POSC3621 European Politics

Mon 1-4 pm
Spring 2017

Instructor: Dr. Antti-Ville Suni
Location: tbc
Email: @fordham.edu
Office Hours: Mon 4:00-6:00pm, tbc

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 4-9). 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 10, 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 12, 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: Tim Bale, *European Politics: A Comparative Introduction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 3rd Edition, 2013). 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 details 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 Moodle. University of London libraries and The British Library carry comprehensive collections of the rest of the readings.

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 (Tim Bale, *European Politics*).

- *Midterm exam* (February 27): 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 24th): 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.

- *Final exam* (May 1-5, TBC): 40 %. Examples of questions will be provided one week before the exam.
Note on Academic Integrity: Failure to properly acknowledge the intellectual contribution of others constitutes plagiarism and is a very serious academic offence. Please consult the Fordham University Undergraduate Policy on Academic Integrity to get familiar with the standards of academic integrity.

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

- www.euractiv.com (daily news on the EU)
- www.ft.com (subscription recommended)
- www.project-syndicate.org (opinion pieces by political elites and thinkers)
- www.opendemocracy.net (European politics in section ‘Can Europe Make it’)
- www.voxeu.org (policy pieces by political economists – browse by topic)
- www.cer.org.uk (think tank, ‘Pro-European but not uncritical’)
- www.bruegel.org (a Brussels-based think tank focusing on economic policy)
- 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.

Outline

1. Jan 16th: Introduction to the course + What is Europe?
   Required readings:


   Recommended readings:


2. **Jan 23rd:** What is the European Union and how does it work in principle?

   Required readings:


   Recommended readings:


3. **Jan 30th:** Political Power in the EU and its Legitimacy

   Required readings:


   Recommended readings:

   Wallace, Helen (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 6th:** National Executives and Parliaments

   Required readings:


**Recommended readings:**


**5. Feb 13th: European Party Politics**

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


**6. Feb 20th: Cleavages, Electoral Systems and Change**

**Required readings:**


**Recommended readings:**


7. **Feb 27th:** Midterm Exam + Organized Interests in European Politics

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


8. **March 13th:** Politics and Markets

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


9. **March 20th: European Responses to the Great Recession**

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


10. **March 27th: 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.


11. **April 3rd: 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.


12. **April 10th: Europe as a Global Actor**

Required readings:


Recommended readings:


13. **April 24th: Politics and the Media/ Exam prep/ Papers Due**

Required readings:


Recommended readings:
