

RPOS 351: European Politics

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University at Albany, SUNY

Fall 2020: August 24-November 25

Class Time: T-Th: 4:30 PM - 5:50 PM or Online

Classroom: Lecture Center (LC) 24 and Online¹

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM on Zoom

Office: Virtual Office on Zoom

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Course Description

This course explores the politics and political systems of select European countries and culminates with a study of the European Union and European integration. As the cradle of much of Western Civilization, Europe's importance in world affairs is belied by its status as the second smallest continent and land mass in the world. As the second most densely populated continent in the world (after Asia), Europe is also home to significant variation in not only political systems but also languages, cultures, histories, and peoples. With such diversity, Europe offers students of political science, international relations, and comparative politics a unique lens through which we can study how such a diversity of power and interests have worked cooperatively to develop the European Union. We explore the variation of political systems and societies by focusing on the following countries: United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Poland. As we learn about European countries, we will discuss and debate issues related to European integration and cohesion. **The course focus will be on the rise of left- and right-wing populism in Europe, and students will debate and discuss these developments throughout the semester.**

In-Person or Online?

Students may opt to take the course completely online or in-person. All lectures - whether in-person or online - will be based off the same "script" so students will get the same content. I'm clearly not a robot so I can't promise I'll explain everything using the same exact phrasing for both, but I will do my best to be consistent. I will publish my lecture PowerPoints to Dropbox.

Online: Students who opt for the online mode of delivery watch pre-recorded lectures the instructor has uploaded to a private YouTube channel. Copies of the PowerPoints that drive the lectures will be placed in our Dropbox folder for those students who wish to take notes along with the video. Reading should be completed on a weekly basis so that you can complete the

weekly quizzes (see **Course Assessments** below). All assessments for in-person and online are the same and are to be submitted through Blackboard. *Do not email assignments to the instructor directly.*

In-Person: Students who opt for in-person mode of delivery will attend class on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week **from 4:30 PM to 5:50 PM**. *We will probably not go the whole time at the start of the semester.* During the first weeks of the semester, we will only meet on Tuesdays. After the ADD/DROP period ends and because the number of in-person attendees is small (and the room is big) we will meet twice a week during our normal regularly scheduled class time. Students should bring a mobile device or computer with them to interact with me during lecture - students will be prompted to ask questions during lectures to help prompt discussions. Reading should be completed on a weekly basis so that you can complete the weekly quizzes (see **Course Assessments** below). All assessments for in-person and online are the same and are to be submitted through Blackboard. *Do not email assignments to the instructor directly.*

Public Health Requirements

All students must wear masks in the lecture hall. If you do not have a mask, you will be asked to leave and retrieve a mask. I will not lecture unless all students have masks. **If you are sick or under the weather, DO NOT COME TO CLASS.** There are no attendance penalties. Just watch the online lecture; **Never, ever, ever, feel compelled to come to class if you are unwell.** You risk infecting myself and others, and it is not worth it. Just email me that you are unwell, contact Student Health, and keep me apprised. **PLEASE FOLLOW ALL UNIVERSITY AND COUNTY GUIDELINES** to the letter.

Course Objectives

Students, after completing this course, should be able to

- understand the variation of political systems and governing institutions in both Western, Central, and Eastern Europe and why these variations have occurred.
- analyze European politics, historical development, political culture, institutions, and societies comparatively.
- develop an understanding of why political systems have developed the way they have, how institutions function from one country to the next, and key issues facing each European country studied.
- develop basic analytical skills to assess the impact of European integration on domestic and international politics and the future of integration as it varies from one EU member state to another.
- learn and apply the comparative method using established social scientific methodology to test propositions we will develop in class to compare and contrast different European countries than those we have covered in the course.

- understand, learn, and apply the comparative method to the different forms of populism that have emerged in Europe, how populism affects EU cohesion and integration, and why these populist parties and forces have emerged in Europe across the countries explored.

Course Expectations

We will “dive deep” into six countries: United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Poland. In the last two weeks of the course, students will have the option to read about Poland or Sweden (students can choose one or the other; I’ll lecture on both). Each module will last three weeks (except for Module 5), and during each week you will read a portion of the textbook (see below) for the course. Textbook readings will be supplemented by journal articles, newspaper articles, and other pieces on those weeks when reading load is lightest. I’ve kept the reading manageable since you will need to do research on a second country not covered in the textbook as part of the assessment (see the Research Memo assignment below), which will probably require additional outside readings.

Required Textbooks

We will be using the following textbook below in our study of European Politics this semester:

- Hancock, Donald, et al. 2018. *Politics In Europe*. 7th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Students can rent or purchase the book; **make sure you purchase the correct edition**. It will be impossible to complete the class successfully without the textbook; if you have trouble securing the book, please reach out to me. Besides the textbook, I will also assign short articles and chapter excerpts from other authors throughout the semester. These readings will be available through the library’s catalog or our folder on Dropbox:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1o18uhpny0s23uh/AAB7sqbgBSMaF8KUil9Y0wCqa?dl=0>

Grading Policy

The course will be assessed on the University’s **A-E scale**: A (93-100), A- (92-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-83), B- (82-80), C+ (79-77), C (76-73), C- (72-70), D+ (69-67), D (66-63), D- (62-60), E (less than 60).

Course Assessments

Online Quizzes: 10%

Students **must complete 7 of the 14 online quizzes** over the semester. The quizzes are located on Blackboard and are timed. The quiz period runs from Sunday to Sunday. *You can earn extra credit by doing more than 8 quizzes*. I will count the highest 7 quiz grades and then apply any additional quizzes into an extra credit pool and apply that pool in the most advantageous way possible at the end of the term.

Discussion Boards: 20%

Students will engage in at least **THREE** discussion boards over the course of the semester. A **FOURTH** discussion on Italy is optional and extra credit. Each discussion board assignment will last two weeks. In the first week of each assigned discussion board, students will publish an initial response to the prompt using appropriate citations and connections to the reading. Your initial response should be no less than 200 words. In the second week of each assigned discussion, students will respond to their peers and the instructor's comments. Students should respond to no less than three peers over the entire week, and student responses must take place on three distinct days in the second week. Fifty-percent of your discussion board grade will come from your initial response to the question(s) I pose; the remaining fifty-percent will come from your engagement and responses to your peers. **ALL DISCUSSION BOARDS will occur on Slack – please be sure to sign up for Slack through Blackboard.**

Midterm Exam: 25%

There will be a midterm exam in early November, a take-home exam of short answer questions that test your knowledge of material covered in the course. Each student will receive a randomly assigned set of questions after receiving the complete exam. The midterm will be released on Monday, November 9 and **will be due on Sunday, November 22 by 11:59 PM.**

Research Plan (10%) and Research Memo (35%): 45%

The main assignment for this course will be a short research memo of no less than 8 pages that will explore a research question. Students will choose a broad research question from a list generated by the instructor or can propose their own. Students will submit a **research plan** by **Sunday, October 25 by 11:59 PM.** The final research memo is due **Sunday, December 6 by 11:59 PM.**

Course Policies

Academic Accommodation

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation in this class, please go here: <http://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml>. You can arrange for an academic accommodation letter to be sent to me. If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this course, please also inform me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity and Honesty

I have no tolerance for cheating or plagiarism; all instances will be reported. For a good survey of potential dangers, visit this page: http://www.albany.edu/elrtl/academic_integrity.php.

Attendance Policy

There is no attendance policy for the course. However, if lecture attendance dwindles below 5 students for two consecutive weeks, I may potentially move the course online.

Cell Phones/Tablets/Computers

If you plan to attend the class in person, please bring a phone, tablet, or computer to class so we can use the interactive features in Google Slides.

Courtesy

Be respectful in the discussion board. Also, be respectful of maintaining six feet distance between me and your peers. Wear a mask at all times in lecture. Do not come to class if you are unwell.

Email Etiquette

Treat email as a formal means of communication and not as a text message. This means using proper salutations and closings (don't put your entire email in the subject line), having a (proper) subject line (so I know what your email is about), and being respectful.

Grade Appeals

If you feel you have been assessed unfairly, please contact me within 1 week of receiving your grade. I will advise on how to go about doing the grade appeal.

Late Penalties

Assignments must be submitted to Blackboard on the days they are due. If you need extra time or need an extension, please ask. *I am generally pretty lenient on extensions, especially given the current climate.* Students will receive 7-points per day late penalty. After the third day, late assignments will not be accepted, and students will receive a zero.

Make-Up Policy and Religious Holidays

If you have life events that impact your studies or will be celebrating religious holidays, please advise me in case they interfere with due dates. Religious holidays are your right – just let me know when they occur and what I can do to help facilitate new due dates.

Office Hours

Office hours will take place on Zoom on Wednesdays from 11am-1pm. *If this day/time does not work for you, please email me for an individual appointment.* You can find the weekly Zoom link for office hours on Blackboard.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

For each country, we will explore its **political context, x.1, the institutions, x.2, major players in the political process, x.3, legislation and policymaking, x.4, and the future of politics in each country, x.5.**² Each chapter in the textbook explores each of these factors, and this method will allow us to compare within and between countries. As we talk about each country, we will also explore that country's relationship (or former relationship, as the case may be) with the **European Union.**³

On weeks where the textbook reading is lighter, supplementary readings will be added to provide students with a deeper understanding of the country in question. The textbook also contains a chapter on Russia, and we will look at Russia's effect on the politics of European countries as we proceed through the course, as well.

MODULE 1: United Kingdom

Week 1: August 24-August 29

Focus: What is comparative politics; United Kingdom I

Tasks for Week 1:

1. Read **Hancock**, Introduction, xix-xxxiii (15 pages)
2. Read **Hancock** Chapter 1, section 1.1 (21 pages)
3. Watch the introductory video lectures I created for the course.
4. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester. *Be sure you keep track of which quizzes you need to complete.*

Week 2: August 30-September 5

Focus: United Kingdom II

Tasks for Week 2:

1. Watch the online lectures.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 1, sections 1.2-1.3 (49 pages)
3. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

²The "x" refers to the number of the chapter; the number after the decimal point refers to the subsection of that chapter; most of the chapters in the book contain 5 subsections that address each of the factors in bold.

³To learn more about the European Union in greater depth, I suggest taking RPOS 375: International Organization, which is routinely offered by the department of political science.

Week 3: September 6-September 12

Focus: United Kingdom III

Tasks for Week 3:

1. Watch the online lectures.
2. SKIM **Hancock**, Chapter 1, section 1.4 on Policymaking. *I'll lecture about this, so the lecture is more important than the reading. Just skim through the chapter for key points/ideas.*
3. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 1, section 1.5.
4. Read **Robert Ford and Matthew Goodwin (2017): "Britain After Brexit: A Nation Divided"** (on Dropbox).
5. Read **Ailsa Henderson et al. (2016): "England, Englishness and Brexit."** (on Dropbox).
6. Read **Sofia Vasilopoulous (2016): "UK Euroscepticism and the Brexit Referendum."** (on Dropbox).
7. **Discussion Board 1 Begins, Week 1:** *Please post your initial post by Sunday, September 13 by 11:59 PM. Your initial post should be no less than 200 words.*
8. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

MODULE 2: FRANCE

Week 4: September 13-September 19

Focus: France I

Tasks for Week 4:

1. Watch online lecture.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 2, sections 2.1-2.2 (44 pages)
3. **Discussion Board 1 Continues, Week 2:** *Please respond to at least 3 students; your responses should be no less than 100 words. You must respond on different days during the week; do not respond to three people on the same day. Discussion Board 1 closes for responses on Saturday, September 19 at 11:59 PM.*
4. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

Week 5: September 20-September 26

Focus: France II

Tasks for Week 5:

1. Watch online lecture.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 2, sections 2.3 (42 pages)
3. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

Week 6: September 27-October 3

Focus: France III

Tasks for Week 6:

1. Watch online lecture.
2. **Discussion Board 2 Begins, Week 1:** *Please post your initial post by Sunday, October 4 by 11:59 PM. Your initial post should be no less than 200 words.*
3. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 2, sections 2.4-2.5 (29 pages)
4. Read **Daniel Stockemer (2019)**, "What is right-wing populism and how does it manifest itself? An analysis of the French National Front's Facebook posts and sympathizers' Facebook comments," *French Politics* 17: 340-50 (Read the first 9 pages; you can skip the appendix)
5. Read **Gilles Ivaldi (2018)**, "Contesting the EU in times of crisis: The Front National and politics of Euroscepticism in France," *Politics* 38(3): pp. 278-91 (14 pages)
6. Read **Foreign Affairs (2016)**, "An interview with Marine Le Pen," p. 2-8 (7 pages)
7. Read **Richard Wike (2017)**, "5 Charts Showing where France's National Front draws its support," Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/21/5-charts-showing-where-frances-national-front-draws-its-support>.
8. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

MODULE 3: GERMANY

Week 7: October 4-October 10

Focus: Germany I

Tasks for Week 7:

1. Watch the online lecture.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 3, sections 3.1 (26 pages)
3. **Discussion Board 2 Continues, Week 2:** *Please respond to at least 3 students; your responses should be no less than 100 words. You must respond on different days during the week; do not respond to three people on the same day. Discussion Board 2 closes for responses on Saturday, October 10 at 11:59 PM.*
4. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

Week 8: October 11-October 17

Focus: Germany II

Tasks for Week 8:

1. Watch the online lecture.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 3, sections 3.2-3.3 (43 pages)
3. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

Week 9: October 18-October 24

Focus: Germany III

Tasks for Week 9:

1. Watch the online lecture.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 3, sections 3.4-3.5 (26 pages)
3. Read **Lees 2018:** "The 'Alternative for Germany': The rise of right-wing populism at the heart of Europe." *Politics* 38(3), 295-310.
4. Read **Hansen and Olsen 2019:** "Flesh of the same flesh: a study of voters for the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in the 2017 Federal Election." *German Politics* 28(1): 1-19
Flesh of the same flesh: a study of voters for the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in the 2017 Federal Election." *German Politics* 28(1): 1-19.
5. Read **Baluch 2017:** "The dynamic of euroscepticism in Germany." In *Routledge Handbook of Euroscepticism*, New York: Routledge, pp. 113-126.
6. **Discussion Board 3 Begins, Week 1:** *Please post your initial post by Sunday, October 25 by 11:59 PM. Your initial post should be no less than 200 words.*
7. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

MODULE 4: ITALY

Week 10: October 25-October 31

Focus: Republic of Italy I

Tasks for Week 10:

1. Watch the online lecture.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 4, sections 4.1-4.2 (42 pages)
3. **Discussion Board 3 Continues, Week 2:** *Please respond to at least 3 students; your responses should be no less than 100 words. You must respond on different days during the week; do not respond to three people on the same day. Discussion Board 3 closes for responses on Saturday, October 31 at 11:59 PM.*
4. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

Week 11: November 1-November 7

Focus: Republic of Italy II

Tasks for Week 11:

1. Watch the online lecture.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 4, sections 4.3 (51 pages)
3. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

Week 12: November 8-November 14

Focus: Republic of Italy III

Tasks for Week 12:

1. Watch the online lecture.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 4, sections 4.4-4.5 (36 pages)
3. **Discussion Board 4 Begins, Week 1:** *Please post your initial post by Sunday, November 25 by 11:59 PM. Your initial post should be no less than 200 words.*
4. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.
5. Read **Caiani, Manuela. 2019.** "The populist parties and their electoral success: difference causes behind different populisms? The case of the Five-start Movement." *Contemporary Italian Politics* 11(3): 236-50. (14 pages)

6. Read **Tarchi, Marco. 2008.** "Italy: A Country of Many Populisms." In *Twenty-First Century Populism*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 84-99

MODULE 5: SWEDEN *or* POLAND

Week 13: November 15-November 21

Focus: Sweden or Poland

*For Week 13, you may choose to read either **Chapter 5** on Sweden or **Chapter 7** on Poland.*

Tasks for Week 13

1. Watch the online lecture.
2. Read **Hancock**, Chapter 5 or Chapter 7.
3. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

Week 14: November 22-November 25

Focus: Course Wrap-Up

Tasks for Week 14:

1. Watch the online lecture that concludes the course.
2. Work on and finish up your research memo.
3. Complete the online quiz; you must complete 7 out of the 14 quizzes over the course of the semester.

Final Exam Period: November 26-December 7

There is no final exam for the course; **please submit your Research Memo by Sunday, December 6 by 11:59 PM on Blackboard.**

In-Person Meeting Schedule

All class meetings will take place in LC 24. Be sure to sit **only** in designated seats to maintain social distancing. Class duration will range from 45-55 minutes (perhaps longer). We will play it by ear in the first few weeks.

1. Tuesday, August 25: *Course Introductions, Syllabus, Expectations, Questions*
2. Tuesday, September 1: United Kingdom I
3. Tuesday, September 8: United Kingdom II
4. Thursday, September 10: United Kingdom III
5. Tuesday, September 15: France I
6. Thursday, September 17: France I
7. Tuesday, September 22: France II
8. Thursday, September 24: France III
9. Tuesday, September 29: France III
10. Tuesday, October 6: Germany I
11. Thursday, October 8: Germany I
12. Tuesday, October 13: Germany II
13. Thursday, October 15: Germany II
14. Tuesday, October 20: Germany III
15. Thursday, October 22: Germany III
16. Tuesday, October 27: Italy I
17. Thursday, October 29: Italy I
18. Tuesday, November 3: Italy II
19. Thursday, November 5: Italy II
20. Tuesday, November 10: Italy III
21. Thursday, November 12: Italy III
22. Tuesday, November 17: Sweden (highlights)
23. Thursday, November 19 (last day of in-person meetings): Poland (highlights)

University Policies

Religious Holidays

As you know, UAlbany changed the way it puts together its academic calendar, and UAlbany no longer closes for religious holidays as it did in previous academic years. New York State Education Law (Section 224-a) states that all campuses are required to excuse, without penalty, individual students absent because of religious beliefs, and to provide equivalent opportunities for make-up examinations, study, or work requirements missed because of such absences.

According to UAlbany, "It shall be the student's responsibility to provide sufficient documentation to support any request (In this context, it should be noted that fraudulent excuses are considered violations of academic integrity and are grounds for academic or disciplinary penalties)."

Please note that students are still required to complete all readings and assignments in the syllabus. If a quiz or exam takes place during a religious holiday to which you have an exemption, please let me know in advance so we can work out alternative arrangements to make-up the missed assessment. No student will be penalized for absences due to religious holidays.

Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded education programs and activities.

The SUNY-wide Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policies prohibit offenses defined as sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), sexual exploitation, and stalking. The SUNY-wide Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policies apply to the entire University at Albany community, including students, faculty, and staff of all gender identities. The University at Albany provides a variety of resources for support and advocacy to assist individuals who have experienced sexual offenses.

Confidential support and guidance can be found through the following:

Counseling Center (518-442-5800, https://www.albany.edu/counseling_center/)

University Health Center (518-442-5454, https://www.albany.edu/health_center/)

Interfaith Center (518-489-8573, <https://www.albany.edu/spirituality/onCampus.shtml>)

Individuals at these locations will not report crimes to law enforcement or university officials without permission, except for in extreme circumstances, such as a health and/or safety emergency. Additionally, the Advocates at the University at Albany's Advocacy Center for Sexual Violence are available to assist students without sharing information that could identify them (518-442-CARE, <https://www.albany.edu/advocacycenter/>).

Sexual offenses can be reported non-confidentially to:

Title IX Coordinator within The Office for Equity and Compliance

(518-442-3800, <https://www.albany.edu/equity-compliance/>, Building 25, Room 117)

University Police Department
(518-442-3131, <http://police.albany.edu/>).

Please note that faculty members are considered “responsible employees” at the University at Albany, meaning that they are required to report all known relevant details about a complaint of sexual violence to the University’s Title IX Coordinator, including names of anyone involved or present, date, time, and location.

In case of an emergency, please call 911.