

ACADEMIC SPECIALTY: SOCIOLOGY

Master's Program in SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND POLITICAL MARKETING

Educational and Qualification Degree: MASTER

Professional Qualification: MASTER IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND POLITICAL MARKETING

Duration of Studies: 2 years

Mode of Study: regular

QUALIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS

The Master's program "**Sociological Research and Political Marketing**" for non-specialists is designed for graduates from all fields of higher education. The program is also suitable for young professionals who have oriented themselves towards the analysis of political conjuncture, as well as the design and analysis of sociological research.

The main goal of the program is to develop students' knowledge and skills through the use of various academic methods and practices, enabling them to prepare survey questionnaires, accurately and objectively interpret them, conduct in-depth data analyses, understand the functioning of the political governance model in Bulgaria, the specifics and main functions of institutions in the country, and the forms of local self-government. All of this is situated within the context of European sociological and political practices and analyses.

The program plans to develop students' managerial and communication skills, comparative analysis abilities, expert behavior, and more through the use of various academic methods. Students acquire knowledge in core sociological disciplines such as Introduction to Sociology, History of Sociology, Quantitative Methods in Sociology, Public Opinion and Media, Social Statistics, Social Stratification and Inequalities, Sociology of Social Regulators, Qualitative Methods, Statistical Methods in Sociology, and SPSS; as well as specialized knowledge including Application of Qualitative Methods in Political Research, Constitutional Law, the Bulgarian Political System, Economic Policy of Modern Bulgaria, European Policies – Key Characteristics, Public Opinion and Political Communication, Contemporary Demographic Trends, and Political Marketing.

Graduates of the Master's program possess:

- a broad spectrum of theoretical and practical knowledge specialized in the respective field, building upon the achievements of the previous educational stage; they know and understand theories, concepts, principles, and regularities;
- highly specialized practical and theoretical knowledge that forms the foundation for originality in developing and applying new ideas and solutions; they demonstrate critical awareness of knowledge in the field and the interconnections between different studied areas;
- a rich set of practical knowledge and approaches necessary for understanding abstract problems and developing creative solutions and diagnostics, based on contemporary research through the integration of knowledge from new or interdisciplinary fields

Graduates of the Master's program possess the following skills:

- They make adequate judgments in situations characterized by incomplete or limited information and unpredictability, develop new and diverse skills in response to emerging knowledge and practices, and demonstrate confident application of innovative methods and tools distinguished by creativity in solving complex tasks and unforeseen problems in their specialized field of work; they identify and maintain arguments when addressing interdisciplinary problems.
- They show initiative in work and learning within complex and unpredictable environments requiring the resolution of problems involving multiple interacting factors; they possess skills to create and lead networks or teams, manage time efficiently, and oversee human and financial resources, as well as solve complex problems using new technological methods and tools.
- They quickly locate, extract, organize, synthesize, and evaluate necessary information from various sources; they have the ability to solve and overcome critical issues in research and/or innovation; rapidly acquire new qualities and skills and anticipate technological and creative development.
- They possess entrepreneurial spirit, rigor, adaptability, intellectual flexibility, independence, and responsibility, which are developed throughout the course and the execution of assignments within the Master's program.

Professional Competencies:

- Graduates collect, process, and interpret specialized political information necessary for solving social problems; they integrate a wide range of sociological and political science knowledge and sources of information into a new context; they make well-founded expert assessments and find solutions in a complex political environment with diverse interactions.
- They are capable of solving social and political problems by integrating complex sources of knowledge, under conditions of insufficient available information, in a new political environment; they are able to initiate changes and manage social development processes in complex political conditions. They engage with important political and social issues arising in the course of their work or studies.

Graduates of the master's program can pursue careers as:

- Heads of units, directorates, and departments in local and state administration;
- Managing and executive directors;
- Political leaders at national and local levels;
- Human resources management leaders;
- Managers in political and administrative activities, etc.;
- Consultants in the field of management and local self-government;
- Consultants in state and private sociological agencies;
- Consultants preparing programs for empirical sociological research on the political, social, and economic life of Bulgaria;
- Experts in non-governmental organizations and foundations.

STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM

| First Year | | | |
|--|--------------|---|--------------|
| First Semester | ECTS credits | Second Semester | ECTS credits |
| Introduction to Sociology | 5 | Sociology of Stratification and Inequalities | 6 |
| History of Sociology | 10 | Sociology of Social Regulators | 6 |
| Quantitative Methods in Sociology | 5 | Qualitative Methods | 6 |
| Public Opinion and Media | 5 | Statistical Methods in Sociology | 6 |
| Social Statistics | 5 | SPSS | 6 |
| | Total 30 | | Total 30 |
| Second Year | | | |
| Third Semester | ECTS credits | Fourth Semester | ECTS credits |
| The Bulgarian Political System | 8 | The Economic Policy of Modern Bulgaria | 2.5 |
| Constitutional Law | 6 | European Policies – Key Characteristics | 2.5 |
| Application of Qualitative Methods in Political Research | 8 | Local Self-Governments | 5 |
| Elective Course | 8 | Elective Course | 5 |
| | | State Examination or Master's Thesis Defense | 15 |
| | Total 30 | | Total 30 |
| Elective Courses / Third Semester / <i>Students choose one course</i> | ECTS credits | Elective Courses /Fourth Semester/ <i>Students choose one course</i> | ECTS credits |
| Administrative Law | 8 | Political Marketing | 5 |
| Public Opinion and Political Communication | 8 | Contemporary Demographic Trends | 5 |
| OVERALL FOR 2 ACADEMIC YEARS: 120 CREDITS | | | |

ANNOTATIONS OF COURSES

COMPULSORY COURSES

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Iveta Yakova, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: yakova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The discipline "Introduction to Sociology" aims to introduce students to the "logic" of the science of sociology, which, through the comparative historical method, studies society as a totality, and in particular individual social institutions, processes, groups and communities. At the heart of sociological thinking is both the interaction between the individual and society, as well as the causes and consequences of social inequality and the social construction of human life.

The training also emphasizes sociological imagination as a means of understanding the connection between the life events (biography) of members of a given society and the society itself (history). In this way, students are encouraged to think critically, beyond the boundaries of their personal lives, and to interpret social reality/society by subjecting to verification the "taken-for-granted" or "common-sense" understandings of community, society, institutions, problems, and so on.

Content of the course:

The lecture course Introduction to Sociology, linked to other sociological disciplines within the curriculum, aims to lay the foundations of sociological literacy. To this end, the course is divided into two modules: theoretical and empirical sociology:

1) Theoretical Sociology covers the conceptual framework: social action and social relations; social function; social stratification; inequalities and mobility; personality formation; types of societies; power and domination; the concept of a political system.

2) Empirical Sociology addresses the methodology and methods of sociological research, as well as the stages and elements of empirical sociological investigation.

The aim of the course is for students to:

- a) master a set of concepts and categories that form the foundation of sociological science;
- b) develop critical thinking in exploring the cause-and-effect relationships behind various forms of social behavior, events, phenomena, etc., through the contextualization and reconstruction of what is happening in terms of "there and then" and "here and now";
- c) build a general understanding of the theoretical approaches and methods used in empirical sociology.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

Students are given the opportunity to be exempt from the final exam. To qualify, they must actively participate in class discussions and receive a grade of "Very Good" or "Excellent" on their case study and coursework.

HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY

ECTS credits: 10

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Dilyana Keranova, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: dkeranova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 3 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The history of sociology is not taught as a standalone discipline, but rather as a means of acquiring knowledge that supports the argumentation of sociological analyses in

contemporary society. The constant movement between social constellations and the outlining of various social strata leads to the development and practice of specific "skills of the mind," which are essential to any modern science of society.

Content of the course:

The course covers fundamental sociological schools, concepts, and circles. Students learn to interpret, understand, and analyze social facts, to compare and organize them. When formulating problematic situations in the "here" and "now," they may be able to find answers in the "there" and "then."

Teaching and Assessment Methodology:

The final grade reflects the results of ongoing assessment and the written exam.

QUANTITATIVE METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Mario Marinov, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: mario_marinov@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The lecture course focuses on the structural features and specific requirements in the process of creating and using the toolkit for Empirical Sociological Research (ESI). It closely examines the organization of work, content requirements, and research issues at each stage of ESI. The course analyzes the cognitive possibilities of different research methods, the limits of empirical knowledge application, and the validity of ESI, as well as potential errors and abuses of empirical sociological information.

The entire cycle of its implementation is simulated, with students developing their own individual projects, including an ESI program, theoretical model, hypotheses, questionnaire, and data processing plan. Students learn to independently analyze data from univariate and bivariate distributions and to work with basic statistical coefficients.

Content of the course:

- To clarify the structural features and specific requirements in the process of creating and using the toolkit for Empirical Sociological Research (ESI);

- To analyze the cognitive capabilities of various research methods, the limits of application of empirical knowledge, and the validity of ESI;

- To analyze possible errors and abuses of empirical sociological information.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course Quantitative Methods in Sociology is determined at the end of the semester based on students' answers to written questions. The final grade reflects the results of ongoing assessments and the exam score.

PUBLIC OPINION AND MEDIA

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Prof. Dobrinka Peycheva, D.Sc.

E-mail: peichevad@swu.bg

Annotation:

The media serve as an expression of agreement or disagreement with a given governance and, in this sense, represent the public aspect of public opinion. There is a direct connection between the media and public opinion, which is the subject of numerous research inquiries and interpretations, applying both classical and contemporary practices in retrospective and current contexts.

The course Public Opinion and Media includes the study of the role of communications and the media in shaping public opinion across different contexts and temporal frames. It reveals the classical and diverse contemporary models and techniques of mass communication influence and their effects, as well as the various methods and techniques for studying them.

Content of the course:

The course includes the study of the role of communications and the media in shaping public opinion across various contexts and time periods. It reveals the classical as well as the diverse contemporary models and techniques of mass communication influence and their effects, along with the different methods and techniques used to study them.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on students' answers to written questions..

SOCIAL STATISTICS

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Vera Veleva, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: veleva_v@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The Social Statistics course provides general theoretical knowledge of the fundamental concepts and categories related to population, as well as the approaches and methods for measuring and analyzing data in socio-demographic research. It identifies the main sources of statistical information and presents statistical data from observations conducted by national statistics authorities. The course discusses the application of international regulations (Eurostat, UN, ILO, etc.) and practices of other countries in the field of demographic and social research.

Content of the course:

The methodology and practical organization and implementation of statistical studies of phenomena and processes (natural and mechanical population movement) are examined. These form the basic structures of the population and its development, economic activity of the population (employment and unemployment), income structures, expenses and consumption of the population (household budgets), as well as the educational and health status of the population.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on ongoing assessments and the results of the final exam.

SOCIOLOGY OF STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITIES**ECTS credits:** 6**Weekly hours:** 1 l + 1 s**Assessment:** exam**Type of exam:** written**Methodical guide:****Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Prof. Valentina Milenkova, DSc, Department of SociologyE-mail: vmilenkova@swu.bg**Annotation:**

Sociology of Stratification and Inequalities is a contemporary scientific discipline with a broad research scope that encompasses numerous issues related to the development of various social groups and their hierarchical organization. A central focus of the subject is the interpretation of social stratification, with two main analytical approaches: the "nominalist" and the "synthetic."

Content of the course:

The four basic systems of stratification are distinguished: Slavery, Caste, Estate (or social order), Class. Special attention is given to the analysis of the "middle class" and its theoretical interpretations, including contributions by Bulgarian authors. The second part of the course covers "social inequalities" and their presence in societies—both historically and especially in contemporary modern societies. In this context, the topic of poverty is also analyzed, along with related concepts, theories, and explanations arising from the notion.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on students' responses during the written exam.

SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL REGULATORS**ECTS credits:** 6**Weekly hours:** 1 l + 1 s**Assessment:** exam**Type of exam:** written**Methodical guide:****Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Vladislava Lendzhova, PhD, Department of SociologyE-mail: vlendzhova@swu.bg**Annotation:**

The course "Sociology of Social Regulators" examines the key mechanisms and tools that govern and direct social behavior and social relations. Through theoretical analysis and practical examples, it explores social norms, morality, law, religion, culture, media, education, and politics as primary social regulators. Special attention is given to the role of digitalization, globalization, and environmental responsibility in the transformation of social regulators in contemporary society.

Content of the course:

The course offers an interdisciplinary perspective that connects classical and contemporary sociological theories. Students will learn the specifics of key institutional forms and analyze the principles of their functioning in the context of individual socialization.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is based on ongoing assessments during the semester, coursework, and a written exam.

QUALITATIVE METHODS

ECTS credits: 6

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Mario Marinov, PhD, Department of Sociology

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

E-mail: mario_marinov@swu.bg

Annotation:

The course introduces students to the methodology and techniques of sociological research based on meaningful models of the social world, grounded in socially valid meanings. This is a specific area of sociological knowledge focused on microsociology, the individual, and socio-cultural processes and contradictions. This branch of sociology studies everyday social practices, natural attitudes, and the practical logic characteristic of different social communities. A key idea behind the course is to overcome the common perception of opposition between qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology.

Content of the course:

The object of qualitative research is individuals as performers of social roles, while the subject of study is the nature of the performance of these roles. Essential sociological concepts introduced include interaction, lifeworld, personal meaning, hermeneutics, formal rationality, practical logic, dramaturgical sociology, and interpretative sociology.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade reflects the results of ongoing assessments and the exam grade.

STATISTICAL METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

ECTS credits: 6

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Vera Veleva, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: veleva_v@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The course on the application of statistical methods in sociology covers part of the general theory of statistics, clarifying the fundamental theoretical concepts, the cognitive nature of the logic, and the principles of the statistical approach in studying socio-economic processes. Special emphasis is placed on the methodology and techniques of sample surveys, statistical inference, and hypothesis testing based on data from sociological research. The

application of methods in practical sessions is developed through the use of computer technology and problem-oriented software products. Information is provided about the national statistical information system and its harmonization with European statistics (Eurostat).

Content of the course:

The material presentation focuses primarily on the essence and cognitive capabilities of various statistical methods and characteristics (indicators), the conditions for their practical application, accurate interpretation, and formulation of statistical findings and conclusions during the organization and conduct of sample sociological studies.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the term based on the results of a written test and ongoing assessments throughout the semester.

SPSS

ECTS credits: 6

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Petrana Stoykova, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: petrana_stoikova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The course is focused on mastering the capabilities of modern specialized software tools for statistical processing and analysis of empirical data from sociological research. The need for knowledge and skills in working with specialized software products is driven by the development of applied sociological research and is directly related to the future professional realization of sociology students.

Content of the course:

The use of specialized statistical software enhances the ability to master and apply the apparatus of applied statistics in the analysis of empirical data from sociological studies. During the course, ongoing assessments are made of the students' skills in performing the various elements of sociological data processing.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course concludes with a written exam in which students present an analytical report applying specific statistical procedures (descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing for comparing empirical distributions, parameters, and analysis of dependencies) based on the data from the conducted study.

THE BULGARIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

ECTS credits: 8

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Petrana Stoykova, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: petrana_stoikova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 lectures + 2 seminars

Type of Exam: Written

Annotation:

The presented course aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the rich political experience and practices of the Bulgarian state and society. It traces both the democratic traditions and the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes of governance. The course includes an in-depth analysis of the Bulgarian party system, key party ideologies, and political policies. A sociological examination is also conducted on the most prominent political figures in Bulgaria's history who have significantly contributed to the country's prosperity and societal development.

The thematic units are designed to equip students with knowledge and skills for conducting sociopolitical analysis and for forecasting governance systems within the country. Special emphasis is placed on the study of the contemporary political system, which holds a central place in the academic preparation of the students. Through extensive lecture content and the inclusion of key authors, students in the master's program develop term papers on relevant topics, applying comparative historical-sociological analysis.

Content of the course:

The discipline explores the fundamental forms of political power, the types of societies in relation to their political systems of governance, and the main forms of political governance within Bulgarian society. It clarifies the core concepts and theories associated with political issues in the country, with particular focus on the political system.

Students develop a conceptual framework and gain proficiency in applying it, acquiring the skills necessary to analyze various forms of political governance. The course fosters an in-depth "understanding" of the Bulgarian political landscape, especially within the context of a globalized society.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course "The Bulgarian Political System" is determined at the end of the semester based on students' responses to written examination questions.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

ECTS credits: 6

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vesela Mircheva, Department of Public Law Sciences

E-mail: dvar@abv.bg

Weekly hours: 2 lectures + 1 seminar

Type of Exam: Written

Annotation:

The course in Constitutional Law aims to clarify the regulatory mechanisms that govern the relationships between citizens and the state. The discipline is designed to present the constitutional characteristics as defined by the fundamental law of the country, as well as the organization and structure of state power.

The course includes the following thematic modules:

1. Constitutionalism, Constitution, and Constitutional Law
2. Economic and Political System
3. System of State Authorities
4. Local Self-Government and Public Administration
5. Amendment and Supplementation of the Constitution

Content of the course:

The academic discipline provides the constitutional foundations for the other branches of law and, on this basis, introduces students to the fundamental law of the state and society,

as well as the most important social relations regulated by it. The course clarifies the basic principles of the structure and functioning of the political system, with particular focus on the state. It also examines the constitutional and legal status of citizens.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester based on the students' responses to a designated written question.

APPLICATION OF QUALITATIVE METHODS IN POLITICAL RESEARCH

ECTS credits: 8

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Prof. DSc. Dobrinka Peycheva

E-mail: peichevad@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 lectures + 2 seminars

Type of Exam: Written

Annotation:

The course aims to develop in students a theoretical “understanding” of the foundations and traditions of qualitative research on religions, as well as their relevance to contemporary Bulgarian society, while simultaneously combining this with practical know-how and direct experience in their application. Students are introduced to the debate between proponents of quantitative and qualitative methods in the study of religions, along with the arguments presented by each side.

Qualitative research was deliberately underdeveloped in sociology during the communist period. Therefore, the course draws on the contributions of classical and contemporary Western authors to familiarize students with the heuristic potential of qualitative methods. It also traces the few examples from pre-war traditions in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the new trends and reasons for their revival in the post-communist era.

Content of the course:

The course familiarizes students with specific methodologies such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, life histories, content analysis, discourse analysis, and focus groups.

In this way, students acquire the skills to:

- apply practical know-how and direct experience in implementing these methods;
- and to practically employ specific techniques that will assist them in gathering empirical data for their future master's theses

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester based on the results of the coursework.

THE ECONOMIC POLICY OF MODERN BULGARIA

ECTS credits: 2.5

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniela Pastarmadzhieva, Department of Philosophy and Political Sciences

Weekly hours: 2 lectures

Type of Exam: Written

E-mail: daniela.pastarmadzhieva@swu.bg

Annotation:

The course aims to introduce students to the fundamental issues of the modern economic policy of the Bulgarian bourgeois state from the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century until the establishment of the totalitarian socialist system. The focus is on the formation of the modern economic policy of the Third Bulgarian State; the challenges encountered during its development; the formation and competencies of the main economic institutions; the primary laws and principles underpinning this policy; as well as its achievements and shortcomings. The course also examines the structure of the economy and the international economic and trade relations of the modern Bulgarian state during this period.

The purpose of the academic discipline is to enable students to understand the issues related to the formation and development of the economic policy of modern Bulgaria; to grasp the essence and advantages of this novel economic policy for the country. Students will become familiar with the main economic institutions of modern bourgeois Bulgaria and their role in the governance and development of the modern market economy. This comprehensive study requires referencing both ancient classical sources and Christian patristic, as well as distinctive hagiographic literature, spanning from the earliest times to the present.

Content of the course:

Students should acquire a clear understanding of the structure of the modern Bulgarian economy and the main institutions that determine the economic policy of the Bulgarian bourgeois state. They should become well-oriented in these issues and be able to analyze, from a comparative perspective, the policy of the modern Bulgarian state in its integration into the modern capitalist economy of the West, as well as the current challenging transition of the country toward market relations and bourgeois democracy.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course concludes with an examination at the end of the semester, which consists either of an essay on a specific topic or a comprehensive test covering the entire material. It is also possible to submit written assignments on selected topics, such as reports or coursework.

EUROPEAN POLICIES – KEY CHARACTERISTICS

ECTS credits: 2.5

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Prof. DSc. Valentina Milenkova, Department of Sociology

E-mail: vmilenkova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 lectures

Type of Exam: Written

Annotation:

The main objective of the course is to familiarize students with the emerging prerequisites and conditions in Europe for the transition towards continental, pan-European economic, political, and social integration. The Republic of Bulgaria is an active participant in this pan-European process. Bulgaria's economic, political, and social conditions determine its involvement in several subregional economic unions. The strategic goal of our country is full membership in the most highly developed integration formation in the contemporary world – the European Union.

In the memorandum of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria concerning its application for EU membership, it is explicitly emphasized that Bulgaria's accession to the European Union is a strategic goal reflecting the national interests of the state. Bulgaria's joining the European Union is one of the few issues on which there is a national consensus in the country, both among the public and political forces.

Content of the course:

The course examines the methodology, practical organization, implementation, and execution of policies across various sectors, including the economy, taxation, transportation, environment and ecology, education, culture, and media. All these areas fall under the jurisdiction of EU member states, where cooperation takes place and is actively pursued. EU legislation holds precedence over national laws and policy areas to which it is related. The course demonstrates how these policies evolve over time through the different stages of the European Union's development.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester and takes into account the completed coursework.

LOCAL SELF-GOVENMENT

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniela Pastarmadzhieva, Department of Philosophy and Political Sciences

E-mail: daniela.pastarmadzhieva@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 lectures + 2 seminars

Type of Exam: Written

Annotation:

The course aims to reveal to students the essence of local self-government through its historical development, to introduce them to the relevant terminology, and to familiarize them with the evolution of municipal legislation and the historical practice of various types of municipalities both abroad and in Bulgaria, including metropolitan, urban, rural, and others.

Significant emphasis is placed on the importance of local self-government for the development and consolidation of social communities, municipal policies in the life of social communities, and the opportunities for individual participation in addressing local issues.

Content of the course:

The course is designed to acquaint students with both the theory and the historical development of the interaction between the state and local self-government. Special attention is given to the various forms of cooperation among municipalities, the new European legislation on local authorities, as well as the opportunities for young people to participate in local self-government. Particular focus is also placed on the history of local self-government in the region of Southwest University and the history of the Blagoevgrad Municipality.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade takes into account the results of the ongoing assessment as well as the evaluation of the defense of the term project prepared by the students.

ELECTIVE COURSES

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

ECTS credits: 8

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Margarita Cheshmedzhieva, Department of Public Law Sciences

E-mail: margo@law.swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 lectures + 2 seminars

Type of Exam: Written

Annotation:

The course covers the nature of the executive branch and public administration, emphasizing their distinct legal characteristics. Special attention is given to the operational autonomy and linked competencies of executive authorities. Administrative law norms and administrative legal relationships are analyzed in detail. Due to their significant practical importance, the sources of administrative law are studied extensively, with particular focus on secondary normative acts—such as Council of Ministers' decrees, regulations, ordinances, and instructions.

Within a legal-logical framework, the course examines the main institutions of administrative law, outlining the administrative-legal status of citizens, non-profit legal entities, and business entities—including commercial companies, cooperatives, municipal enterprises, and others. The legal characterization of executive bodies is delineated, accompanied by various classifications. Priority is given to the central and territorial executive authorities.

Content of the course:

The course provides students with a thorough understanding of the administrative-legal status of executive authorities. It prepares them to draft normative, general, and individual administrative acts. During the course, students are trained to comprehend the procedures for appealing decisions of administrative bodies and the enforcement of administrative-penalty liability.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester based on students' performance in case study analyses, tests, and coursework.

PUBLIC OPINION AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

ECTS credits: 8

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Prof. D.Sc. Dobrinka Peycheva

E-mail: peichevad@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 lectures + 2 seminars

Type of Exam: Written

Annotation:

Media and public opinion are respectively considered the fourth and fifth powers in any society. Unlike the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, which are formalized and institutionalized within specific governmental institutions and structures, the power of the media and public opinion is non-institutionalized and informal, yet no less influential and effective. It is no coincidence that the governance of any administration is successful only

when it aligns with public opinion; similarly, elections—being the manifestation of public opinion—serve as indicators either confirming or prompting the emergence of new consensus regarding the governance of a society. The media express either agreement or disagreement with a given administration and thus embody the public nature of public opinion.

Political communication lies at the core of shaping political public opinion, which, in turn, is inconceivable without the media.

Content of the course:

The course "Public Opinion and Political Communication" encompasses the study of the role of communication in general, and political communication in particular, in shaping public opinion across various political contexts and temporal frameworks. It explores classical models as well as a diversity of contemporary models and scopes of influence of political communication and its effects, alongside the different methods and techniques used for their investigation. The course highlights the role and significance of political communication in the formation of public opinion. It further emphasizes the specific model effects and consequences of political media influence on public opinion within the broader process of political mediatization.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester based on the students' responses to a given written question.

POLITICAL MARKETING

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petrana Stoykova, Department of Sociology

E-mail: petrana_stoikova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 lectures + 2 seminars

Type of Exam: Written

Annotation:

Within the course "Political Marketing," fundamental theoretical issues are examined, including the subject matter, methods, principles, functions, and structural scope of this discipline, as well as questions concerning the evolution of political marketing and its various types. The course also focuses on other important theoretical topics such as the nature of elections, the phenomenon of the "political market," the historical aspects of "political money," among others.

In addition to theoretical and methodological problems, the practical aspects of political marketing are analyzed in depth: planning and conducting electoral campaigns, socio-political diagnostics, branding, political communication, political advertising, political image management, and more. The course also raises a range of discussion topics related to the financing of electoral campaigns, electoral systems, models of voter behavior, and other relevant issues.

Content of the course:

The course "Political Marketing" is divided into two sections. The first section is of a theoretical and methodological nature, while the second focuses on issues related to the practical application of political marketing. Emphasis is placed on national models of political marketing as well as the specific characteristics of its functioning. Trends and challenges facing contemporary political marketing are analyzed in depth.

A special part of the course consists of seminars that actively involve students in analyzing specific electoral campaigns, pre-election political propaganda, and the psychological aspects of political marketing.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

At the end of the “Political Marketing” course, students’ answers to assigned written questions or their independent research on current issues within the discipline are evaluated.

MODERN DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical Guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Prof. DSc. Valentina Milenkova, Department of Sociology

E-mail: vmilenkova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 lectures + 2 seminars

Type of Exam: Written

Annotation:

The course on Contemporary Demographic Trends provides theoretical knowledge of the fundamental concepts and categories related to population, as well as the approaches and methods for measuring and analyzing data in socio-demographic research. It covers the methodology and practical organization and implementation of statistical studies on phenomena and processes (natural and mechanical movement) that shape the main structures of the population and its development, economic activity of the population (employment and unemployment), income, expenditure, and consumption structures of the population (household budgets), and the educational and health status of the population. The course identifies the primary sources of statistical information and presents statistical data from state statistical observations. It also discusses the application of international regulations (Eurostat, UN, ILO, etc.) and practices in other countries concerning demographic and social research.

Content of the course:

Through the lecture course and the acquired practical knowledge, students master the fundamental concepts and population categories within the field of demographic and social statistics. They utilize primary sources of information, applying various methods; calculate and analyze key indicators characterizing the size and structure of populations; and track the level and intensity of the development of demographic processes.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester based on the results of a written test, ongoing assessments, and a coursework developed using real statistical data.