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PSC 382.01: The European Union

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PSC 382.01: The European Union (MWF 3:10-4:00 p.m. in LA 205)

“The contribution which an organized and living Europe can bring to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations.”

– FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER ROBERT SCHUMAN, MAY 9, 1950

Course Description

While the EU is a highly successful experiment in international cooperation, it seems incapable of undertaking important economic reforms and defining its place in the world. This course invites students to examine the ideas and historical processes that established and lead to the EU and determine how the Union works, explore potential obstacles to “an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe,” and propose solutions to guide Europe towards a resolution of its collective action problems.

Course Philosophy

Learning is using information to gain an understanding of how things work and how to make them better which requires enhancing your ability to:

- ask the right questions and frame good problems,
- acquire information and evaluate sources of information,
- critically investigate and solve problems,
- make choices among different alternatives,
- explain concepts to others both verbally and in writing and,
- generalize to new situations.

Method of Instruction

To provide students the opportunity to practice these skills, this course will be conducted using a format known as problem-based learning (PBL). Students will be randomly assigned into *learning groups* of 3-4 students on the fifth day of class that will work on a series of problems related to European integration (See Appendix A). Before each new problem, a class discussion will be held on material related to the problem.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Explain how the EU’s three main legislative institutions function together.
- Characterize challenges to European integration as collective action problems.
- Analyze European integration using different conceptual approaches.
- Propose solutions to Europe’s collective action problems.
- Evaluate and select competing solutions to Europe’s collective action problems.
- Explain key concepts to others both verbally and in writing
- Generalize conceptual knowledge to new situations.
- Evaluate sources of information according to high scholarly standards.

Required Materials

There is one *required* textbook available for purchase at the UC Bookstore for \$9.95:

Pinder, John, and Simon Usherwood. 2007. *The European Union: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0199233977.

All additional course material will be available in electronic form through Blackboard.

Student Responsibilities

1. Students have the responsibility to attend class regularly and complete all assigned readings before coming to class.
2. Students have the responsibility to inform the instructor beforehand of any reasons why they are unable to attend class or complete an assignment on time.
3. Students have the responsibility to complete all assignments by the deadline given by the instructor.
4. Students have the responsibility to complete course requirements by the end of the semester. University policy on incompletes will be adhered to strictly.

Academic Misconduct Policy

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at: <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

Statement On Disabilities:

I strongly encourage students with documented disabilities to discuss with me appropriate accommodations. Because I am not qualified to make an assessment of your need for an accommodation or what accommodations are needed, if you have a disability and feel you need accommodations in this course please present me with a letter from Disability Services for Students (DSS), Lommasson Center 154 (243-2243), indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested accommodations.

Course Requirements

Participation

Students will be randomly selected to respond to and discuss “critical questions” based on each reading assignment. The questions are available on Blackboard. Responses will be evaluated on a “good faith” basis. For every two “bad faith” responses, including those due to absence, a student’s course grade will be reduced by one letter grade.

Learning Groups

Students will be randomly assigned into learning groups to work on a series of ten problems related to environmental politics. For each problem, groups will produce their own original, written solution. See Appendix A for more information.

Final Paper

Students will be individually assessed on their achievement of course objectives by writing a final paper offering a comprehensive solution to the political, economic, and social problems causing Europe’s existential crisis. See Appendix B for more details.

Grading

Course grades will be based on the quality of work in the learning groups and on the final paper as adjusted by peer evaluations and participation using the following table:

Final Paper Grade	Learning Group Average	Course Grade
A	A	A
	B	A-
	C	B
	D	C-
B	A	B+
	B	B
	C	B-
	D	D+
C	A	B
	B	C+
	C	C
	D	D+
D	A	C
	B	C-
	C	D+
	D	D

A “F” will be assigned for the course grade for failing work in any portion of the course.

Course Schedule

I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule as the semester develops.

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
Jan 26	State of Nature Simulation; Syllabus	
Jan 28	A Brief History of the EU	Pinder, Chapters 1-2
Jan 30	How the EU is Governed	Pinder, Chapter 3

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Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
Feb 2	What the EU Does: Economic Policy	Pinder, Chapters 4-5
Feb 4	What the EU Does: Non-Economic Policy	Pinder, Chapters 6-7
Feb 6	What the EU Does: Foreign Policy	Pinder, Chapters 8-9
Feb 9	Intro to Problem Solving; Policy Memos	
Feb 11	Practice Problem: Group Work	
Feb 13	Identity Crisis	Ash (2007)
Feb 18	Problem 1: A Preamble For Europe	(Library Session)
Feb 20	Problem 1: A Preamble For Europe	
Feb 23	Problem 2: Enlargement	Commission (2008)
Feb 25-27	Problem 2: Much Ado About Copenhagen	
Mar 2	Turkey	Gordon and Taspinar (2006)
Mar 4-6	Problem 3: In or Out?	
Mar 9	Policy Gridlock	Tsebelis (1995)
Mar 11-13	Problem 4: Is EU Policy Gridlock Institutional or Ideological?	
Mar 16	Implementation Deficit	Commission (2008)
Mar 18-20	Problem 5: Is 1% Good Enough?	
Mar 23	Lack of Popular Legitimacy	TNS Opinion & Social (2008)
Mar 25-27	Problem 6: Avoiding the Pitchforks	
Apr 6	Democratic Deficit	Follesdal and Hix, 2006
Apr 8-10	Problem 7: Defending the Democratic Deficit	
Apr 13	Lisbon Treaty	TBD
Apr 15-17	Problem 8: What Part of "No" Don't You Understand	
Apr 20	Foreign Policy	TBD
Apr 22-24	Problem 9: A Common Foreign Policy Towards Russia	
Apr 27	The 2009 European Parliament Elections	Hix, 2008, Chapter 9
Apr 29-May 1	Problem 10: The 2009 Commission President Contest (A Scenario)	
May 4	The European Union in the World	Pinder, Chapter 10
May 6	What's Next?	TBD
May 8	Instructor Evaluations; Final Papers Due	

Appendix A: Learning Groups and Problem-Based Learning

This course is organized around small learning groups of 3-4 randomly assigned students who will work on a series of ten problems related to European integration. For each problem, groups will produce their own original, written solution to the problem as a policy memo submitted through Blackboard. This appendix provides further details about the process students will follow to offer a resolution for the ten problems.

An Introduction to Problem Solving

In this course, problem-solving is defined as a six-step process. Students will follow it as they produce their weekly solutions.

Step 1: Identify and Select the Problem

You have to determine what the problem you have to solve is and write it down in a workable format. Some problems are too big and have to be broken into pieces.

Task: Write a problem statement.

Step 2: Analyze the Problem

Once defined, you have to analyze the problem to see what the root cause is. Analyzing means to gather information. If you do not have enough information, figure out what you need to know (i.e. **learning issues**) and research it. You must also establish a set of **criteria** that are appropriate to the problem and the situation that you can use to evaluate solutions. Remember to revise and edit your problem statement from Step 1 as new information is discovered and "old" information is discarded.

Tasks: Identify & resolve learning issues. Establish criteria.

Step 3: Generate Potential Solutions

Once analyzed, you have to generate as many solutions to the problem as possible. Focus on generating, not on evaluating.

Task: Generate a list of possible solutions.

Step 4: Select the Solution

Once generated, you have to select the best solution using your **criteria**. Order your solutions from strongest to weakest and investigate the best one(s). If there is not enough information to make a judgement or to show a solution is viable, determine what you need to know (i.e. **learning issues**) and research it.

Task: Identify & resolve learning issues. Order possible solutions. Choose the best.

If your research supports your preferred solution, go to step 5. If not, go back to step 3.

The Six-Step Problem-Solving Process

Step 1.

Identify and Select the Problem

Step 2.

Analyze the Problem

Step 3.

Generate Potential Solutions

Step 4.

Select and Plan the Solution

Step 5.

Present the Solution

Step 6.

Evaluate your Performance

Step 5: Present the Solution

A presentation of your solution includes both the process and the outcome. State your solution clearly and support it with arguments and evidence. Bring attention to the problem defined in step one and offer your solution to the problem from step 4.

Task: Write up your solution in a policy memo and submit it.

Step 6: Review your performance

When you get an evaluation of your solution, review it to see what was done well and what mistakes were made. Discuss them to plan improvements on the next problem.

Task: Review the evaluation of your solution.

Policy Memo Guidelines

Policy memos must be submitted as a PDF through Blackboard and are due one week after students receive the problem. See Blackboard for exact deadlines. Each memo will be about two pages in length plus references and follow a specific template, available on Blackboard. Memos may not exceed this length. References will be formatted using the parenthetical citation format of the Turabian writers manual, 7th Ed.

Solution Evaluation

Each policy memo will be evaluated using a scoring rubric available on Blackboard and assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F. The final grade for your learning group will be calculated by averaging all ten grades using the traditional 4 point scale (i.e., A = 4, B = 3, etc.). Averages will be rounded up or down and then converted back to a letter grade using the same scale. These letter grades may then be modified by peer evaluations.

Group Peer Evaluation

Each group member will evaluate the group's other members (but not themselves) by assigning a certain number of "shares" in the group's work via confidential balloting on the last day of class. A fair contribution to the group's efforts is worth two shares. Students will have an extra share to distribute to the group's MVP. Any additional shares awarded above the two share average must come at the expense of other group members serving as a deterrent for free riding.

A student's final learning group grade will be raised or lowered if their average shares deviates from the two share average by more than half a share. The changes are listed in the table to the right. Single outlying scores are discarded in the calculation of mean shares awarded to limit the impact of individual personality clashes. Because of the MVP share, this system raises grades more often than it lowers them. **Students who do not complete a valid peer evaluation will receive an F for the learning group portion of their grade.**

Average Shares	Grade Modification
< 0.5	F
< 1.5	-1 Letter Grade
> 2.5	+1 Letter Grade
> 3.5	+2 Letter Grades

Appendix B: Final Research Paper

To assess individual achievement of course objectives, students will write a final paper due the last day of class (Friday, May 8, 2009). **Late papers will not be accepted.**

Task

You have been asked by the President of the European Commission to prepare a report on the state of European integration and to formulate an appropriate policy response for the appropriate domestic and international European actors (e.g., political parties, interest groups, parliaments, EU institutions, etc.) to overcome the challenges you have identified in your report.

Paper Guidelines

The paper should be written as a long-form policy memo. Its length will be determined by your definition of the problem and the specific solutions you propose. It must conform to the parenthetical citations—reference list source citation and paper formatting guidelines of the 7th edition of the Turabian writers manual.

Sources

Students should consult a diverse cross-section of sources on environmental politics including books, peer-reviewed journals, and other appropriate sources.

Project Evaluation

Your papers will be evaluated using a scoring rubric available on Blackboard and assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F.

Note to students taking PSC 300/400

You will submit a draft of your paper via email to eric.hines@umontana.edu as a Microsoft Word document one month before the final paper deadline date (Friday, April 10, 2009 by 5:00 p.m.). I will return your paper to you within two weeks with suggestions about revisions you should make for the final draft. You must submit both the original draft with my comments and your final draft by the final paper deadline.