

INTA 2220: Government and Politics of Western Europe

Sam Nunn School of International Affairs

FALL 2010

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:05-11:55AM, Instructional Center 115

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Office Hours: By appointment

This course is designed to familiarize you with the politics of Western Europe, concentrating on the period since 1990. The fundamental goal of this course is to question how institutions, parties, and governments influence political and economic developments in Europe. The course is divided thematically into three broad sections: 1) domestic political and economic institutions, 2) country studies of the several western European states, and 3) the process and politics of European integration. We begin by considering the character of democratic organization and party competition in Europe, and explore the institutional and economic fundamentals that underlie outcomes. We will then complement our analyses of these issues with more in-depth investigation of the political history of the countries. For each country, we will spend time analyzing how social and political forces have shaped economic policies aimed at securing growth and prosperity for all. This emphasis on comparative political economy will allow us to discern how differences in political organization and competition have led to varying policy patterns. In the last section of the course, we shall consider the development and organization of the European Union. The dramatic deepening of European integration in the postwar period has had vast implications for policymaking in European states. We will consider why the EU was formed, how it works, and what it means for member states.

There are no formal prerequisites for this class, but an introductory course in political science or comparative politics is helpful.

Required Reading

One textbook is required for this course. Copies are available at the student bookstores and elsewhere.

- Mark Kesselman and Joel Krieger (Eds). 2006. *European Politics in Transition*. 6th edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin. ISBN: 0-618-43295-7 (abbreviated K&K hereafter)

In addition to the required book, there will be several required readings from other sources. Links to these readings will be available on the T-square site for the course. Specific readings for each week are noted in the course schedule.

The T-square site will also contain other important material for the course, including assignments, study guides for exams, and so on. Regular access to T-Square is mandatory for this course. Most of you already have the necessary skills to use this tool, but if you don't OIT runs periodic workshops.

Recommended Reading

Being informed about what is going on in the world is always a good idea. We will spend some time in this course discussing contemporary European politics, and though it is not required I highly recommend spending a little time each day checking the international news. Keeping up with European events will enhance the quality of our discussions as we incorporate what we are learning with what we see and read in the news. Listed below are some of the best news sources you can use to stay abreast of events in Europe. If you speak a European language, I can recommend country-specific news outlets as well.

- [*The Financial Times*](#) (British daily newspaper with quality information on Europe)
- [*The Economist*](#) (weekly British newsmagazine)
- [*BBC News*](#)
- [*The New York Times*](#) (best American coverage of European events)

You should also consider reading the US Department of State's Background of each country as we are about to discuss them in class to get you up to speed on the current political situation within each country.

Background notes can be found at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/index.htm>.

Class Format

This class will meet Three times a week for 50 minutes. Generally, I will lecture for 20-30 minutes at the beginning of class, and we will use the remainder of the time for discussion of the readings and lectures. A list of general discussion questions appears with the reading assignment for each session. Participation in this discussion is mandatory and will be evaluated as part of your grade. I expect all students to come to class having done the reading and ready to comment and/or ask questions. Remember, no question is too small or too obvious. Chances are your classmates will be wondering the same thing.

Course Requirements

- Quizzes (5/6): 15%
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Issue Papers (3) 20%
- Participation: 15%

Quizzes (15%)

There will be quizzes every other Friday (for the most part) for a total of six quizzes. The quizzes will not last more than 15 minutes, but will be mainly to make sure you are keeping up with the reading and lectures. You will be able to drop your lowest quiz grade so only your best five grades will count towards your final grade.

Exams (50%)

There will be two exams during the semester – The midterm (worth 25%) will cover material from the first part of class and the final (worth 25%) will be cumulative (but weighted toward the second half of the course). Each of these exams will consist of a series of short answers, multiple choice and short essays. I will provide a study guide prior to each exam. **The midterm exam will be held October 11th in class and the final exam is scheduled for December 17th (Friday) 2:50pm - 5:40pm.**

Issue Papers (20%)

I will assign three papers to be written during the semester. Each should be between five (5) and seven (7) pages, in 12-point font and double-spaced. The topics to each paper will be given with plenty of notice (at least two weeks prior to the deadline). All papers are due by the beginning of class. The first paper will be due September 22nd, the second is due November 3rd, and the last paper is due November 22nd. Papers must be submitted on paper. Electronic submission will be not accepted.

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Attendance in class is mandatory. However, being in class is not enough – you should participate and ask questions, especially during the discussion period after each lecture. Demonstration of having done the reading will result in a better grade. Please advise me ahead of time if you will miss class or afterward if you are ill. I will grant you two absences (for whatever reason) during the semester, after which, your final grade will be deducted 1.5 points for each additional absence. Obviously there are extenuating circumstances that I will consider, but you need to consider your presence in class as vital to your final grade.

Honor Code

Full compliance with the Georgia Institute of Technology's Honor Code is required on all assignments, exams, and papers.

Go to www.honor.gatech.edu for more information.

Special Needs

I am happy to meet any special needs you may have for the class in terms of assistance. You must present me with your ADAPTS office information so that I can make sure our learning environment is best suited to help you succeed.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One: August 23rd - 27th: Introductions and Background

Welcome to Europe

- *Recommended:* K&K, Introduction, 1-10
- Magstadt, : Ch. 4: "The Western Political Heritage" from Nations and Governments: Comparative politics in regional perspective

What constitutes Western Europe?

What are the essential elements of European democracy?

Is capitalism a necessary condition for democracy, an impediment, or both?

Is the "idea of Europe" a new idea? What previous attempts have been made to unify Europe?

European Electoral Systems

- Gallagher, Laver and Meir (2001). Chapters 9 and 11. From Representative Government in Modern Europe.

Describe the effects of a proportional representation (PR) electoral system versus a plurality system.

What would happen if the US switched from a plurality to a proportional system?

Why are there only two major parties in the US but more than two in many European countries?

What are cleavages and are there any in the US? What are typical cleavages in Europe?

Week Two: August 30th – September 3rd: Leadership and Parties

- **Quiz One on 9/3**

Catch-up from Week One (if necessary)

Political Parties

- Gallagher et al. Chapters 8 and 10

How does the left in Europe differ from the left in the United States? What about the right?

Which parties in Europe belong on the left and the right? Why?

How do we distinguish American liberalism from classical liberalism and modern European liberalism?

Week Three: September 6th-10th: United Kingdom

- **NO CLASS MONDAY, 9/6 – Labor Day**

Political Development and Institutions

- K&K Chapters 1, 3 and 4

When was the most recent coup d'état or revolution in British history?

What does the unitary nature of British government mean for policymaking efficiency?

Political Parties and Competition

Can you generalize about the reasons behind the British tradition of political compromise?

What are some of the manifestations of British gradualism?

What is meant by Thatcherism and the “enterprise culture”?

Week Four: September 13th-17th: United Kingdom

- **Quiz Two on 9/17**

The New Labour years 1997-2010

- K&K Chapter
- *Recommended:* Listen to “Third Way Politics” on Chicago Public Radio – August 6, 2003
http://www.chicagopublicradio.org/audio_library/od_03/raaug03.asp

How would you characterize Britain’s attitude towards European integration, in particular monetary integration?

The United Kingdom after New Labour

What are the impacts of the 2010 General Election?

Week Five: September 20th-24th: Italy

- **Paper One due 9/22**

Political Development 1990-2010

- K&K Chapter 16

What were some of the reasons behind the collapse of the old party system in the early 1990s?

What were some of the elements of Italian fascism and reasons for its downfall?

Why were Italy’s communists excluded from government for so long?

What has been the impact of the electoral reform of 1993?

Political Institutions and Parties

- K&K Chapters 18 and 19

How powerful is an Italian prime minister? What are the drawbacks of governing by coalition? Why was the post-1993 electoral system developed? What were its effects? What are the main parties on the Italian right and left?

Week Six: September 27th – October 1st: Germany

- **Progress Reports on Friday 10/1**
- **Quiz Three on 10/1**

Political Development and Institutions

- K&K Chapters 11 - 13

Contrast German political development in the 19th and early 20th centuries with that of the UK. What aspects of the modern German institutional structure and policymaking process reflect the emphasis on consensus building? Can you cite specific examples?

A Divided Germany, Political Economy

- K&K Chapter 12
- Goldman, Guido. (1974). The Allied Interregnum. In *The German Political System*. New York: Random House.

What were the main reasons behind democracy's success in West Germany after WWII? How is the relationship between state and market in Germany neither free market nor state dominant? How was the integration of the former GDR into the German economy after 1990 more difficult than expected?

Modern Germany and Present Challenges

- K&K Chapter 15
- Darnton, Robert. (1991). The Stasi Files. In *Berlin Journal, 1989-1990*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

What were the factors that contributed to the collapse of communism in East Germany? Why did German reunification happen so rapidly and peacefully? What are the main challenges facing Germany in its relationship with the U.S.?

Week Seven: October 4th-8th: France

Political Development

- K&K Chapter 6

*What were the long-term implications of the French revolution for democracy in France?
Contrast political development in France with that of the UK.*

Institutions and Parties

- K&K Chapters 8 and 9

*How has the power of the National Assembly been reduced in the Fifth Republic?
What are the policymaking roles of the President and Prime Minister of France?
What are the minor parties in France and have they attained support in recent years?*

Week Eight: October 11th-15th: France

- **MIDTERM on 10/11**
- **Drop Day is 10/15**

Present Challenges

- K&K Chapters 7 and 10

What was the role of the state in the postwar economic development of France? What is dirigisme?

Why did Mitterrand and the left reverse economic policy in the early 1980s?

Why are many French today convinced of the country's decline?

Week Nine: October 18th-22nd: Spain and Portugal

- **FALL BREAK 10/18**

Spain

- Curtis et al.: Ch. 4: "The Government and Politics of Spain" from Western European Government and Politics.

Portugal

- **Readings to be determined.**

Week Ten: October 25th-29th: Scandinavia

- Quiz Four on 10/29

The Nordic Social and Political Model

Norway, Sweden, Denmark (Finland and Iceland)

- http://www.etla.fi/files/1892_the_nordic_model_complete.pdf

Chapter one, Intro & Summary

Week Eleven: November 1st-5th: Belgium and Netherlands

- Paper Two due 11/3

Belgium

Netherlands

- Curtis et al: Chapter 7: The Government of the Netherlands

Week Twelve: November 8th-12th: Catch Up (If Necessary)

Week Thirteen: November 15th-19th: European Union

The Origins and Development of the European Union

- K&K, Chapters 31 and 32
- "EU-Questions and Answers"
- *Recommended: "The Ever Changing Union"*
- Poettering: The EU as a Global Player

What were the most powerful reasons for the creation of a supranational body in Western Europe?

What were the hopes of the founders of the EEC? What were the different visions for Europe at that time?

What has the legacy of Charles De Gaulle been for European integration?

What is the significance of the Maastricht Treaty (1992-1993)?

How does the EU today compare with the hopes of its founders?

Institutions and Politics of the European Union

- K&K, Chapter 33
- “EU Parliament”
- “Lisbon Treaty”

What are the most important bodies within the EU?

Which bodies seem more intergovernmental in nature and which seem more supranational?

Does the EU seem like a super-state in the making?

Week Fourteen: November 22nd-26th: European Union

- Paper Three due 11/22
- NO CLASS 11/24 or 11/26

Week Fifteen: November 29th-December 3rd:European Union

- Quiz Six on 12/3

Policies, Parties, and European Integration

- K&K, Chapter 34
- Seraty: “No Time for a Time-Out in Europe”

How do extreme and moderate elements of the European left and right view EU integration?

What kinds of conflicts arise within left and right parties on the subject of European integration?

Democracy and Identity in the EU

- Schmidt, Vivien: Chapter 4

Are European identities and territorial identities mutually exclusive?

Do your own identities display similar conflicts to those of European citizens?

Will a truly European identity ever develop in Europe?

Week Sixteen: December 6th-10th: Culture and Politics

Eurovision Song Contest

FINAL EXAM: Friday, December 17th, 2:50pm - 5:40pm