

University of Houston Department of Political Science
POLS 3329: Nations of Europe
Spring 2009
Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 pm, PGH 343

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Course description

This course has three general objectives: 1) to introduce students to the institutions and actors which have shaped political development in Europe since World War II, 2) to provide context to help students better understand current events in European politics and society, and 3) to use Europe as a setting for applying concepts of comparative political analysis. Comprising more than 20 independent countries, Europe is a premier laboratory for studying variation in political institutions, processes, and policy outcomes. Accordingly, most of the course is devoted to cross-national comparison to highlight similarities and differences in political institutions and processes across European democracies.

Course requirements and evaluation

- Participate in class. Attendance in class two times a week is required. This class is small enough to have fruitful interaction between students and the instructor. *Your attendance and the quality of your participation in class discussion may raise or lower your final grade.*
- Do the assigned readings. Assigned readings should be completed *before* we discuss the topic in class. The general schedule of readings follows the calendar below. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule. Any changes will be announced at least one week in advance.
- Compare and contrast paper: Students will write a research paper comparing and contrasting some aspect of politics in TWO of the following European democracies: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. This will be an opportunity for students to explore some countries and issues in greater detail than we have time for in class. The paper will require original research with references. Your choice of topic is broad, though I recommend it relate to one of the subjects addressed in the course (see below schedule of topics). To ensure the appropriateness of the topic, a short paper proposal is due on **March 2**. Students also are encouraged to discuss paper topics with the instructor in advance. More details on the paper assignment will be given in class.
- Complete the exams. There will be 3 in-class exams, part short answer or multiple choice, and part essay. More discussion of exam content and format will be provided in the class sessions before the exam dates listed below. If you foresee problems with exam dates, contact me *before* the assigned dates. Make-up exams will not be offered except in extremely rare circumstances. If you have an *unanticipated* emergency that causes you to

miss the exam, contact me as soon as possible. If you foresee any absences for religious holy day observation, please contact the instructor in advance.

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Item	Date	Points	percentage
Exam 1	Monday, Feb 23	40	20
Paper proposal	Monday, March 2	10	5
Exam 2	Wednesday, April 1	50	25
Paper	Monday, Apr 27	50	25
Exam 3	Monday, May 11	50	25
<i>Totals</i>		<i>200</i>	<i>100</i>

Final letter grades will be calculated using the following percentages:

93-100% = A	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+
90-92 = A-	83-86 = B	73-76 = C	63-66 = D
	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D-

Other Course and University Policies

Academic honesty

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and observe the University of Houston's policies against cheating and plagiarism. The University's statement on academic honesty is available from the student handbook or at <http://www.uh.edu/dos/hdbk/acad/achonpol.html>.

Students with disabilities

The University of Houston is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities, including students who have learning disabilities, health impairments, psychiatric disabilities, and/or other disabilities. If you believe you have a disability which requires accommodation, please contact the Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD) at 713-743-5400-voice or 713-749-1527 (TTY)

Cell Phones and Laptops

Since they cause interruptions and distractions, cell phones should be turned off during class time. In particular, no cell phones may be accessible during exams. Text messaging and emailing/websurfing are not permitted in class. Such practices are extremely distracting to the professor and to your fellow students, so please be considerate in adhering to this policy.

Required texts

The following required text has been ordered for this course and is available for purchase at the University Bookstore:

Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver, and Peter Mair, *Representative Government in Modern Europe*, 4th. ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006).

In addition, there will be chapters assigned from other texts. These will be made available electronically from the course WebCT site – accessed via www.uh.edu/webct. First-time users of WebCT need to get their WebCT ID by using one of the following options:

1) Online at <http://www.uh.edu/webct> - click “New Users” to get a WebCT ID.

2) In person in Room 116 in the PGH building on the main campus, Monday-Friday, 8 am to 8 pm.

3) By phone at 713-743-1411 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you encounter problems with WebCT, please contact tech support through one of the channels listed above or send an email to support@uh.edu with a description of the problem.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Exams

Readings should be done in the order listed. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule, and it is the student's responsibility to be aware of these changes. Date changes will be announced well in advance during class.

Weeks 1 & 2: Jan 19 (MLK holiday), 21, 26 & 28

Topic: Introduction and Historical development of European political systems

Read: Mazower, *The Dark Continent*, Chapters 9-11, pp. 286-394 (WebCT)

Week 3: Feb 2 & 4

Topic: Constitutional Designs: Presidential, Parliamentary, or hybrid?

Read: Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch 2, pp. 24-55 and pp. 381-402 (part of ch. 12)

Week 4: Feb 9 & 11

Topic: Parliaments – what do they do?

Read: Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch 3, pp. 57-85

Week 5: Feb 16 & 18

Topic: The development of European Constitutions

Read: Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch 4, pp. 86-114

On or about Monday Feb 23 – Exam 1

Week 6: Feb 23 & 25

Topic: Bureaucracies and Levels of Government

Read: Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch 6, pp. 154-186

Monday March 2 – Paper proposal due

Week 7: Mar 2 & 4

Topic: Elections, Electoral Systems, and what happens after the election?

Read: Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch 11, pp. 340-80

Week 8: Mar 9 & 11

Topic: Political Parties - Organization

Read: Robert Michels, *Political Parties*, pp. 21-44 (WebCT)

Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch. 10, pp. 307-39

SPRING BREAK (March 16 & 18)

Week 9: Mar 23 & 25

Topic: Political Parties – Party Systems and Families

Read: Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch. 8, pp. 230-262

Week 10: Mar 30 & Apr 1
Topic: Social Cleavages and Electoral Change
Read: Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch 9, pp. 263-306

On or about Wednesday Apr 1 – Exam 2

Week 11: Apr 6 & 8
Topic: Public Opinion and Mass Politics
Read: Dalton, Russell J., *Citizen Politics* (4th ed, 2006), chapters 5 & 6, pp. 81-124 (WebCT)

Week 12: Apr 13 & 15
Topic: Interest organization
Read: Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch 14, pp. 441-464

Week 13: Apr 20 & 22
Topic: Policymaking and the Comparative Study of the Welfare State
Read: Pontusson, Jonas. *Inequality and Prosperity: Social Europe vs. Liberal America* (2005, Cornell University Press), chapter 7, pp. 142-181 (WebCT)

Monday, April 27 – final paper due

Weeks 14 & 15: Apr 27, 29, & May 1
Topic: Welfare State Retrenchment, and an introduction to European integration
Read: Pontusson, Jonas. *Inequality and Prosperity: Social Europe vs. Liberal America* (2005, Cornell University Press), chapter 8, pp. 182-203 (WebCT)
Gallagher, Laver, and Mair ch 5, pp. 115-53

Exam 3: Monday, May 11 at 2:00 pm in 343 PGH, as per scheduled by the university