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Pols 234 Western European Politics and Government

Course Description:

The aim of this course is to provide students with a broad overview of the politics and political systems of Western Europe, as they have developed after WWII. The course is organized thematically (rather than in a country-specific way) around a framework that emphasizes the political determinants and policy consequences of institutional differences. We discuss the wide variety of democratic political institutions found across Europe (e.g. multi-party systems, proportional representation vs. majoritarian electoral systems, and types of cleavages and political systems), the political economy of Western Europe, as well as some of the challenges facing Western democracies. Finally, where appropriate, the class discusses the nature and types of the political institutions that have emerged in the European Union. The class is designed for students who have already taken Introduction to Comparative Politics or its equivalent and assumes familiarity with the basic institutions of modern democracies. Students who do not think that they have the necessary background information but are still interested in taking the class, should review the additional readings suggested for the first week of class.

Required Texts:

- Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver, and Peter Mair. Representative Government in Modern Europe (5th edition), 2011. New York: McGraw-Hill; ISBN 9781121348240
- Arend Lijphart. Patterns of Democracy: Government forms and Performance in 36 Countries, 1999. New Haven and London: Yale University Press; ISBN 978-0300078930

Additional **required** readings (marked with *) are available through Blackboard.

In addition to the assigned readings, students are responsible for keeping up with Europe-related current events. Students should read internationally-themed newspapers and magazines regularly (e.g. Financial Times, Economist, NY Times, International Herald Tribune) and follow news reports online (e.g. CNN International, BBC News). At the beginning of each class, a few minutes of class time will be devoted to discussing the latest news from Europe. One or more questions related to current events are likely to appear on each exam.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and participation in class discussions:	10 %
Map quiz	5%
Presentation:	10%
3 Exams:	75 %

Grading Scale

A: 90-100 B: 80-89 C: 70-79 D: 60-69 E: < 60

Attendance is mandatory. You are expected to attend every class meeting, and come prepared to

discuss the assigned readings and relevant European news events. Attendance will be taken every time. You are allowed to miss one class without a proper excuse. Each absence (after the one you are allowed to) will count for half a point deduction from your attendance score. It is solely your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate.

Participation in class discussions is required. Throughout the course students are encouraged to raise questions and relevant discussion topics in class, and students are expected to contribute to class discussions. To prepare for discussions, it is important that assigned readings be completed prior to the corresponding class period.

Note: I make a strong distinction between attendance and participation. Attending every class, without ever speaking up, does not constitute participation. To receive credit for participation, students are required to ask questions, raise issues, express opinions, etc. regarding the topics covered, as well as respond to the questions. *Students who do not feel comfortable speaking in class must contact me by the end of the second week of class at the latest to arrange for alternative methods of participation.*

The joint attendance and participation grade will depend on both class attendance and meaningful participation in discussions. Regular attendance without meaningful participation will result in less than perfect attendance and participation score.

Map quiz: It will be conducted in class during the third week of the semester. Students will be asked to identify the countries of Western Europe on an outline map. To practice for the map quiz, consider the following interactive game

<http://www.ilike2learn.com/ilike2learn/Western%20Europe.html>

Country presentations and discussions: Students, individually or in groups, will be assigned to provide a brief overview of the current political institutions and issues of a country in Western Europe. Students interested in the European Union will have the option to present on a political party group in the European Parliament. Participation in this assignment is mandatory. All presentations must be prepared in MS PowerPoint format and e-mailed to the instructor minimum two (2) calendar days prior to the scheduled presentation. Presentations will be posted on the class website on Blackboard and made available to the rest of the class. Non-presenting students will be expected to have researched recent news and events affecting each country and participate in a general discussion about these topics. Questions regarding the institutions of individual countries will appear on each of the exams as appropriate. Failure to submit the presentation two (2) calendar days prior to the scheduled date will result in a reduced grade for this assignment.

If group presentations are scheduled, depending on the final enrollment in the class, each student will be assigned both an individual, and a group grade for this assignment. More details regarding this assignment, including whether or not presentations will be individual or in groups, will be provided during the second week of class when the final enrollment numbers are

available. In the interest of time and ease, students will be randomly assigned to countries. Students may change their assignment only if they find a colleague with whom to switch.

Exams: There will be three exams in this class, each worth 25% of the final grade. All exams will take place during regular class meeting time, as identified in the detailed syllabus below. Exams will consist of short answer, multiple choice, identification, true/false and fill-in the blank questions.

Make-up for the examinations: If a student cannot attend an examination, s/he needs to notify me as soon as physically possible by phone or e-mail. My e-mail is available 24 hours a day. Students who fail to notify me prior to the examination will not be allowed to take it. Make-ups will be given only to students who have been unable to take the regularly scheduled exam due to a medical or personal condition which has incapacitated them. Written documentation explaining the situation is required for make-up exams. I need to receive the documentation *before* I allow any student to take a make-up.

If any make-up exams are necessary, they will be given during the final week of class at a time that is convenient for both the student and the instructor.

Students with disabilities must inform the instructor of the need for accommodations. Those who require accommodations for access and participation in this course must be registered with the Disability Resource Center. Please contact ODS at 312/413-2183 (voice) or 312/413-0123 (TTY).

Course Drops: Only a student can initiate the dropping of a course. The student can drop a course through Banner up through the 10th day of the semester; there is no academic penalty nor does a 'W' appear on the transcript. After the 10th day and through Friday of the 10th week, the student may drop courses by seeing a college academic advisor. These late drops are indicated by 'W' on the transcript and are limited to a total of four for the student's entire UIC career.

Enrollment in class: Campus policy requires that students be properly registered for a class in order to earn academic credit for that class.

Incompletes will not be allowed except in a case of a medical emergency resulting in hospitalization.

Academic Honor: Students are expected to adhere to the UIC Student Honor Code. **Students violating the honor code will receive zero (0) points for the assignment or exam in question, and may receive an 'E' for the class.**

DETAILED SYLLABUS

Jan 10-12 **Introduction: Variation in Political and Economic Outcomes across Europe**
Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch 1.
Lijphart, ch. 1-4

Optional readings (for those wishing to gain or refresh basic knowledge of comparative government)

Online course on Introduction to Comparative government

<http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/political-science/17-50-introduction-to-comparative-politics-fall-2006/>

Jan 17-19 Political Parties: Definitions, Ideologies, Cleavages

Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch 7, 8, 9

* ADDITIONAL READINGS TO BE ASSIGNED

Jan 24 Political Parties Internal Organization

Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch 10

* Tapio Rauno "Political Interests: the European Parliament's Party Groups" in Jon Peterson and Michael Shackleton, ed. 2006. *The Institutions of the European Union*, Oxford University Press. Second edition.

* Ware, Chapters 2&3

Jan 19 Presentations and discussions on the United Kingdom and Germany

Jan 24 Presentation and discussion on Portugal

Jan 26-Feb 7 Categories of Party Systems

Lijphart, ch. 5

* Sartori, Giovanni. 1990. A Typology of Party Systems. In Peter Mair, ed., *The West European Party System*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 316-349.

Presentations and discussions on European Parliament Political Groups (if any)

MAP QUIZ JAN 26 IN CLASS

Feb 9 EXAM ONE

Feb 14-23 Electoral Systems and Their Impact on Parties and Politics

Lijphart ch. 8

Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch. 11

* Riker, William. 1982. "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 76, no. 4: 753-766.

* Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. New York: Cambridge University Press, ch. 3

* 2006. William Clark & Matt Golder. "Rehabilitating Duverger's Theory: Testing the Mechanical and Strategic Modifying Effects of Electoral Laws" *Comparative Political Studies* 39: 679-708.

Feb 16 Presentation and discussion on Greece

- Feb 23** Presentation and discussion on Ireland
- Feb 28** **Majoritarian and Coalition Governments**
Lijphart ch. 6
Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch. 2
- Presentation and discussion on Switzerland
- Mar 1-6** **Coalition Formation**
Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch. 12
* Lanny Martin and Randolph Stevenson. 2001. "Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies", *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(1): 33-50.
- Mar 6** Presentation and discussion on The Netherlands
- Mar 8-13** **Parliamentary, Presidential and Semi-presidential Systems**
* Giovanni Sartori. *Comparative Constitutional Engineering* (2nd edition), 1997, ch. 5-7.
- Mar 8** Presentation and discussion on France
- Mar 13** Presentation and discussion on Finland
- Mar 15** **EXAM TWO**
- Mar 27** **Types of Legislatures**
Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch. 3
Lijphart, ch. 11
- Mar 29** **Federalism, Devolution, and Regionalism**
* Newhouse, John. 1997. "Europe's Rising Regionalism." *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 1: 67-84.
* Selection of Economist articles on Belgium, Spain, and the UK
* David Dunkerley et al. 2002. *Changing Europe: Identities, Nations and Citizens*, ch 5, pp 65-79
- Presentations and discussions on Belgium and Spain
- Apr 3-5** **Interest Groups: Pluralism vs. Corporatism**
Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch. 14
* Cameron, David R. 1984. *Social Democracy, Corporatism, Labor Quiescence and the Representation of Economic Interest in Advanced Capitalist Society*. In John H. Goldthorpe, ed., *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
* Lange, Peter and Geoffrey Garrett. 1985. "The Politics of Growth: Strategic Interaction and Economic Performance in Advanced Industrial Democracies,

1974-1980.” Journal of Politics 47, no. 3: 792-827.

Apr 5 Presentations and discussions on Austria and Italy

Apr 10 **Central Bank Independence**
Lijphart ch. 8

Apr 12-17 **Executive Legislative Relations**
Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch. 6
Lijphart, ch. 7

Apr 19-24 **Political Institutions and Policy Outcomes**
Gallagher, Laver, and Mair, ch. 13
Lijphart, Arend, ch. 15.

Apr 19 Presentation and discussion on Denmark

Apr 24 Presentation and discussion on Sweden

Apr 26 **EXAM THREE**

The instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus at any time with adequate advance notice to students