

SYLLABUS for POLS 360: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN WESTERN EUROPE

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Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30-5:30 and by appointment.

T, TH 11:00-12:15, DuSable Hall 459

Please remember to check Blackboard for announcements!

COURSE OBJECTIVE: This course is an examination of the institutions, parties and political processes that affect political behavior in representative European democracies. In this course we will examine common themes across a sample of countries including: France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, Latvia and Poland. In addition, we will devote a substantial amount of time to understanding the politics of the European Union as influenced by these member states.

Some of the themes that we will address include:

- *Power: centralizations, integration, devolution and regionalization*
- *Leadership: Presidents, Prime Minister, and Parliaments*
- *Representation: party families, cleavages and attachment*
- *Rule: consensus versus coalition*
- *Society and the democratic process*
- *Territorial politics and the nation state*
- *Accountability, political corruption and state capture*
- *Anti-system politics: political extremism, radicalism and populism, religious fundamentalism and terrorism*
- *Eastern and Western democracies in an enlarged Europe*
- *Judicial and constitutional politics in Europe*

In addition to analyzing European political structures (institutions, electoral systems and political parties), and processes (decision making rules, law making procedures, policy making and societal input), we will also examine a number of policy areas as case studies in European politics. These include: *macroeconomic policy; European welfare states; foreign and defense policy; state and religion; immigration and asylum; organized crime and law enforcement.*

This course encourages critical thinking. We will seek to answer a number of questions raised in the core texts by monitoring current events in Europe. For example:

- *Where does power lie in European political systems?*
- *Which actors and institutions shape European political decisions? Who makes decisions, and how are these decisions implemented?*
- *What mechanisms exist for holding political actors in Europe accountable?*
- *How does European integration and the process of Europeanization mesh with domestic member state politics?*
- *Do trends in European politics suggest a strengthening of presidential politics or a hollowing out of the centre?*
- *How are societal difference reflected in European political processes?*

- *How are European democracies coping with challenges to the political process from inside and outside the state, including ideological and social movements (such as workers and/or terrorist groups), globalization, and European integration?*
- *How important are territorial boundaries in the modern European state?*

READING MATERIAL:

Gallagher, Laver and Mair ((2006: 4th Edition) Representative Government in Modern Europe: Institutions, Parties, and Governments, McGraw Hill.

Heywood, Jones, Rhodes, Sedelmeier (2006) Development in European Politics, Palgrave.

This course is designed to capture the most recent developments in European Politics, thus a *number of articles will also be posted on Blackboard as required reading. Students are also required to access and analyze European media sources throughout the course*, and will have the opportunity to boost their participation grades by posting these articles on Blackboard. Please note: in order to receive full points for all of the course requirements, you will need to have read all of the assigned reading.

PLEASE NOTE:

YOU MUST COMPLETE EACH OF THE REQUIREMENTS LISTED BELOW TO PASS THE COURSE

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Class Participation (15%)

You are expected to come to class prepared. This means that you have done the reading and visited the discussion forum on Blackboard. You are expected to actively participate in class by both answering direct questions and raising issues for discussion.

Participation grades will be split into three categories.

- 'Responsive and substantive' in class discussion 6%. In order for participation to be substantive it must be consistent, relevant, informed by lecture or reading material and delivered respectfully. Debate is encouraged and expected, and everyone's opinion is important.
- 'Discussion starter' points 6% I will randomly ask you to submit a 'discussion starter' question at the start of class which relates to the assigned reading from that day. Your question will be attributed to you, and you may be asked to initiate the discussion this topic. If you are not prepared to lead the discussion you will lose participation points.
- 'Online participation' through Blackboard 3%. Have you seen an interesting article that relates to course discussion? Have a comment or question? Post it in on the Discussion Board in Blackboard. Online participation will be divided into three categories: regular, occasional, and rare.

Remember: If you miss class, you automatically lose participation points for the day and poor attendance will be reflected by a low participation grade. If you have a legitimate reason for needing to be absent: talk to me beforehand!

**** At the end of the course you be asked to assess the participation of your peers on a scale from 1-5 (1= Is this student in our class ? 2= This students was frequently absent and did not contribute much to this course 3 = This student regularly attended class and did make a minimal effort to participate 4 = This student attended class and regularly participated in a substantive and 'reactive' manner (ie responded to questions raised by the instructor or others) 5 = This student attended class and regularly participated in discussions in both a highly substantive reactive and proactive manner (ie, he/she both reacted to questions raised by others and raised interesting and informed questions and topics for debate.**

2. Group Assignments (25%)

At the beginning of the term you will be assigned to a group. Groups will compete against each other for points in 2 jeopardy type competitions (designed to test factual knowledge) and 2 pre-election style debates (deigned to test your capacity to develop arguments). You are expected to prepare for these competitions by 1) studying as a group 2) developing questions for opponents.

Everyone will be asked to evaluate the participation of other group members at the end of the course. Problems with any group member (ie. a member that is not prepared, does not attend study sessions etc.) need to be brought to my attention immediately. Group members who are not present for the competitions/debates will not receive points.

3.& 4.

In Class Midterm (25%)

In Class Final Exam (35)%

Both the midterm and the final exam will consist of 4 essay questions. You will be given 6 possible essay questions in advance (4 of which will be randomly chosen on the day of the exam). You will be permitted to bring an outline to the exam. I will expect you at a minimum to use material from class notes and the assigned reading. Incorporating media stories and addition information from the discussion board on Blackboard will earn you extra points. In order to receive high marks you will need to

- 1) form well developed answers with conceptual arguments supported by factual information and current case studies.

- 2) reference specific scholars (from the Heywood book and from information presented in class) who support or disagree with the arguments you are making.

I **will not** be handing out a study guide for the midterm or the final exam. Therefore, you will need to take notes both from lectures and from the assigned reading.

Makeup exams will only be given in extraordinary circumstances. Students should contact me as soon as these circumstances arise and recognize the possibility that they will need to verify their excuse with documentation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance is not mandatory, but students will lose participation points for absences. Participation is 15% of your grade, thus poor attendance could cost you more than 1 letter grade! The material presented in class will

be highly relevant to your midterm and final exams. Therefore, it is in your best interest to attend class.

CLASSROOM DECORUM: Please set your cell phones to vibrate, resist the urge to text message and refrain from having private conversations during class or I will answer your phone and single you out. Debate is encouraged and expected in this course and everyone's opinion will be respected, thus uncivil behavior will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Cheating- which includes plagiarism- will not be tolerated in class. The NIU Undergraduate Catalog states that 'Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written whole or in part by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy materials from books, magazines or other sources without identifying or acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them.' Students who plagiarize will be reported to the Department of Political Science and subject to further action by university judicial proceedings.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE WEBSITE: Students are strongly encouraged to consult the Department of Political Science web site on a regular basis. This up-to-date, central source of information will assist students in contacting faculty and staff, reviewing course requirements and syllabi, exploring graduate study, researching career options, tracking department events, and accessing important details related to undergraduate programs and activities. To reach the site, go to <http://polisci.niu.edu>

UNDERGRADUATE WRITING AWARDS: The Department of Political Science will recognize, on an annual basis, outstanding undergraduate papers written in conjunction with 300-400 level political science courses or directed studies. Authors do not have to be political science majors or have a particular class standing.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NIU is committed to making reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Those students with disabilities that may have some impact on their coursework and for which they may require accommodations should notify the Center for Access-Ability Resources (CAAR) on the fourth floor of the Health Services Building. CAAR will assist students in making appropriate accommodations with course instructors. It is important that CAAR and instructors be informed of any disability-related needs during the first two weeks of the semester.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT RESOURCES: Written work will determine a significant portion of your grade. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the University Writing Center <http://uwc.niu.edu>

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE: (Please note: I will not rush through topics. If more time is needed on any particular topic, the schedule will be amended accordingly. Students should check Blackboard regularly for announcements).

T 8/26	Topic: Introduction to POLS 360: discussion of syllabus, formation of groups, short survey on course expectations and learning preferences
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TH 8/28	Topic: Introduction to Comparative Western European Politics Reading: Gallagher Chapter 1 (1-23); Heywood Chapter 1 (1-12)
T 9/2	Topic: The Executive: Primer Ministers and Presidents Reading: Gallagher Chapter 2 (24-56); Heywood Chapter 5 (73-96)
TH 9/4	Topic: Parliaments Reading: Gallagher Chapter 3 (57-85)
T 9/9	Topic: Constitutions, Judges and Politics Reading: Gallagher Chapter 4 (86-112); Heywood Chapter 9 (216-236)
TH 9/11	Topic: The European Union/Europeization Reading: Gallagher Chapter 5 (115-150); Heywood Chapter 4 (54-70)
T 9/16	Topic: Levels of Governance and Territorial Politics Reading: Gallagher Chapter 6 (154-185) ; Heywood Chapter 8 (136-154)
TH 9/18	Group competition # 1
T 9/23	Topic: Electoral Systems Reading: Gallagher Chapter 11 (340-377)
TH 9/25	Topic: Political Parties Reading: Gallagher Chapter 7 (187-227) and 10 (307-335)
T 9/30	Topic: Party Families Reading: Gallagher Chapter 8 (230-260); Heywood Chapter 6 (97-116)
TH 10/2	Topic: Party Cleavages and Electoral Change Reading: Gallagher 9-10 (263-303), Heywood 7 (117-135)
T 10/7	Group Competition # 2
TH 10/9	Midterm
T 10/16	Topic: Building and Maintaining Government Reading: Gallagher Chapter 12 (381-421)
TH 10/18/	Topic European Politics and Policy Reading: Gallagher Chapters 13-14 (422-463)
T 10/21	Topic: Political Scandals and Corruption Reading: Heywood Chapter 9 (157-177)
TH 10/23	Topic: State and Religion Reading: Heywood Chapter 13 (237-258)
T 10/28	Topic: European Welfare States

	Reading: Heywood Chapter 14 (259-279)
TH 10/30	Topic: Europe's Global Challenges and International Politics Reading: Heywood Chapters 2-3 (15-70)
T 11/4	Topic: European Defense Policy Reading: Heywood Chapter 17 (318-336)
TH 11/6	Group Competition # 3
T 11/11	Group Competition # 3
TH 11/13	Topic: Asylum, Immigration and Organized Crime Reading: Heywood Chapters 15-16 (280-317)
T 11/18	Topic: An Enlarged Europe Reading: Heywood Chapter 11 (196-215)
TH 11/20	Topic: Anti-system Politics Reading: Heywood Chapter 10 (178-195)
T 11/25	Topic: The European Constitutional Debate Please prepare for discussion by reading current articles on the European Constitutional debate in Europe including the failed referendums
TH 11/27	THANKSGIVING!!!!
T 12/2	Group Competition # 4
TH 12/4	Group Competition # 4
T 12/9	FINAL EXAM 10-11:50 a.m.