Government 284: Comparative Politics of Western Europe

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Office hours: Thursday, 2-4pm

Class meetings: MW, 2:40-4:00, Wyllys 115

Course overview

The leading nations of Western Europe – Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy – have developed vibrant economies and stable democracies that differ in important ways from the United States and from each other. This course explores the ability of European economies to withstand pressures of globalization and the capacity of European democracies to integrate political newcomers such as women and immigrants. We address questions such as: Where is Britain headed in the post-Blair era? With the limited ability of the French people to influence politics, should we still consider that country a democracy? Has Germany definitively overcome its Nazi past or does the strength of German democracy rely on a strong Germany economy? How can we make sense of the Italian “second republic”? Our readings and discussions over the course of the semester will shed light on these questions.

Course Requirements

25% First paper (October 23rd)
25% Second paper (November 25th)
35% Final
10% Participation
5% Images of Europe project

Course Readings

The readings for this course average around 150-200 pages per week. They contain conflicting interpretations of both theory and history. It is important that you read actively and critically. There is no single accepted “truth” in most of the topics we explore. Your job is to learn to identify, and then to compare and evaluate competing arguments. The readings for this course complement classroom discussion; neither can substitute for the other. You should do the reading on each topic before coming to class.
The following books are available for purchase:


Get the Kindle edition.

The other readings will be through the course Moodle.

**Participation**

This course will have a mixed lecture/discussion format. It is therefore critical that you come to class having done the readings and prepared to talk about the material. Because discussion is critical to the course, attendance is required. Students are allowed two absences. Absences exceeding two will result in a deduction of your participation grade. Attendance alone, however, does not guarantee a good participation grade. You must also actively contribute to class discussion and I will keep track of who has spoken. Smaller assignments, such as short answers to study questions or pop quizzes, will also count towards your participation grade. Frequent absences from class will result in your participation grade counting for significantly more than 10%.

**Course Policies**

Students are required to complete all readings and attend each class period prepared to talk about the readings. Extensions and incompletes will not be granted under any circumstances other than significant and verifiable personal emergencies (e.g., serious illness, death in family). **Late work will be penalized one full grade per day.**

All work that you submit must be your own. You must cite all sources used in completing the assignments using the standard form of citation that we will go over in class. If you are unsure how to use proper citation form, please ask me. Failure to use proper citation is plagiarism. You must adhere to all aspects of the honor code. Please write on each assignment: “No aid. No violation.” Please sign your name next to that statement.

**Images of Europe**

Once during the semester you will be required to contribute to our Images of Europe blog. We will assign days on the second day of class. Your blog entry should contain at least two images related to the subject matter of that day’s course material, as well as citation to where you found them. Students will present their images at the beginning of each class. Presentations should be between 5 and 10 minutes long.
Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

INTRODUCTION

Sept 7  Introduction

Sept 9  Did the United States Save Europe?


Sept 14  Why the United States and Europe are Different: Cross National Differences


THE POSTWAR SETTLEMENTS

Sept 16  Great Britain: Political System

Readings:  Hancock on Britain.


Sept 21  Great Britain: Political Economy


Sept 23  NO CLASS – Professor at conference
Sept 28  **France: Political System**  
Readings: Hancock on France.  


Sept 30  **France: Political Economy**  

Oct 5  **Germany: Political System**  
Readings: Hancock on Germany.  


Oct 7  **Germany: Unification and Its Aftermath**  


Oct 8  German Unity Event (4:30-6pm)

Oct 12  **Germany: Political Economy**  

Oct 14  Italy: Political System
Readings: Hancock on Italy.


Oct 19  Italy: Political Economy


**CONTEMPORARY POLITICS**

Oct 21  Britain: New Politics in an Old Democracy


**OCTOBER 23: FIRST PAPER DUE!**

Oct 26  FALL BREAK!

Oct 28  France: Identity in the French State


Nov 2

Italy: The Second Republic


EUROPEAN UNION

Nov 4

European Union: History

Readings: Hancock: Chapters 8.1-8.3

Nov 9

The Institutions of the European Union

Readings: To be decided

Nov 11

The Euro and the Financial Crisis

Readings: To be decided

ISSUES IN EUROPEAN POLITICS

Nov 16

Immigration: Citizenship Models


Nov 18  **Immigration: The Impact of Radical Right Parties**


Nov 23  **Paper Writing Workshop**

Nov 25  **SECOND PAPER DUE! Thanksgiving break!**

Nov 30  **Women and Work in the European Context**


Dec 2  **Gender Quotas in Europe**


Additional reading to be announced.

Dec 7  **Gay Rights and Gay Marriage in Europe**


Dec 9  

Conclusion

Reading:  TBA