ISS 4180 Thinking About Institutions and Governance

Institution:	International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Year, Block:	Year 1, Block 1
Course type:	Track-specific course
Assessment:	85% Assignment (essay) 15% Group work presentation
ECTS:	9

Brief description (including learning outcomes): Governance is a concept that implies different meanings to different audiences depending on the area, discipline, field, and theoretical lenses one uses in defining it. Yet, across this myriad of interpretations and practices, this course looks into the central relationship linking Institutions and governance. More specifically, it focuses on how our analysis of institutional formation, emergence, maintenance, persistence, change and evolution shapes the extent to which we deal with different modalities of governance. In so doing, this course enables students to critically analyse new programs of governance and institution- and state-building reforms that have emerged in the past two decades to replace, supplement, or facilitate policies previously solely focused on market liberalization. It also allows students to situate and better understand some of the disputes and different approaches to questions of governance, reform and democracy and how these influence the development policy agenda.

The course is divided into three parts. Part I is theoretical in its content. It introduces students into different conceptualizations of governance before it tackles the theoretical underpinnings that inform it, with a particular focus on the new institutionalism literature with all of its disciplinary varieties. Part II aims to link the first theoretical block with a series of processes that speak to governance-related topics and issues. As such, the second block looks into the extent to which institutional analysis informs the design of World Bank's Good Governance policies (with a focus on anti-corruption and decentralization policies), and how it relates to the literature on the varieties of capitalism (VoC) which studies contemporary state-market interactions in modern capitalist societies. . Part III comprises a series of workshops (three) where students undertake a variety of assignments that speak to topics already covered throughout the course.

In this module, students learn how to:

- critically conceptualise complex analytical issues such as social change, continuity, and institutional reform;
- understand the main differences among authors and schools of thought in relation to key debates in the area of governance and institutional analysis;
- formulate a coherent argument regarding one's own theoretical position in the diverse governance literatures;
- develop further their skills of presenting the results of their own research to an audience and assessing the research findings of others.