Course Description and Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the politics of Europe. Six decades after the Second World War and two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the countries of the European continent face a markedly different set of challenges than those known to past generations. While the collapse of Communism ended the strategic conflict that divided the continent for nearly half a century, new developments, including demographic changes, increased pressure on social welfare states, and the effects of globalization and changing patterns of economic production have threatened to disrupt many of the arrangements that evolved in Western Europe during the decades of the Cold War. Most recently, the global economic downturn has revealed stark differences among European states and generated crises in several European countries as well as in the institutions of the European Union, the organizational successor to the economic community that was founded in the wake of World War II to promote the integration of the continent’s nations. For those European countries of the former Soviet–bloc, the downturn has intensified the challenge of establishing market economies and democratic political systems. As a consequence of the crisis, observers and actors have begun to question the perceived benefits and limitations of current arrangements within the EU and reassess the roles of national and European authorities in economic and political governance.

Prerequisite: POLS 267 or permission of the instructor

Upon completion of this course, students should have an understanding of the variation in the political and economic systems in European countries, the institutions and historical origins of the European Union, and the major issues in contemporary European politics. Students should also gain a broader appreciation of the interconnectedness among the cultures, economies, and political systems of Europe and the world, and insights into a global region that – despite sharing many customs, traditions, and institutions with the United States – also demonstrates significant differences with the U.S. in many key areas.

Course Structure

Individual course sessions will be a combination of traditional lecture and seminar–style discussion. Student questions and comments are strongly encouraged. All opinions should be expressed in a manner that is respectful of other students in the class. Students should also expect to receive frequent
emails from the professor with information of relevance to the lectures and readings, such as news articles on current political events.

Required Text


Any supplemental readings will be posted on either the library e–course reserves or Westernonline. You will need a valid ECOM user name and password to access the supplemental readings on westernonline.wiu.edu. If you have problems accessing Westernonline, please contact University Technology Support Center at 298–2704.

Students should also make a habit of keeping up with current domestic and international political developments by reading daily or weekly news sources such as The New York Times, The Financial Times, and The Economist, and European Voice.

The professor reserves the right to alter and/or add readings wherever appropriate, and to modify course requirements.

Assessment

Attendance and participation (10 percent)

Students are expected to attend each session and should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. A range of assignments may be given in class, such as requests for written summaries of lectures, films, and readings. Except in cases of documented illness, family emergency, and institutionally recognized obligation, no–make ups will be allowed. Please note that the use of portable electronic devices is not permitted. Students who use such devices in class will not be eligible for attendance and participation points for that class.

Midterm Examination (25 percent)

The midterm exam will cover material from the first part of the course and will include at least one essay question.

Analytic Paper (20 percent)

Students are required to complete a 5–7 page analytic paper on a question or set of questions assigned by the professor.

Debates (10 percent)

Students will participate in a group debate in class. The professor will outline the format of the debate in class and the professor and students will determine debate topics in advance.

Final Research Paper (35 percent)

Students will complete a final research paper twelve pages in length on a topic selected by students in consultation with the professor. A proposal for the final paper will be due in class on April 21. Students will have the opportunity to turn in an early draft of the paper to the professor for comments.
Grading Scale
A 93 – 100
A− 90 – 92
B+ 87 – 89
B 83 – 86
B− 80 – 82
C+ 77 – 79
C 73 – 76
C− 70 – 72
D+ 67 – 69
D 63 – 66
D− 60 – 62
F Below 60

Academic Integrity and Student Responsibilities

Academic honesty is expected of all WIU students; cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please take time to review the University’s academic integrity policy, which is outlined at http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php. A more complete catalog of student rights and responsibilities can be found at http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php.

Students who violate the academic integrity policy will fail the assignment at issue with no opportunity for make-ups and will be reported to the Council on Admission, Graduation, and Academic Standards.

Campus Resources for Student Support

In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that the student take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor’s attention, as he is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e., fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact the Disability Resource Center at 298–2512 for additional services.

The University Writing Center is available to assist students with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one–on–one assistance available at the Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global – level issues such as organization, and even working through grammatical problems. The University Writing Center is located in Simpkins Hall 341. Call for an appointment (298–2815) and be sure to take a copy of an assignment.

Course Schedule and Readings

January 20: Introduction and Course Overview

January 27: What is Europe?
3. “Where are Europe’s Borders,” 2009 lecture by Aleksander Kwasniewski, former President of Poland, available online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRBiR4r2Ct0

PART I: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

February 3: The 20th Century: War, Division, and Reconciliation

PART II: NATIONAL SURVEYS

February 10: Britain
1. Politics in Europe, pp. 3-96.

February 17: France
1. Politics in Europe, pp. 97-209.

February 24: Germany
1. Politics in Europe, pp. 211–313.

March 3: Italy

March 10: Midterm Exam

March 16-20: Spring Break- No Classes

March 24: Southern Europe

March 31: The Nordic Countries

April 7: Central and Eastern Europe
1. Politics in Europe, pp. 574-642 (Poland).
PART III: THE EUROPEAN UNION

April 14: Development of the EU (Analytic Paper Due)
1. Politics in Europe, pp. 623-637
2. Jean Monnet, Memoirs, excerpts.
3. Robert Schuman, The Schuman Declaration

April 21: European Institutions
2. European Union, “How the European Union works - Activities of the institutions and bodies.”

April 28: Governance in the European Union
1. Politics in Europe, pp. 657-705

PART IV: ISSUES FOR DEBATE

May 5: Debates

Final Papers Due:
Hardcopy: Tuesday, May 12, 6:00 p.m.
Dropbox: Wednesday, May 13, 1:00 p.m.