POSC3621 European Politics

Thurs 5-8 pm  
Spring 2018

Instructor: Dr. Antti-Ville Suni

Location: Hopkins

Email: asuni@fordham.edu

Office Hours: Thurs 8-9 pm, Faculty Lounge (book by email).

Overview

This course examines key topics in contemporary European politics. We begin by defining Europe, both culturally and as an evolving political ‘unit’. In weeks 2-3, we review the history, organization and political power of the European Union. After discussing the ‘supranational’ level, we turn to national politics in a comparative perspective (weeks 4-7). The topics covered include the organization of national executives and parliaments; party systems and politics; cleavages and electoral behaviour. Furthermore, we analyze the political economy of Europe by looking at organized interests; the role of the state in the economy; and national responses to the Great Recession. In week 9, we explore the continuing political and economic crisis in Europe and possible solutions. This leads us to the following week’s discussion on Brexit and its domestic and international politics. In week 11, we examine the global role of Europe and the EU. The final week is devoted in equal measure to exam preparation and to a discussion on the media’s role in European politics.

Learning Objectives

The main purpose of this course is to help students understand the key dynamics and contemporary issues in European politics. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Have a basic understanding of the historical roots of contemporary European politics;
- Understand the key characteristics of the formal political institutions at the national and supranational level;
- Have a broad understanding of the (informal) institutions, interests, and ideas that shape European politics today;
- Identify and understand the central debates and conflicts in contemporary European politics;
- Develop the skills to critically analyze European politics and political economy.
Readings

The readings address the learning objectives. There is a massive literature on any of the weekly topics with hundreds of new publications coming out every year. At the same time, European countries and the EU are constantly changing. Therefore, the readings are meant to give you a broad overview of European politics and provide a foundation upon which to analyze current and future developments. There are two to three required readings for each week (60-80p). One textbook will be used during most of the course: Gallagher, Michael, Michael Laver, and Peter. Mair. 2011. *Representative Government in Modern Europe*. McGraw-Hill. This is a light read and offers a broad overview of each topic. However, covering complex topics in a few short pages comes with trade-offs. First, the lack of detail will leave you with questions. Second, eschewing details means that the book is unable to engage the reader in the same way as more detailed expositions. Therefore, I encourage you to turn to the recommended readings on topics of personal interest. The recommended readings are not required for the exams, but they may be helpful when preparing your research paper. I will upload all electronically available readings on Blackboard. University of London libraries and The British Library carry comprehensive collections of the rest of the readings.

In addition to the course readings listed below, students are encouraged to consider the following websites on European politics (news, commentary, and other resources):

- [www.euractiv.com](http://www.euractiv.com) (daily news on the EU)
- [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com) (subscription recommended)
- [www.project-syndicate.org](http://www.project-syndicate.org) (opinion pieces by political elites and thinkers)
- [www.opendemocracy.net](http://www.opendemocracy.net) (European politics in section ‘Can Europe Make it’)
- [www.voxeu.org](http://www.voxeu.org) (policy pieces by political economists – browse by topic)
- [www.cer.org.uk](http://www.cer.org.uk) (think tank, ‘Pro-European but not uncritical’)
- [www.bruegel.org](http://www.bruegel.org) (a Brussels-based think tank focusing on economic policy)
- [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu) (the EU’s official website with lots of resources)
- Also consider country newspapers such as Le Monde, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Repubblica, and El Pais.

Assessment & Key Dates

- **Participation**: 10%. Students are expected to read the compulsory readings weekly and to contribute actively to class discussions/exercises.

- **Presentation**: 10%. Each student will open class discussion once by giving a 10-minute presentation on one reading of interest for the week. The reading can be any required or recommended reading for the week except the text-book (Gallagher et al 2011).

- **Midterm exam** (March 8th): 20 %. Examples of questions will be provided one week before the exam. The midterm and final exams will consist of short answer questions. The exams
will cover the course material, including assigned readings, lectures, and classroom discussions. A make-up exam will only be offered in case of documented illness.

- **Research paper** (approx. 3000 words, due April 26th): 20%. Possible topics will be made available by the course instructor. Students can choose their own topic according to their research interests as long as the relevance of the topic to the course has been approved by the course instructor. Late submissions will not be accepted unless they are shown to result from documented illness or other.

- **Final exam** (May 3rd): 40%. Examples of questions will be provided one week before the exam.

Extra credit (up to 15% of total grade) can be earned by conducting short interviews with European voters.

- Two interview questions:
  - What do you think of your current (national) government?
  - What do you think of the European Union?
- Interviews must display a mix of nationalities, demographics, and cleavages.
- Max 3 interviews per nationality with a variation on (at least) 4 out of following 8 key demographics and cleavages.
  - 4 key demographics: gender, ethnicity, education, and age (millennial, gen x, baby boomer, silent generation, or G.I. generation born between 1901-1924)
  - 4 key cleavages: class (worker/business owner/public sector); economic ideology (left/right); centre/periphery (rural/urban/regional minority); religious/secular.
- 1% of grade per interview (15 interviews for maximum extra credit).
- Evidence: Notes or recording/transcript by email.
  - Remember to document nationality and demographics.
- Feel free to use interview material when writing your research paper.

**Grading System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score of 100</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Factor in CUM of 4</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Excellent. Hot-shot work, outstanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>Still excellent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>Very Good. High level of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good. Solid and above average of performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>Good. Above average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>Better than satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>Minimally Acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Passing but unsatisfactory. Below the average level expected. The lowest passing grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Failure. Inferior performance.</td>
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# Fordham London Centre Assessment Criteria for Written Work (Emphasis on Knowledge):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Highly Satisfactory A – B+</th>
<th>Satisfactory B – C+</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory C - F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Style</td>
<td>Demonstrated the ability to prepare quality written work:</td>
<td>Work was easy to read, logical and flowed smoothly from issues to conclusions. Work presentation was competent and had only minor spelling and/or grammatical errors.</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate the ability to prepare satisfactory written work:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge - Analysis and Synthesis</td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of the issues. Organises ideas and draw appropriate conclusions. Demonstrated the ability to analyse and synthesise information:</td>
<td>Ideas were all relevant and clearly stated. Appropriate concepts, models or theories were included and integrated effectively. Demonstrated competence and knowledge of the key issues. Ideas were synthesised and appropriate conclusions drawn.</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate the ability to analyse and synthesise information:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasiveness</td>
<td>Demonstrated the ability to write persuasively:</td>
<td>Work provided information competently and in most cases articulated the value of conclusions. Convinced the reader of the reasonableness and appropriateness of the conclusions.</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate the ability to write persuasively:</td>
</tr>
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# Fordham London Centre Assessment Criteria for Oral Presentations (Emphasis on Content):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Highly Satisfactory A – B+</th>
<th>Satisfactory B – C+</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory C - F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Demonstrated mastery of the content knowledge integral to an effective presentation:</td>
<td>Topic was introduced in an interesting way and the purpose of the presentation was explained in detail. Presentation showed a very good understanding of the topic. Information was well evidenced and always relevant. Presentation was summed up clearly and effectively, with key points emphasised.</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate adequate knowledge integral to a presentation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Demonstrates presentation was well prepared and rehearsed. Organises information logically and clearly explains ideas. Adheres to the allocated time limit.</td>
<td>Completely prepared and had obviously rehearsed. Information was well organised. Links between ideas were clear and ideas flowed logically from one point to the next. Adhered to the allocated time limit.</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate the ability to organise a presentation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and Delivery</td>
<td>Demonstrated ability to deliver an effective presentation:</td>
<td>Always spoke clearly and with good pace and volume. Used appropriate vocabulary and extended the audience’s vocabulary by defining words likely to be new to them. Alert and engaged posture. Looked confident and made eye contact with most people. Traded audience participation and responded to questions with little difficulty. Visual aids/multimedia were carefully prepared and supported the presentation effectively by adding impact and interest.</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate the ability to deliver a presentation:</td>
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POSC3621 European Politics
Fordham University Policy on Academic Integrity

Failure to properly acknowledge the intellectual contribution of others constitutes plagiarism and is a very serious academic offense. Please consult the Fordham University Undergraduate Policy on Academic Integrity to get familiar with the standards of academic integrity. Academic integrity is honest, thoughtful, and responsible scholarship. Fordham College at Rose Hill students are expected to maintain the highest standards with regard to honesty, effort, and performance in their academic work. Examples of dishonest scholarship include, but are not limited to plagiarism, cheating, and false authorship. For further information about the Undergraduate Policy on Academic Integrity, and the procedures related to violations.

Attendance Policy

Please read Fordham University’s Student Attendance Policy on Excused Absence (Undergraduate Faculty Handbook: 2.4). The total number of allowed absences (excused or unexcused) is two to qualify for the final exam.

Services for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations, please register with the Office of Disability Services for Students (ODS) in order to request academic accommodations for your courses. Please contact the main ODS number at 718-817-0655 to arrange services. Accommodations are not retroactive, so you need to register with ODS prior to receiving your accommodations. Please see me after class or during office hours if you have questions or would like to submit your academic accommodation letter to me if you have previously registered for accommodations.

Course Outline:

1. Jan 18th: Introduction to the course + What is Europe?

   Required readings:


   Recommended readings:


2. **Jan 25th: What is the European Union and how does it work in principle?**

   **Required readings:**


   **Recommended readings:**


3. **Feb 8th: Political Power in the EU and its Legitimacy**

   **Required readings:**


   **Recommended readings:**

   Wallace, Helen S, Mark A. Pollack, and Alasdair R. Young. 2014. *Policy-Making in the European Union*. (N.b. the chapter on energy policy is very inaccurate)


### 4. Feb 15th: European Party Politics

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


### 5. Feb 22nd: Cleavages, Electoral Systems and Change

N.b. Guest lecturer: Will Brett, Head of Campaigns, Electoral Reform Society

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


6. March 1st: National Executives and Parliaments

N.b. Class visit to the Parliament in Westminster

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


7. March 15th: Midterm Exam + Political economy of Europe

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


**8. March 22nd: European Responses to the Great Recession**

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


9. **March 29th: Europe in Crisis**

Required readings:

Majone, Giandomenico. 2012. “Rethinking European Integration after the Debt Crisis.”


Recommended readings:


Tsoukalis, Loukas. 2016. *In Defence of Europe: Can the European Project Be Saved?* Oxford University Press.


10. **April 5th: Brexit – Causes and Implications for Europe and Beyond**

Required (short) readings:


Oliver, Tim. 2016. “Goodbye Britannia? The International Implications of Britain's Vote to Leave the EU”. Geopolitics, History and International Relations, 8(2), 214-233.
Matthijs, Matthias, and Andrew Whitworth. 2016. "Brexit’s Path Forward." Foreign Affairs.


Patel, Oliver and Christine Reh. 2016. “Brexit: The Consequences for the EU’s Political System”. UCL Constitution Unit Briefing Paper

Recommended readings:


Hall, Peter A. 2016 "The Roots of Brexit." Foreign Affairs.


11. April 19th: Europe as a Global Actor

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


12. April 26th: Politics and the Media/ Exam prep/ Papers Due

Required readings:


Recommended readings:
