

PSCI 4002

Western European Politics

Contact Information

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Course Information

Jan 13 – May 1
Classroom: CLUB 4
Class-time: 9:05 – 9:55am

Course Description: Though the peace, prosperity, and integration of modern Europe would have been unthinkable a century ago, Western Europe is nevertheless in crisis. Fragmentation, polarization, and extremism are increasingly on the rise throughout the region. What explains recent electoral shifts and the spectacular rise of populist parties across Europe? How can mainstream parties respond to the growing democratic deficit and threats to democracy in the region? How have national governments adapted to increasing European integration, regional governance, and the public response to both? Building on concepts from Introduction to Comparative Politics, this course offers an introduction to the key institutions, historical events, and identities that define the political landscape and governmental systems of West European states. In addition to exploring the expanding role of the European Union, we will pay particular attention to how domestic institutional choices and social structures explain cross national differences in political outcomes. Over the course of this semester, the goal for this course is to provide you the tools necessary to understand this fascinating region and think like a social scientist to understand a changing Europe.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Participation	10%
Weekly Quizzes	10%
Geography Quiz	5%
Exams (3)	50%
Research Paper	25%

Letter grades will be assigned at the end of the semester based on the following scale. I will **not** round your grade and grades will not be curved.

	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%	
A	94-100%	B	84-86%	C	74-76%	D	64-66%
A-	90-93%	B-	80-83%	C-	70-73%	D-	60-63%

Participation & Attendance (10%)

Active participation in this course is critical! Coming to class well prepared and offering comments and questions in discussions will result in a superior participation grade. Attendance is mandatory. In lieu of tracking excused and un-excused absences, each student gets **three** “freebie” absences which cover both excused and un-excused absences. You do not need to e-mail me for each absence. Each subsequent absence will result in a decrease in the participation and attendance grade. If you have eight total absences, you will receive a 0% for this category. Ten or more absences will result in an “F” in the course. Attendance alone is not sufficient to receive full credit. Students with perfect attendance but no participation in class should expect to receive a 60% on the participation and attendance grade.

Weekly Quizzes (10%)

Each week, there will be a weekly quiz on that week's readings and lecture which make up 10% of the overall course grade. There will be **twelve** quizzes (1/week minus exam weeks), and the two lowest scores will be dropped. Quizzes are open-note and students get two attempts, and the highest score is kept. Quizzes will be published on Canvas at the end of class on Friday and students will have until before class on Monday to complete each quiz.

Geography Quiz (5%)

At the end of week 2, on January 24th, students will take a geography quiz. Students are expected to be able to identify the 18 countries traditionally associated with "West Europe" and their capitals. This will count as 5% of your final grade.

Exams (50% Total)

There will be three exams during this course: two midterms and one final. Exams will consist of some combination of multiple choice, short answer, long answer, or essay questions. Each exam is worth at least 15% of your course grade, with the highest score being weighted at 20%. Exams are not cumulative.

Exam Dates:

- Midterm: Friday, February 14
- Midterm: Wednesday, March 19
- Final: Tuesday, May 6 (1:30-4pm)

Research Paper (25%)

There will be one essay for this course which will be worth 25% of the overall course grade. Students are expected to write 2000-2500 words on a research question of their choice related to West European politics. Students will be expected to identify a research question of interest related to course topics and consult relevant research and data to develop an argument that answers their question. More specifics will be available on a separate assignment sheet on Canvas. Final essays will be due on **April 25th at 11:59pm**.

Current Events

I encourage you to stay on top of current events, election results, and other developments in West Europe throughout the semester. In our discussions, I'll draw on current events and I'd like you to be able to do the same. You may choose which on-line publications you'd like to read, but I'd recommend you select from among The New York Times, the Financial Times, The Guardian, BBC, or The Economist. German publications such as Der Spiegel and Deutsche Welle have English sources. Another open-access English on-line site is France 24. I'd also suggest becoming a regular NPR listener.

Late/Makeup Assignment Policy

All assignments must be submitted by their specified due date as designated in the syllabus. Late assignments will suffer a 10 percent penalty for each day that they are late and will not be accepted after three days. In general, there will be no make-up exams or extensions without a university approved excused absence. However, if you find yourself in a situation where you cannot complete the work on time, please communicate with me as soon as possible before the deadline or day of the exam.

Canvas & Email Policy

I will primarily communicate with the class via Canvas Announcements. Please ensure Canvas notifications are enabled, and announcements go to your inbox. Please do not use Canvas to send me a message.

E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me. When communicating with me, emails must have PSCI4002, West European Politics, WEP, or a logical alternative indicating the email pertains to this course. Emails to me must be sent from your official University of Colorado email address. It is class policy that grades will not be discussed over email. I will generally reply to e-mails within 24 hours.

Artificial Intelligence

Generative artificial intelligence tools—software that creates new text, images, computer code, audio, video, and other content—have become widely available and pose new threats to academic integrity. **You may not use generative AI tools on assignments in this course.** Generative AI tools are typically trained on limited and pre-existing datasets that may be out of date and are designed to produce content that *appears* to be written by a human. As a result, work produced using generative AI is considered plagiarism and will often produce potentially outdated and inaccurate work that is not your own. If you use generative AI tools to complete assignments in this course, in ways that I have not explicitly authorized, this will be considered a violation of the Honor Code and there will be consequences appropriate to your specific case. These include getting a zero on the assignment, and possibly failing the class. Please act with integrity, for the sake of both your personal character and your academic record.

Course Materials

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings will be made available on Canvas. Assigned readings and deadlines are subject to change, but you will be notified in advance.

Schedule

Week 1: Course Introduction

Monday, January 13: Course Overview, Intro, “West Europe”

- No Reading

Wednesday, January 15: Approaches to Comparative Politics

- Lichbach, Mark Irving, and Alan S. Zuckerman. 1997. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. Cambridge University Press. 3-8.

Friday, January 17: Post-War Democratization (Social Democracy & Southern Europe)

- Berman, Sheri. 2019. *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe: From the Ancien Régime to the Present Day*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 14 and 16.

Week 2: Political Institutions

Monday, January 20: No Class (MLK Day)

Wednesday, January 22: Majoritarian Model

- Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy*. Yale University Press. Pages 1-5, Chapter 2

Friday, January 24: Consensus Model

- Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy*. Yale University Press. Chapter 3
- **DUE (In-Class): Geography Quiz**

Week 3: Federalism, Devolution, & Succession

Monday, January 27: Federal vs. Unitary States

- Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy*. Yale University Press. Chapter 10

Wednesday, January 29: Devolution vs. Succession

- Pardos-Prado, Sargi. 2017. "Catalonia's three ways forward." *Good Authority*.
<https://goodauthority.org/news/catalonias-three-ways-forward>

Friday, January 31: National Identities & Regionalism

- Mylonas, Harris, and Maya Tudor. 2021. "Nationalism: What We Know and What We Still Need to Know." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24(1):109–32.

Week 4: The European Union & Supranationalism

Monday, February 3: What is the EU? A Brief Overview

- James McBride. 2022. "How Does the European Union Work??" *Council on Foreign Relations*.
<https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/how-does-european-union-work#chapter-title-0-5>

Wednesday, February 5: The Democratic Deficit

- Franklin, Mark N., and Sara B. Hobolt. 2011. "The Legacy of Lethargy: How Elections to the European Parliament Depress Turnout." *Electoral Studies* 30(1):67–76.

Friday, February 7: Euroskepticism & Brexit

- Hobolt, Sara B. 2016. "The Brexit Vote: A Divided Nation, a Divided Continent." *Journal of European Public Policy* 23(9):1259–77.

Week 5: Exam #1

Monday, February 10: The European Identity?

- Carl, Noah, James Dennison, and Geoffrey Evans. 2019. "European but Not European Enough: An Explanation for Brexit." *European Union Politics* 20(2):282–304.

Wednesday, February 12: Catch-Up & Review

Friday, February 14: Exam 1

Week 6: Parties and Party Systems

Monday, February 17: Electoral Systems

- Lachat, Romain, André Blais, and Ignacio Lago. 2015. "Assessing the Mechanical and Psychological Effects of District Magnitude." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 25(3):284–99.

Wednesday, February 19: The Origins of Parties

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper. Chapter 8.

Friday, February 21: Party Systems & Party System Change

- Lipset, Seymour M., and Stein Rokkan. 1990. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments." In *The West European Party System*, Peter Mair, ed. New York: Oxford UP. Pgs. 91-138.

Week 7: The Rise of the Radical Right

Monday, February 24: What is "Populism" & "The Radical Right"

- Berman, Sheri. 2021. "The Causes of Populism in the West." *Annual Review of Political Science* 24(1):71–88.

Wednesday, February 26: The Culture Argument: Immigration

- Ivarsflaten, Elisabeth. 2008. "What Unites Right-Wing Populists in Western Europe?: Re-Examining Grievance Mobilization Models in Seven Successful Cases." *Comparative Political Studies* 41(1):3–23.

Friday, February 28: The Economic Argument: Left Behind

- Colantone, Italo, and Piero Stanig. 2018. "The Trade Origins of Economic Nationalism: Import Competition and Voting Behavior in Western Europe." *American Journal of Political Science* 62(4):936–53.

Week 8: The Decline of Social Democracy

Monday, March 3: The Dilemma of Social Democracy

- Benedetto, Giacomo, Simon Hix, and Nicola Mastrorocco. 2020. "The Rise and Fall of Social Democracy, 1918–2017." *American Political Science Review* 114(3):928–39.

Wednesday, March 5: Political Convergence & Class Voting

- Evans, Geoffrey, and James Tilley. 2012. "How Parties Shape Class Politics: Explaining the Decline of the Class Basis of Party Support." *British Journal of Political Science* 42(1):137–61.

Friday, March 7: The Decline of Mainstream Parties

- Spoon, Jae-Jae, and Heike Klüver. 2019. "Party Convergence and Vote Switching: Explaining Mainstream Party Decline across Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 58(4):1021–42.

Week 9: The West European Voter

Monday, March 10: Vote Choice

- Clarke, Harold D., David Sanders, Marianne C. Stewart, and Paul Whiteley. 2009. "The American Voter's British Cousin." *Electoral Studies* 28(4):632–41.

Wednesday, March 12: Turnout

- Kostelka, Filip, Eva Krejcova, Nicolas Sauger, and Alexander Wuttke. 2023. "Election Frequency and Voter Turnout." *Comparative Political Studies* 56(14):2231–68.

Friday, March 14: Partisanship & Polarization

- Reiljan, Andres. 2020. "Fear and Loathing across Party Lines' (Also) in Europe: Affective Polarisation in European Party Systems." *European Journal of Political Research* 59(2):376–96.

Week 10: Exam #2

Monday, March 17: Catch-Up & Review

Wednesday, March 19: Exam 2

Friday, March 21: No Class (Enjoy!)

SPRING BREAK (March 24-30): Relax!

Week 11: Immigration

Monday, March 31: Immigration, Integration, and Conflict

- Koopmans, Ruud. 2010. "Trade-Offs between Equality and Difference: Immigrant Integration, Multiculturalism and the Welfare State in Cross-National Perspective." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36(1):1–26.

Wednesday, April 2: Ethnic Diversity and Assimilation

- Choi, Donghyun Danny, Mathias Poertner, and Nicholas Sambanis. 2023. "The Hijab Penalty: Feminist Backlash to Muslim Immigrants." *American Journal of Political Science* 67(2):291–306.

Friday, April 4: No Class

Week 12: Social Capital

Monday, April 7: Social Capital: What is It

- Putnam, Robert. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 4.

Wednesday, April 9: Consequences of Social Capital

- Putnam, Robert. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 6.

Friday, April 11: The Dark Side of Social Capital

- Satyanath, Shanker, Nico Voigtländer, and Hans-Joachim Voth. 2017. “Bowling for Fascism: Social Capital and the Rise of the Nazi Party.” *Journal of Political Economy* 125(2).

Week 13: A Green Europe

Monday, April 14: The Emergence of Green Parties

- Grant, Zack P., and James Tilley. 2019. “Fertile Soil: Explaining Variation in the Success of Green Parties.” *West European Politics* 42(3):495–516.

Wednesday, April 16: Environmental Politics in Europe

- Spoon, Jae-Jae, Sara B. Hobolt, and Catherine E. de Vries. 2014. “Going Green: Explaining Issue Competition on the Environment.” *European Journal of Political Research* 53(2):363–80.

Friday, April 18: Environmental Protests in Europe

- Borbáth, E., & Hutter, S. (2024). Environmental protests in Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1–26.

Week 14: Democracy in Europe

Monday, April 21: Democratic Backsliding

- Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. “On Democratic Backsliding.” *Journal of Democracy* 27(1):5–19.

Wednesday, April 23: Populism & Democratic Backsliding

- Vachudova, Milada Anna. 2021. “Populism, Democracy, and Party System Change in Europe.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 24(1):471–98.

Friday, April 25: Democratic Deconsolidation

- Armingeon, Klaus, and Kai Guthmann. 2014. “Democracy in Crisis? The Declining Support for National Democracy in European Countries, 2007–2011.” *European Journal of Political Research* 53(3):423–42.
- **DUE: Research Paper at 11:59pm**

Week 15: The Future of West Europe

Monday, April 28: Course Wrap-Up: A Region in Decline?

- Jäger, Anton and Dries Daniels. 2024. “Things Are Terrible in Europe, and They’re Only Going to Get Worse”. *New York Times Opinion*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/22/opinion/europe-germany-france-trump.html>

Wednesday, April 30: Review

Friday, May 2: No Class (Reading Day)

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 6, 1:30-4pm

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, political affiliation, or political philosophy. For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Accommodation for Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or DSinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

If you have a temporary illness, injury or required medical isolation for which you require adjustment, please let me know as soon as possible via e-mail.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns: CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. Understanding the course's syllabus is a vital part in adhering to the Honor Code. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: StudentConduct@colorado.edu. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Note: Use of AI in your written answers is considered plagiarism in this course and is not permitted.

Discrimination and Harassment: CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who have been subjected to misconduct can contact

OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email CUreport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and [support resources](#) including confidential services can be found on the [OIEC website](#). Please know that faculty and graduate instructors must inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive outreach from OIEC about resolution options and support resources. To learn more about reporting and support for a variety of concerns, visit the [Don't Ignore It page](#).

Religious Holidays: Campus policy requires faculty to provide reasonable accommodations for students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please communicate the need for a religious accommodation in a timely manner. In this class, **please let me know by the end of week 3 of any religious accommodations you may require.** See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Mental Health and Wellness: The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#) located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7. Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through [Academic Live Care](#). The Academic Live Care site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.