European politics has become fascinating…and, for many Americans, also plenty confusing. Are the U.S. and Europe blood brothers in confronting Islamic radicalism…or do Americans only have real friends in London? Are the U.S. and Europe bound together in the struggle to re-invent capitalism for the 21st century…or are we bitter commercial rivals who have less in common than we used to think? Are the U.S. and Europe two pillars of a pluralist cultural community deeply informed by Christianity and Judaism with Islam, Buddhism and other faiths influencing at the margins….or are Americans and Europeans actually from “different planets?”

This course takes on these questions (and more) first by backing up and looking at the entire post-World War II era and not just this week’s headlines. It introduces the politics of contemporary Europe by looking at selected countries. For much of the post-WWII era, it was widely assumed that “becoming modern” meant becoming like the United States. Yet Britain, France, Italy and Germany all developed prosperous economies and well-functioning democracies that differ in important ways from the US and from each other. What are these differences? Where do they come from? Why, if at all, do they matter? Are they at the heart of the recent and sometimes bitter debates between the US and some European countries? These are the broad themes of the course.

We spend two weeks learning about each of the four European democracies listed above. In addition, we will try to gain an understanding of the transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe. In the final session of most of the blocks, we will step back and consider some broader problem in European politics of which the nation just studied is a particularly good example: Britain (European ambivalence about the transatlantic relationship with the US), France (dealing with immigration), Italy (the decline of political parties), Germany (European political economy), Central and Eastern Europe (the transformation to democracy and capitalism), and the European Union (political legitimacy). These are our bi-weekly “fighting Thursdays” where you do some of your work in the identity of a European politician, and you have to argue with classmates who have been assigned a different identity.

I have identified two major objectives for this course. First, there is a “content” objective. I want you to come away from the semester with a new set of ideas about how capitalist democracies work and where and how they are struggling to adapt to new challenges. Second, I want to help you improve your ability to communicate your knowledge. Whatever you have already mastered when you enter the class, I hope – through written and oral assignments – to help you improve your skills. Please remember that political science 200 is a prerequisite for this course, and I expect that students will use the knowledge gained there in writing their papers. Students also may wish to familiarize themselves with BYU’s “learning outcomes” policy by consulting:
The requirements for the course are two papers of six to eight double-spaced pages, regular assessments (via email) of our “non-textbook” readings, an in-class presentation at midterm plus a take-home final exam. There also will be quizzes on most of the textbook readings. I will drop your lowest quiz score provided that you fill out the course evaluation. Grades are calculated as follows:

Two 6-8 page Papers (15% each) 30%*
Quizzes 20%
Final Exam 20%
Email 15%
Midterm Presentation 10%
Participation 5%

*As I will explain in class around the time of the first paper, I will actually use different writing rubrics depending on whether you choose to write what I would call “normal BYU papers” or decide instead to follow a process meant to improve your chances of producing a polished and truly persuasive essay. One path is considerably more demanding but also more likely to lead to better work.

No matter what route you take on the paper assignments, you will be challenged to think, write and argue about a range of political issues. In doing so, you will need to grapple with the arguments of others – those of your classmates and of the assigned readings. The class is premised on your participation in using the readings to discuss the political choices Europeans face. The course will be a mix of lecture and discussion. The reading will range from 50-150 pages per week. Generally, we will have one to three readings to discuss per class session, but when articles get very short (1-2 pages), I then assign more of them. I will hand out some basic materials which will help you think critically about the readings and learn to take reading notes that will help you organize the main points.

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. But don’t join in just for the points. Discussion is a way to clarify your understandings and to try out your conclusions with your classmates.

In all papers, the prose must ultimately, of course, be your own, and you should use standard social science composition form for attribution of ideas to others (i.e., Author: Page) plus a bibliography. The internet has made plagiarism easy, but it has also made catching plagiarism easy; please don’t compromise our standards of excellence and integrity by taking plagiarism lightly. While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite
sources, especially in this new age of the internet. Details about Academic Honesty can be found at the Honor Code site (honorcode.byu.edu).

**Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student’s own ideas** presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or literature review), but such material must support the student’s own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing. The substitution of another person’s work for the student’s own or the inclusion of another person’s work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the FHSS Writing Lab in 1051 JFSB or consult me or another faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper.

The papers are due as indicated in the syllabus, and no extensions will be given except in the case of exceptional personal circumstances. Students should also familiarize themselves with BYU’s fairly strict policy on incompletes, a policy that I do not control and cannot change.

Finally, the law prohibits sex discrimination in education. It covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to me about it or contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24 hours). Moreover, BYU reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

Reading and Email Assignments

The main text, Kesselman and Krieger’s *European Politics in Transition* (sixth edition, 2008), is available in the bookstore. The text thinks Gordon Brown is still Prime Minster of the UK, but we will work around that. Also required for the course is the paperback by David Edgar. I will give you instructions on how to purchase the additional readings. Finally, you should read a European newspaper regularly. There is a list of English-language sites at [http://www.world-newspapers.com/europe.html](http://www.world-newspapers.com/europe.html). You may be surprised to learn that, for example, there are about a half a dozen Czech sites available in English.
For the broadest English-language coverage, I recommend London’s *Financial Times*, though you may have to register for their site. Of course, if you read another European language, your options are broader still. A current set of links to European newspapers, including a majority in the vernacular languages but still with many in English, is at [http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/](http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/).

The following assignments are structured by weeks of the semester. At the end of each class meeting, I usually will give specific information about which readings are next in line, although the general rule is that the syllabus is arranged in chronological order. The syllabus is subject to change as needed. Before each class that does *not* have a textbook assignment, you should submit, via email, a short set of comments and questions about that day’s reading assignment. **However, if you have not actually done all of the reading, then you should not submit an email.** Such emails waste my time and yours, and it is usually quite obvious when students have not read carefully. 15% of your grade will be determined by these short (1-2 paragraph) submissions. They are due by 9:00 am on the day of class. Each student may miss two emails without penalty. **Remember, no emails are due on days we have textbook readings.**

**Weeks 1-3: (August 31 – September 16) Europe’s Hard Road**


(9/2) No class.


(9/14) Class Meets at **2:00 pm in 115 MCKB**, where we will listen to the lecture by Tora Aasland, Norwegian Minister of Research and Higher Education. Attendance is required. If you absolutely cannot rearrange your schedule to make this lecture, please let me know by September 7 (the prior week). We will arrange for an alternate lecture for you to attend.


**First paper assigned on September 16 (due September 27).**

Weeks 4-5: (September 21 – 30) Great Britain: America’s Ambivalent Partner


**First paper is due Monday, September 27 at 4 pm** at the political science secretaries’ office (745 SWKT).


Weeks 6-7: (October 5 – 14) France: Globalization and its Discontents

(10/5) *European Politics in Transition*, Part 3 (Quiz 2).

Weeks 8-9: (October 19 – 28) Germany: Going Broke?

(10/19) European Politics in Transition, Part 3 (Quiz 3).


Week 10: (November 2 – 4) The Debate on the Causes of and Responses to the Economic Crisis of 2008-2010. Readings TBA.

(11/2): In-class reports and presentations.

(11/4): In-class reports and presentations.
Weeks 11-12: (November 9 – 18) Italy: The Decline of Babies and Parties

(11/9) *European Politics in Transition*, Part 5 *(Quiz 5).*  


**Second paper topics handed out in class on Thursday, November 11** (due 4 pm. **Tuesday November 23**, which is a Friday for BYU purposes).


(11/18) Fighting Thursday: Do weak states make for bad politics?  

**Second paper is due Tuesday, November 23** (which is a Friday for BYU purposes) **at 4 pm** at the political science secretaries’ office (745 SWKT).


Week 13: (November 30 – December 2) The European Union: Shaky or Stable?

(11/30) *European Politics in Transition*, Part 8 *(Quiz 5).*  

(12/2) Fighting Thursday: Does the EU need more direct democracy?  
Week 14: (December 7 – 9) Eastern and Central Europe: Making Markets and Democracies

(12/7) *European Politics in Transition*, Part 7 (*Quiz 6*).


A take home final will be handed out the last day of class (December 9). It is due to the political science secretaries (745 SWKT) by 4 pm on Thursday, December 16. You may turn it in before this day and time if you wish.