

SYLLABUS for POLS 360: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN WESTERN EUROPE

Instructor: Dr. R. Steffenson

Teaching Assistant: Jerry Molnar

Office phone: 753-0972

Office location: Room 286, Monat Building, 148 N. 3rd Street

email: rsteffenson@niu.edu

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:15-5:15 and by appointment. Please note that my office is off campus, so catch me after class if you need to see me during office hours. Alternatively, email me to schedule appointment.

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: These two core texts are available behind the counter at Borders on Sycamore Road.

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. I will also use a number of documentary films, time willing, as required material.

COURSE ASSESSMENT: There are 1,150 points possible points.
1,000 points = (100%) 150 points = built in extra credit.

PLEASE NOTE:

1) YOU MUST COMPLETE EACH OF THE 6 REQUIREMENTS LISTED BELOW TO PASS THE COURSE

2) I am a tough grader and you WILL need the extra credit.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Short Answer Quizzes x 2 = 100 pts (10%)

Two 50 pt. short answer quizzes will be given throughout the term. If you miss the class, you fail the quiz, UNLESS you have notified me in advance and been granted an excused absence. These short answer quizzes are designed to test your knowledge of factual information.

2. Class Participation = 150 pts (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. On random days I will ask everyone to hand in a 'discussion starter' question or observation directly related to the assigned reading. The second half of the class (which deals with comparative policy) is more participation intensive. Debate is encouraged and expected, and everyone's opinion is important.

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!

**** A small percentage of your participation grade will be determined by peer review: At the end of the course everyone will be asked to rank classmates participation 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 in fairness 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. These peer reviews will be compared to evaluations completed by the instructor and the graduate teaching assistant.**

3. Online Participation (Blackboard) = 100 pts (10%)

Have you seen an interesting article that relates to course discussion? Have a comment or question? Post it in on the Discussion Forum on Blackboard. Online participation will be divided into these categories: regular (90 pts), occasional (60 pts), rare (30 pts), and never (0 pts). The top 3 contributors will receive 100 pts.

4. Group Assignments = 200 pts (20%)

You will be required to complete four group assignments. 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. Any problems with a 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.

5. Take Home Midterm = 250 pts (25%)

The midterm will consist of 4 take home essay questions. Each essay question should be answered in at least 3-4 typed pages. Since the exam is take home, I will expect you at a minimum to make citations from class notes and the assigned reading. Citing extra example from the discussion board on Blackboard will earn you extra points. The take home midterms will need to be submitted electronically through Blackboard's assignment function. Late midterms will be penalized by 10% point (1 letter grade) per day.

6. In Class Final Exam = 350 pts (35)%

The final exam will be an in class essay exam. Well developed answers will be conceptual arguments supported by factual information and current case studies. I will not be handing out a study guide at the end of the course. Therefore, you will need to take notes both from lectures and from the assigned reading. You are also

advised to pay attention to the announcements and additional materials on Blackboard. Eight possible essay questions will be posted on Blackboard two weeks before the final. Four of those questions will be on the final. As with the midterm, you will need to be able to incorporate the arguments made by individual authors (especially from the Heywood book and any additional reading) into your answers. I will give comments to students who have completed outlines for the final exam essays prior to the last day of class. 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 (both lectures and films) will be highly relevant to your midterm and final exams. Therefore, it is in your best interest to attend class.

CLASSROOM DECORUM: Please be respectful and turn off your cell phones. If you eat or drink in class, take your garbage with you!

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).

Wed. 1/17	Topic: Introduction to POLS 360: discussion of syllabus, formation of groups, short survey on course expectations and learning preferences
Mon. 1/ 22	Topic: Introduction to Comparative Western European Politics Reading: Gallagher Chapter 1 (1-23); Heywood Chapter 1 (1-12)
Wed. 1/24	Topic: The Executive: Primer Ministers and Presidents Reading: Gallagher Chapter 2 (24-56); Heywood Chapter 5 (73-96)
Mon. 1/29	Topic: Parliaments Reading: Gallagher Chapter 3 (57-85)
Wed. 1/ 31	Topic: Constitutions, Judges and Politics Reading: Gallagher Chapter 4 (86-112); Heywood Chapter 9 (216-236)
Mon. 2/ 5	Topic: The European Union Reading: Gallagher Chapter 5 (115-150)
Wed. 2/ 7	Topic: Europeanization Reading: Heywood Chapter 4 (54-70)
Mon 2/ 12	Topic: Levels of Governance and Territorial Politics Reading: Gallagher Chapter 6 (154-185) ; Heywood Chapter 8 (136-154)
Wed. 2/14	Quiz # 1/ Group Competition Preparation
Mon. 2/ 19	Group competition # 1
Wed. 2/ 21	Topic: Electoral Systems Reading: Gallagher Chapter 11 (340-377)
Mon. 2/ 26	Topic: Political Parties Reading: Gallagher Chapter 7 (187-227) and 10 (307-335)
Wed. 2/ 28	Topic: Party Families Reading: Gallagher Chapter 8 (230-260); Heywood Chapter 6 (97-116)
Mon. 3/5	Topic: Party Cleavages and Electoral Change Reading: Gallagher 9-10 (263-303), Heywood 7 (117-135)

Wed. 3/7	Quiz # 2 and Group Competition Preparation Midterm questions will be passed.
Spring Break	No Class 3/12, 3/14
Mon. 3/19	Group Competition # 2 ** Midterms Due
Wed. 3/21	Topic: Building and Maintaining Government Reading: Gallagher Chapter 12 (381-421)
Mon 3/26	Topic European Politics and Policy Reading: Gallagher Chapters 13-14 (422-463)
Wed. 3/28	Topic: Political Scandals and Corruption Reading: Heywood Chapter 9 (157-177)
Mon. 4/2	Topic: State and Religion Reading: Heywood Chapter 13 (237-258)
Wed. 4/4	Topic: European Welfare States Reading: Heywood Chapter 14 (259-279)
Mon. 4/9	Topic: Europe's Global Challenges and International Politics Reading: Heywood Chapters 2-3 (15-70)
Wed. 4/11	Topic: European Defense Policy Reading: Heywood Chapter 17 (318-336)
Mon. 4/16	Group Competition # 3
Wed 4/18	Topic: Asylum, Immigration and Organized Crime Reading: Heywood Chapters 15-16 (280-317)
Mon 4/23	Topic: An Enlarged Europe Reading: Heywood Chapter 11 (196-215)
Wed 4/25	Topic: Anti-system Politics Reading: Heywood Chapter 10 (178-195)
Mon. 4/30	The European Constitutional Debate: Please bring articles to class about the controversy surrounding the European Constitution.
Wed. 5/2	Group Competition # 4
Mon. 5/7	FINAL EXAM 2-3:50 p.m.