstrate how institutional knowledge generated by Political Scientists has helped to influence debates on constitutional design in post-conflict societies as well as mature liberal democracies (e.g., constitutional reform in the United Kingdom and Germany, the transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and the attempt to establish a viable constitutional framework in Afghanistan and Iraq). Finally, it will demonstrate and discuss the value of game theory, principal-agent theory and transaction-cost economics as tools for the analysis of institutions.

Introductory Reading  