

Zsuzsanna Végh

Political Transformations in Central Europe: Democratization and backsliding since 1989

6/9 ECTS

Moduls: Vergleichende Sozialwissenschaften: Vertiefung // Modul III.1.: Recht und Politik im nationalen Kontext (Vertiefung) // Modul III.2.: Recht und Politik im europäischen Kontext (Vertiefung)

Tuesday, 14.15-15.45

Online seminar

Start date: 3 November 2020

The seminar explores political transformations in Central Europe, with a focus on the Visegrad countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), from the regime change in 1989 until today, thus covering processes of democratization, consolidation and backsliding that took place over the past 30 years. As a point of departure, the course starts with discussing the political nature of communist regimes across the region before 1989, and the high hopes for democratic transformation and consolidation in the early 1990s as part of the third wave of democracy. Further on, the role of Europeanization, the European Union's so-called transformative power, will be discussed as an important factor supporting the region's democratization. A balance of achievements and shortcomings of transformation after the EU accession will be drawn, leading into a discussion about recent deconsolidation trends and today's heated debates concerning the quality of these countries' democracies as full-fledged member states of the European Union. The course closes by putting the current regional trends into a wider context of the ebb of the third wave of democracy and the challenges liberal democracies face globally.

Literature: Wolchik, Sharon L. and Jane Leftwich Curry (eds.) 2018. *Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.; Schimmelfennig, Frank and Ulrich Sedelmeier (eds.) 2005. *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. The complete list of literature will be made available at the start of the course.

Learning outcomes: The seminar will familiarize students with key concepts of democratization, consolidation and democratic decline. It will provide them a contextual and in-depth understanding of such processes in Central Europe between 1989 and 2020. Active participation in the course will strengthen students' critical thinking, their analytical and academic writing skills.

Language requirement: The language of the seminar is English. Students are expected to read assigned texts, participate in class discussions and complete writing assignments, therefore very good command of both written and spoken English is necessary to take this course.

Requirements: regular attendance and class participation (20%); short written assignments (30%); research paper (50%; 10-12 pages for 6 ECTS, 20-22 pages for 9 ECTS)