

Political Science 341-1
(West) European Politics

Spring semester 2009

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MWF 10-11.50
MARB 346

Office hours: MW 1-1.50
or by appointment

Course description

This Comparative Politics course in (West) European Politics will explore contemporary political structure and issues in Europe. The subject matter varies from political cleavages, party families, parliamentary and electoral systems, and the issues that drive European politics. This is less a class about what a handful of selected countries do - how would one choose?

Given the focus on political and social issues, the material is of direct relevance to many issues more familiar and closer to home - the role of government, economics, social welfare, immigration, rights and equality, and security policy. We might even discuss the role of sports in European politics! In this sense, the discussion of European Politics provides a lens through which we may view our own activity, and a measure of alternatives.

Given that the class size is smaller than normal, the primary format for this course will be class discussion. The discussion is facilitated by your reading of the assignments prior to class. Think about the subject before class - informed discussion based on the readings and thoughtful consideration of the issues is encouraged. The course is organised around a number of key texts, so it is imperative that you read the assignment and come to class prepared to talk.

The class is also premised on your participation in identifying and discussing the main issues in the texts we will read. Read carefully, and come to class ready to make connections to other readings or to contemporary events, to synthesize points and to ask questions. Actively, appropriately, and consistently joining class discussions will push up your grade.

The particular objectives for this class are to inform students about the nature of government, politics and society in several of the countries of Northern Europe. By studying the ideas and information presented through the class, students can gain both a better understanding of the world around them and a greater capacity to affect the world for good. Furthermore, students should see the course not just as a means to acquire specialised knowledge, but also as an opportunity to develop important academic and life skills, including critical thinking and communication.

For more information on the learning outcome objectives of the Political Science department, visit <http://learningoutcomes.byu.edu>.

Reading

There are no required texts that you have to purchase for this class. All readings are journal articles or book chapters that will be made available on Blackboard

Assessment

1. Policy Proposal paper 50% (5 x 10%)

'Politics is the art of the possible' - *Otto von Bismark*

For this assignment, assume the role of an advisor to a European government. Your task is to prepare a policy proposal document. You will select **FIVE** of the various issues or topics under discussion during the semester. Each paper will follow the same format:

- At least one full page stating the nature of the problem or issue in hand. What I am looking for here is that you have a good grasp of the subject;
- At least three full pages considering the various options that you propose to your government. Consider, for example, the particular objectives of each proposal, the implications of policy, and so forth. What I am looking for here is that you have thought through the various alternatives in a prudent and realistic manner, and that your proposals are coherent;
- At least two full pages giving an actual country-specific example. What I am looking for here are details of what a European state is actually doing about the issue you have selected. If you speak a European language, by all means use their government websites for information. Don't forget to cite your sources.

The paper is to be double-spaced with page numbers. The due dates are given below:

Paper 1 is due Friday 8th May
Paper 2 is due Friday 15th May
Paper 3 is due Friday 22th May
Paper 4 is due Friday 29th May
Paper 5 is due Friday 5th June

2. Comparative paper 10%

For this assignment, you are to write a 5 page paper comparing American and European views on one issue that we have discussed during the course of the semester. This is not meant to be a 'we're better than them' paper, but an objective comparison of how the issue is addressed on both sides of the Pond.

The paper is to be double-spaced with page numbers. It is due Monday 15th June.

Note: For all the above assignments, you may either present me with hard-copy in class or via the PLSC secretaries, or you can e-mail it to me. So long as I get it, I don't really mind how, with the exception of pigeons, as I can't open my office window.

2. Final exam 20%

W 17 June, 11-12.50 PM.

The final exam is comprehensive. Two essay questions, each 10%. There is no early exam.

3. Participation 20%

I have found that a smaller class size has a much different dynamic than a 35+ class. We have greater opportunity for flexibility and discussion. I do not want to waste that opportunity. I don't take a roll of attendance, but absence will hurt a class of this small size. I expect students to engage in the discussions.

Answering direct questions is good, but they should be expansive and represent a good grasp of the material. I do not ask for students to sit there and listen; I ask that students sit there and talk, engage, and discuss. Expect to talk in every class and also expect to answer questions about the assigned readings every day. These discussions will allow you to express your opinions on the subject matter, and engage in what can be a lively and engaging discussion.

Your participation in these debates and discussions is graded, in terms of quality and quantity. Please read the assigned material and come prepared to contribute. Contributions can of course be made voluntarily, or I will ask you for your comment. If you miss class, are late, are unprepared for the discussion, or your comments do not meet the expectations, then your grade for class participation will drop accordingly.

To avoid disappointment at the end of the semester, if you have any questions about what I expect for a particular grade or assignment, or for feedback, please contact me. I would much rather that you ask before hand rather than complain after the grade.

Grades are not curved. The score of 94 and above is an A. Any score between a 90 and a 93 is an A-. The score of 87 and above is a B+, 83-86 is a B, and 80 to 82 is a B-. The same system is used for C's and D's. I will happily discuss your grades with you, but make a practice not to amend the grade once given. There is no extra credit. I don't want more work - just better work.

Expectations

You're all adults; you've paid for this class. As much as I will try to provide value for money and time, you will get out as much as you put into this class. I expect you to attend class. I expect you to have read some of the assigned reading prior to each class, and to be able to comment on it upon request. I do not intend this to be a formal lecture series – ask questions! If we take the whole class answering your questions about the topic for that day, and have an engaging class discussion, that's fine by me! I expect you to participate in class.

Honour code:

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honour Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Always provide references to the sources of your ideas and data, and never reprint large pieces of published material without using appropriate punctuation marks (quotation marks or, for more than a few lines of cited text, indentation). This applies to material you find on the Web as well as traditional published material. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation that each student will abide by all Honour Code standards. Please call the Honour Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment

Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to the professor. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB) or with the Honour Code Office (4440).

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (1520 WSC). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

Class Schedule:

#	DATE	SUBJECT
1	W 29 APR	Introduction to the class Selection of subject matter. Overview of assignments.
2	F 1 MAY	
3	M 4 MAY	
4	W 6 MAY	
5	F 8 MAY	
6	M 11 MAY	
7	W 13 MAY	
8	F 15 MAY	
9	M 18 MAY	
10	W 20 MAY	
11	F 22 MAY	
12	W 27 MAY	The role of sport in European politics UEFA Champions League Final!
13	F 29 MAY	
14	M 1 JUNE	
15	W 3 JUNE	
16	F 5 JUNE	
17	M 8 JUNE	
18	W 10 JUNE	
19	F 12 JUNE	
20	M 15 JUNE	Review