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Spring 2-1-2006

PSC 321H.01: Politics of Western Europe

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PSC 321H: Politics of Western Europe

Instructor: Eric H. Hines

Time: MWF 9:10-10:00 AM

Place: Liberal Arts 337

E-mail: eric.hines@umontana.edu

Course website: Blackboard

Office Hours: By appointment.

Description

Nation-states in Western Europe are characterized by several common features including free and open elections, complex economies, and extensive social welfare programs. However, the ways representatives are chosen, the dimensions of political competition, the organization and scope of political decision-making, and the role government plays in managing the economy vary substantially from country to country. This course applies some of the basic concepts of comparative political science to the political systems of Western Europe to understand and explain this variation. It is NOT an in-depth survey course of a small set of "important" European countries.

The course is divided into three sections. In Section I, we will focus on the historical development of European political systems since the end of World War II including the politics of the postwar settlement. In Section 2, we will focus on the institutions of governance with an emphasis on executive-legislative relations, electoral systems, and political parties. In Section 3, we will turn to an examination of issues in contemporary European politics including the European Union, the growth of Islam, and the challenges of democratic representation.

Class Objectives

This course is intended to provide students with an ability to conceptualize, compare, evaluate, explain and ultimately understand the politics of contemporary Europe. Specifically, after completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Conceptualize and understand the concept of "Europe" and "European."
2. Use comparative analysis to explain political phenomena like the number of parties in a party system, the strength of government coalitions, and the level of state intervention in the economy.
3. Evaluate the comparative effectiveness of democratic institutions.
4. Understand the motivations and constraints of European political actors.

Class Organization

While the primary mechanism of instruction in this course will be lectures, considerable emphasis will be placed on students learning from each other. In some cases this will consist of team activities like debates and simulations. At other times, since the course's size precludes seminar-style discussions, students will be called upon to participate in ad hoc group discussions or other activities. The specifics of these activities are discussed below.

One-Minute Papers

At the end of most class periods students will be asked to provide "immediate feedback" using a technique called a "one-minute paper." Students will generally be asked to answer two questions: "What major conclusions did you draw?" and "What questions remain in your mind?" These written responses serve as a way of evaluating the overall progress of the class, provide me with important feedback as to the effectiveness of my teaching, and give students an opportunity to synthesize the major ideas of a class while they are still fresh in their minds.

"Fishbowl"

During a "fishbowl", up to eight students will be randomly selected to form a discussion panel that will sit at the front of the room. The panel will be presented with a specific topic to discuss, usually from the week's readings. I will moderate the discussion to keep it on topic and to ensure that all the panelists are presented with the opportunity to participate. Students not selected for the fishbowl will observe and take notes on the discussion. Non-panelists will be asked to hand in an extended version of a one-minute paper responding to the discussion. Students selected for the fishbowl who are not in attendance will receive no credit.

Teams

Debates and the German election simulation will be organized around six teams established the first week of class. Each team will receive a party label representing a European party families operating in Germany. Your team will be responsible for upholding a position during two class debates, researching and presenting a party profile/platform for your party in the German election simulation, and representing the party during the simulation of the post-election process. Details on each of these assignments will be provided on the course website.

Debates

After teams are assigned, students will be presented with a list of six debate topics. Teams will select the debates and the sides of the topic they are most interested in arguing. Each team will select a leader to organize and outline strategy *and who will ensure that all members participate on an equal basis*. Teams are responsible for researching and persuasively presenting evidence supporting their position on the issue during a classroom debate. I expect evidence from diverse sources, *including current political science research*.

German Election Simulation

This simulation will give you first-hand experience with a PR electoral system and the process of forming a government coalition in a multi-party system. It will also reinforce many of the basic concepts needed to understand European politics from a comparative perspective. Detailed instructions on the simulation will be distributed in class and on the course website.

Exams

Students will take the equivalent of an exam at the end of the each section. The first exam will be two short essays. For the second section, students will be given a number of homework assignments testing them on particular concepts and methods of comparative analysis. These assignments combined with the German election simulation will constitute the exam for the second section. A third exam, featuring 2-3 essays and some short answer questions, will be held during finals weeks. This exam will primarily focus on the third section, but will have one comprehensive essay.

Final Paper

Students will be asked to write a 6-8 page analysis on a political phenomena of their choice contingent on instructor approval. The paper will require students to apply one of the comparative methods discussed in the course to their phenomena in order to provide an explanation for variation across Western Europe. The paper will require substantial library research. The full guidelines for the final paper will be distributed in class.

Grades

Debates: 15% (7.5% for each debate)

Homework: 10%

Exam 1: 10%

German Election Simulation: 15% (5% participation, 10% reaction paper)

Exam 3: 15%

Final Paper: 20%

Participation: 15% (including "fishbowl")

Required Texts:

Gallagher, Michael, Michael Laver, & Peter Mair. 2006. *Representative Government in Modern Europe*. New York: McGraw Hill. ISBN: 007297706X

Hitchcock, William. 2004. *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent 1945 to the Present*. New York: Anchor Books. ISBN: 0385497997

Reid, T.R. 2004. *The United States of Europe: The New Superpower and the End of American Supremacy*. New York: Penguin Books. ISBN: 0143036084

Schedule

The following schedule should be treated as tentative. We may take more or less time to cover the material.

Week 1: January 23-27

Monday: *Introduction.*

Wednesday: *Primer on Political Analysis. Weber's Verstehen and Erklärung. Abduction, induction and deduction. Mill's methods for identifying causes. Other Methods of Comparative analysis.*

Gallagher et al., pp. 1-23 (Chapter 1).

Hitchcock, pp. 1-7 (Introduction).

Reid, pp. 1-6 (Prologue)

Friday: Meet in Student Learning Center, Mansfield Library (MLIB 283)

Section I: Historical Development of European Political Systems

Week 2: January 30-February 3

Monday: *Introduction to the Modern State.*

Wednesday: *Introduction to the History of Modern Europe.*

Hitchcock, pp. 9-97, 127-161 (Chapters 1-3, 5).

Friday: *Politics of the Postwar Settlement.*

Week 3: February 6-10

Monday: *The End of Empire. Charles de Gaulle.*

Hitchcock, 221-241 (Chapter 8)

Wednesday: *Prosperity and its Discontents. Democratization of Southern Europe.*

Hitchcock, 243-287 (Chapters 9 and 10)

Friday: *Margaret Thatcher.*

Hitchcock, 311-341 (Chapter 12)

Section II: Institutions and Their Effects

Week 4: February 13-17

Monday, February 13, 2006: Exam 1

Wednesday: *Parliamentary, presidential, semi-presidential regimes. Executives. Parliaments.*

Gallagher, pp. 24-85 (chapter 2 & 3)

Friday: *Parliaments.*

Linz, Juan J. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy* 1:51-69

Week 5: February 20-24

Monday: *Making and Breaking Governments.*

Gallagher, pp. 381-421 (Chapter 12).

Wednesday: *Formal Models and Government Formation*

Laver, Michael and Kenneth Shepsle. 1996. *Making and Breaking Governments: Cabinets and Legislatures in Parliamentary Democracies.* New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 43-78 (chapters 3-4).

Friday: Debate 1

Week 6: February 27-March 3**Monday & Wednesday:** *Elections and Electoral Systems*

Gallagher, pp. 340-421 (Chapter 11).

Friday: Debate 2**Week 7: March 6-10****Monday:** *Parties and party families. Social cleavages, freezing hypothesis and electoral change.*

Gallagher, 230-306 (Chapters 8-9).

Wednesday: *Extreme right and green parties.*Müller-Rommel, Ferdinand. 1998. "Explaining the Electoral Success of Green Parties." *Environmental Politics* 7(4): 145-154.**Friday: Debate 3****Week 8: March 13-17****Monday:** *Veto Players: The Judiciary*

Gallagher, pp. 86-114 (Chapter 4).

Wednesday: *Veto Players: Multi-level Governance*

Gallagher, pp. 154-185 (Chapter 6).

Friday: *Does Representation Matter?*

Gallagher, pp. 422-440 (Chapter 13).

Week 9: March 20-24*German Election and Government Formation Simulation***Week 10: March 27-31 (Spring Break)****Section III: The EU and Contemporary European Politics****Week 11: April 3-7****Monday:** *The European Union: Origins*

Hitchcock, pp. 435-464 (Chapter 16).

Reid, pp. 26-62 (Chapter 2).

Wednesday & Friday: *The European Union: Institutions*

Gallagher, pp. 115-150 (Chapter 5).

Reid, pp. 272-287 (Appendix II)

Week 12: April 10-14

Monday: *The European Union: Does Europe have a "Democratic Deficit"*

Moravcsik, Andrew. 2002. "In Defense of the 'Democratic Deficit': Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union". *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40(4): 603-624

David, Dominique, Cristina Cuadra, and Rudi Miel. 2002. *Troubled Waters*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Wednesday: *The European Union: Voting Behavior and the Constitution for Europe*

Hines, Eric. 2006. *Voting Correctly in European Elections*. Dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Iowa. (Selections TBD)

Friday: Debate 4

Week 13: April 17-21

Monday: *Europe in the Global Economy*

Reid, pp. 63-143 (Chapters 3-5)

Wednesday: *Challenges to the European Social Model*

Reid, pp. 143-176 (Chapter 6)

Friday: Debate 5

Week 14: April 24-28

Monday: *What does it mean to be a European?*

Hitchcock, pp. 410-434. (Chapter 15).

Reid, pp. 197-226 (Chapter 8)

Wednesday: *Europe and Islam*

Taspinar, Omar. 2003. "Europe's Muslim Street". *Foreign Policy* (March/April): 76-77.

Savage, Timothy M. 2004. "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing" *Washington Quarterly* 27 (3): 25-50.

Friday: Final Papers Due.

Week 15: May 1-5

Monday: *Europe as a new superpower? Power and Principle in Modern Europe.*

Reid, pp. 7-25, 227-244 (Chapters 1& 9)

Wednesday: *Europe as a new superpower? Bones of Bosnia.*

Hitchcock, pp. 380-409. (Chapter 14).

Reid, 177-196 (Chapters 7)

Friday: Debate 6

Week 16: May 8-12 (Final exam scheduled for Wed., May 10 from 10:10 to 12:10pm.)