

Syllabus: Politics and Political Systems of Western Europe

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Fall 2007
MW 8:30AM - 9:45AM BEH 218

1 Aim of Course

The aim of this course is to provide students with a broad overview of the politics and political systems of Western Europe. Students will learn about the wide variety of democratic political institutions found across Europe (e.g. multi-party systems, proportional representation vs. majoritarian electoral systems, and parliamentary government). Moreover, students will learn how these institutions function within specific European countries. The course will be organized by topic, rather than by country, making our approach to European politics truly comparative. Finally, the course will introduce students to the European Union and will examine how this organization affects European democracy. Students are expected to think about how these European political systems differ from their own US democracy, what we living in American can learn from studying Europe, and what Europeans can learn from us.

2 Office Hours

Monday 10-12AM, Thursday 1:15-2:15PM or by appointment. Location: WRI A210.

3 Grading

Grades will be based on 2 midterms (25% each), a final (40%), and class participation (10%). All exams will contain a major writing component. I will make every effort to return student exams in class within a week. Upon receiving their grade, any complaints must be made to me in writing and must specifically address how the exam was unfairly graded. Students must wait 24 hours after the exam has been returned to file a complaint. Further information about the exams will be provided during the semester.

Class participation includes both attending class and actively taking part in class discussions. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. As a general rule, a student missing a class because of observance of a religious holiday shall have the opportunity to make up missed work. Students must notify the instructor of anticipated absences by the last day of late registration, August 31, 2007, to be assured of this opportunity. Students who represent UNLV at any official extracurricular activity shall also have the opportunity to make up assignments, but the student must provide official written notification to the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).

4 Academic Misconduct

“Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join

the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution."

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism: "Using the words or ideas of another, from the internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources." See the "Student Academic Misconduct Policy" (approved December 9, 2005, located at <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>).

5 Copyright Information

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **YOU ARE INDIVIDUALLY AND SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLATIONS OF COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE LAWS. THE UNIVERSITY WILL NEITHER PROTECT NOR DEFEND YOU NOR ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT VIOLATIONS OF FAIR USE LAWS.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. To familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, you are encouraged to visit the following website: <http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright/>.

6 Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates all academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The DRC is the official office to review and house disability documentation for students, and to provide them with an official Academic Accommodation Plan to present to the faculty if an accommodation is warranted. Faculty should not provide students accommodations without being in receipt of this plan. UNLV complies with the provisions set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, offering reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to contact the DRC for the coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), Room 137, and the contact numbers are: VOICE (702) 895-0866, TTY (702) 895-0652, FAX (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>.

7 Rebelmail

By policy, faculty and staff should only e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after admission to the university. Non-admitted students should contact the Student Help Desk at (702) 895-0761, in the Student Union Room 231, or by e-mail: studenthelp@unlv.edu. See <http://rebelmail.unlv.edu/> for information.

8 UNLV Writing Center

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. See <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

9 Readings

There is one required text for this class: Gallagher, Mair, and Laver (GML) "Representative Government in Modern Europe," (4th edition). It is available for purchase in the campus bookstore. Other readings are either

electronically available through the library or on e-reserve at the library. I will provide a list of links to the electronically available articles. To access these articles you will need to connect to the internet through UNLV or set up a proxy connection.

In addition to the assigned readings, students are responsible for keeping up with European current events. Students should read the newspaper regularly (*Financial Times*, *Economist*, *NY Times*, *LA Times*, *Washington Post*) and follow news reports online (BBC news, www.euobserver.com). At the beginning of each week, a few minutes of class time will be devoted discussing the latest news from Europe. One or more current events questions are likely to appear on each exam.

10 Course Plan

Week 1 Introduction: What is Europe and why study it?

GML Chapter 1

Elster *Nuts and Bolts* Chapter 1

Week 2 Executives

Note: No Class on Monday (Labor Day)

GML Chapter 2

Lijphart *Patterns of Democracy*. Chapters 1-3

Week 3 Parliaments

GML Chapter 3

Huber (1996) "The Vote of Confidence in Parliamentary Democracies." *American Political Science Review*.

Strom (1998) "Parliamentary Committees in European Democracies." *Journal of Legislative Studies*.

Week 4 Building Coalitions

GML Chapter 12

Laver & Schofield *Multiparty Government* Chapter 1

Proksch and Slapin (2006) "Institutions and Coalition Formation." *West European Politics*.

Week 5 Federalism

GML Chapter 6 (p164-185)

Bräuninger & König (1999) "The Checks and Balances of Party Federalism." *European Journal of Political Research*.

Week 6 Review and catch-up, Midterm on Wednesday, October 3

Week 7 Constitutions, Judges, and Bureaucrats

GML Chapter 4, Chapter 6 (p154-163)

Georg Vanberg (2001) "Legislative-Judicial Relations: A Game-Theoretic Approach to Constitutional Review." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Week 8 Parties

GML Chapters 7-10

Elff (2007) "Social Structure and Electoral Behavior in Comparative Perspective." *Perspectives on Politics*.

Week 9 Elections

GML Chapter 11

Lijphart (1990) "The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws, 1945-1985." *American Political Science Review*.

Week 10 From Politics to Policy

GML Chapters 13-14

Bawn (1999) "Money and Majorities in the Federal Republic of Germany." *American Journal of Political Science*."

Bawn & Rosenbluth (2006) "Short versus Long Coalitions: Electoral Accountability and the Size of the Public Sector." *American Journal of Political Science*.

Week 11 Catch-up and Review, Midterm on Wednesday, November 7

Week 12 The European Union: History

Note: No class on Monday (Veteran's Day)

Kesselman and Krieger Chapters 1-2

Week 13 The European Union: Integration and Institutions

GML chapter 5, Tsebelis & Garrett (2001) "The Institutional Determinants of Intergovernmentalism and Supranationalism in the EU." *International Organization*.

Week 14 The European Union: Policies

Kesselman and Krieger Chapters 4-5

Week 15 Putting it all Together: A Veto Players Approach

Tsebelis *Veto Players* Introduction, Chapters 1 and 3

Final Exam Wednesday, December 12 8:00AM, as scheduled by university.