

Political Science 250: European Politics
DePaul University
Winter 2020
Mondays 6:00-9:15 PM
Arts & Letters 313

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Course Overview and Objectives

This course examines the contemporary politics of the major states of Europe. As part of the comparative politics curriculum, we will examine the major political institutions, processes, and policy outcomes of various European states. Additionally, the course covers some of the major controversies and challenges facing Europe today, including debates over the European Union, immigration, right-wing populism, and the legacy of Communism in East-Central Europe. We will examine specific states within the context of each topic in order to develop substantive knowledge, apply evidence to theoretical arguments, and examine various political processes and their outcomes.

The course is organized into two major sections:

- “Values, Structures, and Outcomes:” We will seek to understand how the arrangement of political institutions in different European states promote or hinder various social, economic, and political goals—and what the consequences and tradeoffs of these arrangements have been.
- “Europe Pulling in Two Directions:” While the modern nation-state developed in Europe, it now faces challenges from within pushing towards fragmentation, including resurgent regional nationalist movements and the rise of immigration and multiculturalism. At the same time, the process of European integration has weakened the powers of the sovereign nation-state “from above.”

As part of the Political Science curriculum and a “Social, Cultural, and Behavioral Inquiry” offering, this course has the following learning objectives:

1. Students will enhance their understanding of *power* by describing and evaluating how it is allocated in the political systems of major Western European states.
2. Students will develop their ability to describe and evaluate different forms of *democracy* and how it affects various political outcomes.
3. Students will improve their understanding of *diversity* and *identity* by examining how European states cope with the challenges of multi-national societies, immigration, and nationalism.
4. Students will develop their ability to articulate and evaluate arguments based on theory and evidence in writing.

Course Organization

As with most Political Science courses, your success requires that you be prepared to read assigned material, conduct individual research, and regularly attend class. Readings will come from a variety of sources—academic and popular. You are also required to watch two films outside of class. Class meetings will include a mixture of lecture, discussion, small-group work, quizzes, and an in-class simulation. Note also that several class meetings include a research assignment to learn about recent events in Europe.

NOTE: Readings and class meetings are complements, not substitutes. In practice, this means that we will not always discuss assigned readings directly in class (though we often will). I am always happy to answer questions at the start of class, in office hours, or via email about the readings.

Grading

Your grade will be determined by your performance on the following assignments:

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|------------------------|-----|
| In-Class Activities | 15% |
| Simulation Performance | 15% |
| Country Presentation | 15% |
| Research Paper | 25% |
| Final Exam | 30% |

In-Class Activities: Most class meetings will include an in-class activity, which could be a quiz or short individual or small-group writing assignment. These are designed both to assess your understanding of course concepts and to stimulate your critical thinking about course concepts. There are no make-up assignments for these in-class activities.

Simulation Performance: Over the course of several class meetings, we will conduct a simulation of party politics in a multiparty parliamentary system typical of many European states. Students will participate in a simulation of a parliamentary election and government formation process. Students will be given a background assignment, which they must use to determine the party that they should join. Once assembled, the several parties will work individually outside of class and collectively during class to design strategies for campaigning, debating, negotiating, and voting within the parliamentary context. Students are expected to be present for each simulation activity, to participate constructively in all simulation activities, and to contribute equally to their group's work. Student grades will be determined by an evaluation of each student's participation during the in-class simulation activities, a report submitted by each student on the involvement of fellow party members, and three memos that students will submit prior to specific simulation activities. More details on the simulation will be provided in a separate handout.

Country Presentation: Each student will deliver an in-class presentation about the political system of a European state. This presentation of 10-12 minutes should address the following questions:

- What are the major constitutional features of the political system? Is it presidential or parliamentary, does it have a bicameral or unicameral legislature, is it federal or unitary, and what type of electoral system does it have?
- Describe the party and electoral politics. What are the major parties? What are the normal patterns of government—are there single-party or coalition governments?
- What are the major political issues facing the state's politics currently?
- Overall evaluation: is the political system more majoritarian or consensus in nature?

Research Paper: Each student will write a research paper of 8-10 pages that describes and analyzes a European political system. You may write your paper on the same state for which you did your country presentation, or you may choose to write about another state. You may NOT write your paper on the following states: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, or the United Kingdom. More details on the requirements for this assignment are available at the end of the syllabus.

NOTE: If you are taking this course to fulfill an Irish Studies credit, then you must write the paper on Ireland. If you are taking this course to fulfill a German Studies credit, then you must write the paper on Austria. (This is true regardless of which country you presented).

Final Exam: There will be a take-home final exam distributed on the final day of class. The exam will be essay-based and will ask students to demonstrate knowledge of major concepts, arguments, and themes examined during the quarter.

Grading Scale: Letter grades for the course will be determined accordingly: A (94-100), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83), C+ (77-79), C (74-76), C- (70-73), D+ (67-69), D (64-66), D- (60-63), F (59 and below). Any student taking the course Pass/Fail must receive a 74 or higher to pass.

Notes:

1. I try to balance the desire for detailed feedback with the need to return graded assignments promptly. I am always happy to provide further feedback via email or during office hours.
2. The deadline for all assignments is the start of class! This is a strict, no-exceptions, deadline. As you should already be present in the classroom by the start of class, I do not allow any exceptions for last-minute emergencies with uploading the assignment to D2L. Late assignments are penalized a minimum of 10 points for each 24 hours past the deadline.

Readings

The required readings for this course consist of a textbook along with a selection of articles and book chapters, which are available through the Library's E-Reserve system. You should read these carefully prior to the class date for which they are assigned and come to class prepared to discuss them. Note that some readings are long and/or complex; take the time to read each assignment carefully and thoughtfully. The required textbook for the course is:

- Tim Bale. 2017. *European Politics: A Comparative Introduction*, 4th edition. London: Palgrave

Policies and Procedures

Instructor Contact: I hold regular weekly office hours at the times listed at the top of the first page of the syllabus. Please drop by at any time during these hours; you do not need to make an appointment or let me know in advance. If you cannot drop by during office hours, I am happy to schedule another time that works for both of us. I hope that you will consider coming by at least once during the quarter; I enjoy talking to students and want to help each of you do well in this course. You are urged to drop by *as soon as possible* if you have questions or concerns about course material, your performance, my expectations, etc. However, I also encourage students to drop by just to discuss interests, course options, etc.

Excused Absences: If a serious illness or personal emergency causes you to miss an extended amount of class or to be unable to complete assignments on time, you should notify the Dean of Students Office and ask for them to send documentation to me. The Dean of Students Office is located in Student Center Suite 307 (LPC) or DePaul Center Suite 11001 (Loop). Understand that I will not grant extensions or exceptions to course policies without documentation from the Dean of Students.

Desire2Learn: I use D2L as a means to post announcements, readings, notes, and other course materials (including a back-up copy of this syllabus). You will also use D2L for submitting memos, papers, and reviews. You should plan on accessing D2L regularly (at least once between each class meeting). Because I will occasionally use D2L to send mass emails to the class, you should make sure that the system has your correct email address and that you check it regularly.

Disabilities: Students who believe that they need accommodations for a disability should contact me privately as early as possible during the quarter. I take these concerns seriously and will do what I can according to university policy to help. All discussions will remain confidential. In order to receive the most appropriate accommodations, you must also contact either the Plus Program (for LD, AD/HD) or the Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677 (Student Center #370).

Academic Integrity: In academia, ideas are everything, so presenting the words or ideas of others as your own is theft. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will result *at a minimum* in a grade of 0 on the assignment and a report to the Academic Affairs Office. ***Academic dishonesty on any assignment worth 20% or more of the final grade will result in a failing grade for the course, regardless of student performance on other assignments.***

assignments! Any work that you submit must be your own, and you must cite the sources of ideas or words that are not your own. If you have doubt about what constitutes a violation, you should consult the *Code of Student Responsibility* in the Student Handbook and/or consult me. In any case, ignorance is not an excuse. Be aware of the following: making slight changes to the wording of another person's work without citing it is plagiarism; rules about plagiarism apply both to published and unpublished works; and submitting work that you have prepared for another course at DePaul or elsewhere in whole or part constitutes cheating.

Decorum: As one of many students enrolled in this course, you have a shared responsibility to foster a constructive learning environment and to refrain from behavior that would hinder the ability of those around you to learn. These guidelines are for your own good, but they are also a matter of you having a broader obligation to your classmates. Students who fail to adhere to these expectations will have points deducted from their grade. At a minimum, you are expected to:

- Arrive on time, stay in class until the end, and wait until the end of class to put away materials
- Turn off the ringer on your mobile phone and put it away for the duration of class
- Refrain from eating food, talking, reading the paper, etc
- Refrain from disrespectful or demeaning behavior towards your classmates. Disagreements and debates are part of a healthy academic environment, but keep the focus on an open and honest exchange of ideas. This is equally true in the classroom and online.

****You may not use laptops, tablet computers, or smart phones during class without instructor permission****

This policy is in place for two reasons. First, study after study shows that “multi-tasking” substantially reduces cognitive performance. In other words, you are not capable of thinking or learning properly if you are distracted. Second, and more importantly, the classroom is a shared learning environment in which you play a crucial role. Anything that detracts from that environment harms it for everyone else in the class—and makes it less likely that we will have a productive class meeting.

I will lower your final course grade by up to two “fractions” (i.e., from a B+ to B-) if you do not observe these guidelines.

Late Assignments: Due dates for assignments are firm, and they are there to provide a fair environment for all students. If you fail to complete the assignment by then, you will receive a 0. Late assignments will be penalized a minimum of 10 points (i.e., one letter grade) for each 24 hours that it is late. **Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be submitted on D2L by the start of class on the date noted in the course schedule!**

Student Responsibility: It is your responsibility as a student to be aware of and understand all requirements, due dates, policies, and announcements that I provide in this syllabus, announce in class, or post on D2L—whether you were in attendance on a given day (including the first day of class!) or not. **Understand that all course requirements, policies, and due dates listed in this syllabus apply to you universally whether I specifically mention it to you or not!** Finally, please do not wait until the last minute to deal with any concerns or problems with the course. Talk to me early!

Schedule of Classes

I. Values, Structures, and Outcomes

January 6: The Development of European Democracies

- Bale, Chapter 1
- Arend Lijphart. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy*, 2nd edition. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pages 9-20, 30-40. [E-Reserves]

January 13: Executive-Legislative Relations

- Bale, Chapter 4 & 5
- Introduction to Simulation (distributed in class today)

January 20: No Class—Martin Luther King Day

January 27: Elections & Electoral Systems

- Bale, Chapter 6
- **Simulation Memo #1 due today on D2L**

February 3: The Post-Communist Legacy

- *Good Bye Lenin!* Film (2003), directed by Wolfgang Becker. In German, with English subtitles. [Available for viewing at Library]

February 10: The Welfare State in the Era of Globalization

- Bale, Chapter 9
- Robert Kuttner. 2008. “The Copenhagen Consensus.” *Foreign Affairs* 87 (2): 78-94. [E-Reserves]
- **Simulation Memo #2 due today in D2L Group Locker**

II. Europe Pulling in Two Directions

February 17: Immigration & Identity

- Bale, Chapter 10
- *The Class (Entre les Murs)*. 2008. Directed by Laurent Cantet. In French, with English subtitles. [Available for viewing at library]
- Maximilian Popp, Özlem Gezer, & Christoph Scheurmann. “At Home in a Foreign Country.” *Der Spiegel Online*, November 2, 2011. Available at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/at-home-in-a-foreign-country-german-turks-struggle-to-find-their-identity-a-795299.html> [E-Reserves]
- George Packer. “The Other France: Are the Suburbs of Paris Incubators of Terrorism?” *The New Yorker*. August 31, 2015. Available at: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/31/the-other-france> (E-Reserves)

February 24: Regional Nationalism & Separatism

- Bale, Chapter 2
- **Simulation Memo #3 due today in D2L Group Locker**

March 2: The European Union

- Bale, Chapter 11
- The Schuman Declaration. Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en

- Margaret Thatcher. "Speech to the College of Europe." Available at: <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107332>

March 9: Right-Wing Populism & Democratic Reversal?

- **Final Take-Home Exam distributed today**
- Robert Ford & Matthew Goodwin. 2014. *Revolt on the Right: Explaining Support for the Radical Right in Britain*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 3 ("Origins: A Long Time Coming"), pp. 107-42 **[E-Reserves]**
- Peter Kreko & Zsolt Enyedi. 2018. "Explaining Eastern Europe: Orban's Laboratory of Illiberalism." *Journal of Democracy* 29(3): 39-51. **[E-Reserves]**

March 13 (Friday): Research Paper due on D2L by 5:00 PM

March 16 (Monday): Final Exam due at 6:00 PM on D2L

Research Paper Assignment

This essay of 8-10 pages builds upon course material and independent research to consider the process of democratic representation as it is practiced in various West European societies.

The assignment is to describe and analyze the political system of a European state. You may choose any European state, except for France, Germany, Italy, or Spain. You may choose the same state on which you did your presentation, or you may choose another. You must choose Ireland if you are taking this course for Irish Studies credit, and you must choose Austria if you are taking this course for German Studies credit.

Research the political system of that state. Familiarize yourself with the following details of its political system:

- Executive-legislative relations: is it a parliamentary system, a presidential system, or what? Who is the head of state and what (if any) powers does s/he have?
- Vertical division of power: is it federal or unitary? Is any power devolved to local/regional governments?
- Legislature: is it unicameral or bicameral? If it is bicameral, how are the members of the upper house chosen, and who/what do they represent?
- Electoral system: how are members of the legislature and executive elected?
- Party system: what are the major parties? What ideology and/or constituencies do they represent? Have there been any new parties that have entered the scene in the past 10-20 years? How have patterns of party support changed recently?
- Most recent election: what happened? Who won and lost? What were the major issues?
- Current government: which parties are included? What (if any) policies has it attempted to carry out?

Consider the majoritarian and consensus visions of democracy that we have studied. Describe the main criteria and goals of these rival visions. Drawing upon course material and readings, as well as your independent research, write an essay that addresses the following questions:

- What are the main criteria and goals of these two visions?
- Describe and analyze the degree to which the political system of the state that you have chosen performs in terms of fulfilling the criteria of these respective visions of democracy.
- In what ways does the state's political system fulfill each vision of democracy *in practice* and in what ways does it fall short?
- Make sure that you are clear about what institutions you are describing. In keeping with our theme of "values, structures, outcomes", be clear on which you are discussing. Which are the institutions, and which are the outcomes of those institutions?
- How have recent events shown this system to fulfill the goals of each vision? Consider recent elections, major political debates or crises, or legislative/policy debates or accomplishments. How well is the system handling social and economic change?
- Be clear and concise in describing relevant institutions, elections, and events.

Your paper should be organized in the following fashion:

- Introduction and thesis statement. The thesis should be your assessment of the degree to which the state fulfills one or both visions of democracy.
- Your thesis statement should be as follows: "The political system of state X more closely resembles the consensus vision of democracy, but it also has certain majoritarian features [such as] as well."
- Description of the two visions of democracy and the criteria you will use to evaluate the state (i.e., how will you know if it is consensus or majoritarian?).
- Description of the major institutions, parties, and recent events in that state.
- Assessment in which you link the previous two sections together by evaluating the state in terms of the visions of democracy.
- Conclusion

Requirements for the final essay:

- The paper may be a **maximum** of 10 pages of text, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins (not including the bibliography). There is no minimum page length, though it is very rare that a paper of less than 7 pages is adequate.
- Do not include a cover sheet. Number pages in the bottom right-hand corner.
- This final essay requires independent research. You must cite at least **six** outside sources from appropriate academic or journalist media (meaning books, journal articles, or articles from reputable news magazines like *The Economist* or *Der Spiegel*). Entries from Wikipedia, blogs, etc, do not count towards this total. Please note that I will evaluate the extent to which your paper relies on just 1-2 sources.
- You should also cite assigned course readings, though these do not count towards the required sources. Do not cite course lectures or slideshows! If you need to cite a fact or evidence presented in a lecture or slideshow, find it independently.
- Use assigned course materials as a starting point to think about the assignment. Build your arguments and research on this basic knowledge.
- The paper is due on D2L by the time listed in the course schedule above. Please submit the paper as a .pdf document to avoid problems with opening/reading the paper. If I cannot open the paper on my “standard” DePaul Windows computer, then it is late.

Grading & Style Guide

Each paper will be graded according to the following criteria:

Argumentation (40%):

- Does the paper have a clearly stated thesis in the opening paragraph that addresses the prompt?
- Is the thesis logical and relevant to the assigned prompt?
- Does the body of the paper provide logical arguments that make a convincing case in support of the thesis?
- Is the development of the argument internally cohesive, or are there contradictions in the author's own logic?
- Is the argument fully developed to address the prompt or topic in depth? (see the 2nd guideline below)
- Does the author consider possible rival arguments or objections to the paper's thesis and attempt either to respond to those objections or to acknowledge limitations to the thesis?
- Does the paper show evidence that the author has thought carefully and critically about the prompt?

Analysis & evidence (40%):

- Does the paper draw upon a wide range of appropriate evidence to support the thesis?
- Does the paper employ evidence appropriately (i.e., facts are used in the correct context)?
- Does the evidence presented actually support the paper's thesis?
- Does the paper show evidence of critical thinking about the evidence—for example, that the author has made a thorough and balanced assessment of the evidence—or are there obvious rejoinders or counter-arguments to the evidence presented?
- Does the paper show a clear understanding and appropriate application of concepts drawn from course materials?
- Does the author draw upon credible sources of evidence, such as reputable media sources or academic journals and presses? If using potentially flawed sources such as blogs or Wikipedia, does the author consider the possibility of unreliability?

Quality of writing (20%):

- Is the paper well written and free of errors of grammar and spelling?
- Does the author write using language and tone appropriate for a formal essay, avoiding colloquial language, contractions, slang, or “storytelling” language (e.g., writing as though you were talking)?
- Are individual sentences easy to read and understand?
- Is the paper organized into paragraphs that develop a specific point or argument?
- Do sentences and paragraphs “flow” in such a way that the reader can follow the development of the essay’s argument and supporting evidence?
- Does the author cite sources using an appropriate method for the social sciences, providing the necessary information for a reader to verify the source information?
- Does the author number the pages?
- Does the author attach a bibliography containing full reference information organized in an appropriate format?

The grading scale for each dimension is as follows:

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| A | Excellent work (i.e., I can answer “yes” to nearly all questions) |
| B | Above average work (I can answer “yes” to most questions) |
| C | Satisfactory work (I can answer “yes” to some questions and give a qualified “yes” to others) |
| D | Passing, but barely acceptable (I can only give a qualified “yes” to most questions and a “yes” to a few questions) |
| F | Unacceptable (At best, I can give a qualified “yes” to any of the questions) |

Guidelines:

- Get started early! There is no substitute for time and effort thinking, writing, and editing.
- Think fully and critical about your argument and how to develop it and support it with evidence. If your thesis is “education makes people more likely to participate in politics”, then you need to do two things. First, explain the reasons *why* education has this effect. Is it because education makes people more self-confident, or more aware of politics, or does it simply give them more financial resources and time to get involved? Each of these is a distinct argument; which one are you making? Second, think about the different forms of evidence you could use to support your argument. For example, there are many ways one can participate in politics—voting, volunteering for campaigns, donating money to campaigns or organizations, etc. Can you find evidence on each of these different types of participation?
- Get to the point! Do not spend space summarizing class materials.
- Be precise! Be clear about what you are arguing or what evidence you use to support your argument.
- Provide evidence to support your claims!
- Consider different points of view! Think about how a reader would respond to your arguments.
- In the social sciences, no single thesis is ever 100% correct. That is fine. Acknowledge the limitations to your argument and evidence. Do not ignore obvious objections to your argument.
- “Research” does not solely involve the sources that you cite. You should expect to do a lot of background reading—some of which you will not cite—to learn more about the topic and develop some ideas. It also does not mean simply citing the first five readings you come across.
- Organize your paper! Each paragraph should serve a specific purpose—usually to make a specific argument and support it with some combination of logic and evidence. Treat the first sentence as a “mini-thesis” for that paragraph.
- Proofread! Not only does sloppy writing make it harder to understand an author’s argument, but it also takes away from the credibility of one’s arguments.
- Write professionally! Do not use contractions, slang, or casual language. Do not write like you speak!
- In all of this, remember that you are attempting to demonstrate (through your paper) your knowledge, understanding, and ability to think critically and comprehensively.
- When compiling your bibliography, understand the difference between the publication (i.e., the journal in which the article was published) and online repository in which the contents of the journal is housed (e.g., JSTOR, Academic Search Premier). Cite the journal, not the repository!