

EUROPEAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

POSC 367

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Course Description

This course provides a survey of West European politics in the post-WWII period. The course will focus on domestic West European politics. The readings and discussion will focus on the daily topics. In our discussions, we will cover a wide range of topics, such as: constitutions, party systems, new social movements, interest groups, public policies, and the importance of the end of the Cold War on states' domestic politics.

Course Requirements

It is expected that each student will do the weekly readings. Although lectures will cover the readings, they may also cover material that is not in the readings; the student is responsible for the material in both the readings and the lectures. As participation in the class is 25% of the grade, be prepared to add to class discussion. This means coming to each class having read the material and being able to offer your input.

Your participation grade will be given as one of four possible grades. A student can get an A (which equals a percentage score of A (95%) for outstanding participation, B (85%) for good participation, C (75%) very little participation, and D (65%) no active participation. There are just these four grades for participation. *One percent will be deducted from your final participation score for each day of class that you miss that has not been excused.*

The course also requires a 10-15 page paper to be turned in at the end of the semester. You must consult with the professor about your topic before writing the paper. **No Late Papers Will Be Accepted.**

The course also requires two exams, including the final. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they are unable to fulfill any of the class responsibilities at the assigned time.

The Paper

The research paper is meant to allow students to focus on a particular issue in West European politics in depth. The paper must address a causal question. That means the student must explain why something is the way it is in the politics of one or two West European countries. To be a success, a paper needs to be structured, clear, and persuasive. It must have the following elements:

- 1.) A question. You must have an answerable research question for your presentation. You may not predict the future as a topic for your paper as that is not an answerable question. Your question should be presented clearly at the beginning of the paper. Another very important point is to tell the reader why yours is an important question. You need to convince them that your topic is going to be interesting.

2.) The paper must have an argument about the answer to your research question. The argument should be a succinct, yet complete description of what factor or factors you believe account for the phenomenon you are studying.

3.) Evidence. The next section should present your evidence to answer your question. This is the main body of your paper. Make sure the evidence that you present relates to your question. Make sure your evidence is coherently organized

4.) A conclusion. You should end with a conclusion statement. This statement should reiterate what the research question is, why it matters, what you argued, and whether your argument seems well-supported by your evidence. You may also point to what your research can possibly tell us about the future. It should be a succinct summary, and it should also tell us what further research question(s) your research raises.

Topics for the paper

Students can write about any topic in West European politics, as long as it is not a topic that we have extensively covered in class. Good possible topics would be major public policy issues in countries that we did not cover in the class. So, for example, one could write on immigration policy in the Netherlands. This is just one of any number of possible topics a student could choose. I ask that students consult with me once they have a topic in mind and before they start writing. Topics should be chosen by the end of September.

Breakdown of Grading:

Two exams:	25% each
Paper:	25%
Class participation:	25%

Required Texts:

Mark Kesselman and Joel Krieger (eds.). **European Politics in Transition**. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 2002. Fourth Edition

There are also readings on-line as noted.

Daily Schedule

Aug. 31: **No Class** (APSA conference)

Sept.7: **Understanding West European Politics** (“Introduction” in the text.)

Britain

Sept. 14: **British Political Development and Political Culture** (text, Chps. 6 and 7)

Sept. 21:**British Political Parties, Political Institutions, and Policy-making** (text, Chps. 8 and 9)

Sept. 28: **Present Issues in British Politics** (text, Chp.10)

France

Oct. 5: **French Political Development and Political Culture** (text, Chps. 11 and 12)

Oct.12: **French Political Parties, Political Institutions, and Policy-making** (text, Chp.13 and 14)

Oct. 19:**Present Issues in French Politics** (text, Chp. 15)

Oct.. 26: **EXAM ONE**

Germany

Nov. 2: **German Political Development and Political Culture** (text, Chps. 16 and 17)

Nov. 9: **German Political Parties, Political Institutions, and Policy-making** (text, Chps. 18 and 19)

Nov. 16: **Present Issues in German Politics** (text, Chps. 17 and 20)

Italy

Nov.30: **Italian Political Development and Political Culture** (text, Chps. 21 and 22)

Dec. 7: **Italian Political Parties, Political Institutions and Policy-making** (text, Chps. 23 and 24)

Final Exam: tba