

**CMINT: Political involvement in comparative perspective, 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2025/26**

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**Course Description**

Conceptually, political involvement refers to citizens' political attitudes, knowledge and participation. To assess the perceived legitimacy of democratic regimes, political sociologists mostly draw inferences from comparative or longitudinal population surveys which allow them to analyze democratic societies over time or with each other. For example, political support is considered to be a corner stone of any legitimate and well-functioning democratic regime. Despite deviating views on the required level of political support, scholars by and large agree that a minimum amount of political trust is needed for stable and efficient democratic systems. As a consequence, any potential sign of eroding political support, such as declining voter turnouts, the loss of members of political parties or increasing political cynicism or apathy, has become the subject of contested scholarly debates.

Similarly, political participation is considered to be part and parcel of democratic societies. And yet the interrelationship between the legitimacy of political rule and the "universe" of political participation is complex. While high turnout levels at national elections, for example, are an essential ingredient of legitimizing governments and their policies, noninstitutionalized forms of participation, such as protest activities or boycotts, may be perceived as a threat to incumbent political parties or even the democratic regime as a whole.

This seminar will address the full conceptual range with its contradictions, and investigate the empirical state of affairs in European societies and beyond.

**Requirements**

At the end of this CMINT, a two hour exam will be written. Each participant will prepare one short presentation (15 to 20 minutes) on one of the topics listed below (graded by participants). Participation is mandatory and reading and active participation expected.

### **Tentative Course Outline**

	<b>Topic</b>
1.	Introduction and conceptualising political involvement
2.	The concept of political support
3.	Democratic commitment(s) in Europe
4.	Personality traits and political involvement
5.	Political values
6.	Political knowledge
7.	Democratic theory and political participation
8.	Concepts of political participation
9.	Mapping the European terrain
10.	Determinants of political participation: micro and macro level and wrap up of seminar