GOVT 334 Government and Politics of Europe

Fall semester 2015
Tuesday/Thursday, 1:30-2:45pm
KH 12

Draft Syllabus

Overview: GOVT 334 is about European politics, governance, and institutions. The first challenge is to define “Europe,” culturally and territorially. The next is to explore the relationship between “Europe” and the “European Union (EU).” One of the most interesting aspects of European politics is its multi-level nature. In addition to national and sub-national politics, there is a supranational level—the level of the EU. The three levels are increasingly entwined. The impact of EU membership on EU countries—the process of Europeanization—and the impact of EU politics on national politics are profound. This is especially the case with the long-running eurozone crisis. Indeed, involvement in EU politics and policies is changing the political landscape at the national level. Traditional concepts of left, right, and center are giving way to cleavages over the EU, with the rise of Euroskepticism especially prominent.

This course will explore these questions, while at the same time providing essential information on national and EU political structures and systems. The first part will discuss “Europe” and “Europeanness,” and identify key issues, parties, and preferences in contemporary European politics. The next part will focus on the EU—what it is, how it came about, what it does, and why it is having such a major impact on national political life. The third part of the course will look at various national political arenas—Germany, France, the UK; countries in Central and Eastern Europe; and Mediterranean countries.

The course will also include periodic discussions of current political developments and of general elections that are scheduled to take place during the semester, notably in Poland, Portugal, and Spain.

Instructor: Professor Desmond Dinan, School of Politics, Government and International Affairs; d dinan@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-1:00pm and 3:30-5:00pm; Mason Hall D9L

Required Reading:
There are three required books:
In addition, there are a number of required articles for each week’s topic (see class schedule). These are available on the Web, either in open sources or through Mason’s library databases.

**Assessment:** Assessment will be based on three short exams during the course of the semester (10% each); a book review of Marsh, *Europe’s Deadlock* (15%); a short policy paper on a subject pertaining to the EU (20%); and a final exam (35%).

**Learning Outcomes:**
Knowledge of European political issues, institutions, and policies
Knowledge of the European Union
Ability to write a book review
Ability to write a short policy paper

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1 (September 1 and 3): Introduction: Thinking about Europe and the European Union**
*Read for September 3:*
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/09/where-is-europe/?_r=0
“The Last European,” *Spiegel International*, July 22, 2015,
http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/traveling-from-romania-to-portugal-in-an-illicit-van-a-1043797.html
Timothy Garton Ash, “The Crisis of Europe: How the Union Came Together and Why it’s Falling Apart,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2012,

**Week 2 (September 8 and 10): European Politics: Issues; Parties: Preferences**
*Read for Week 2:*
European People’s Party, “Who Are We?” http://www.epp.eu/who-are-we
Party of European Socialists, “Political Initiatives,”
http://www.pes.eu/political_initiatives#middle
Liberals and Democrats for Europe, “About the ALDE Party,”
http://www.aldeparty.eu/en/about/the-alde-party
European Green Party, “History,” http://europeangreens.eu/content/history
Jan-Werner Müller, “The End of Christian Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs* (Web), July 15, 2014,
“The Snail Loses Pace,” *Economist*, August 1, 2015,
“The Last Liberal Democrat,” *New Statesman*, June 30, 2015,
http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/06/last-liberal-democrat-meet-europes-lonely-liberal
“A Field Guide to Europe’s Radical Right Political Parties,” *The World Post*, February 12, 2015,
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/12/europe-far-right_n_6511022.html

**Austerity Debate:**

00144feab7de#axzz3bHcwih0Gd

skidelsky-2015-05

Niall Ferguson, “The Economic Consequences of Mr. Osborne,” *Project Syndicate*, May 19, http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-economic-consequences-of-mr-osborne-by-
niall-ferguson-2015-05

Robert Skidelsky, “Niall Ferguson’s Wishful Thinking,” May 28, 2015, https://www.project-
syndicate.org/commentary/niall-ferguson-british-austerity-by-robert-skidelsky-2015-05

**Week 3 (September 15 and 17): Introduction to the EU**

*Read for Week 3:*

Pinder and Usherwood, *The EU: A Very Short Introduction*

programme-FINAL.pdf

26%20June%202015.pdf

**Week 4 (September 22 and 24): EU Governance and Institutions**

*Read for Week 4:*


EV1_EN.pdf

november/


**Assessment:** September 29, 1:30-2:00pm first in-class exam

**Week 5 (Sept 29 and Oct 1): EU elections in 2014**

*Read for Week 5:*


Assessment: October 8 deadline for book review of Marsh, Europe’s Deadlock

Week 6 (October 6 and 8): The EU in Crisis
Read for Weeks 6 and 7:
Marsh, Europe’s Deadlock.
EIU country analysis: http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/greece
Recommended Web Sites:

Week 7 (no class Oct 13; October 15): Course review and discussion of Marsh, Europe’s Deadlock

Week 8 (October 20 and 22): Germany
Read for Week 8:
EIU country analysis: http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/germany

Recommended Web Site:

Week 9 (October 27 and 29): France
Read for Week 9:
EIU country analysis: http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/france
France 2012 Presidential Election (runoff): https://welections.wordpress.com/2012/05/16/france-2012-runoff/
Olivier Duhamel, France’s New Five-Year Presidential Term, Brookings, March 1, ??? http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2001/03/france-duhamel

Recommended Web Sites:

Assessment: November 3, 1:30-2:00pm second in-class exam

Weeks 10 and 11 (November 3, 5, 10 and 12): The UK
Read for Weeks 10 and 11:
Wright, British Politics: A Very Short Introduction
EIU country analysis: http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/united-kingdom

Read/Watch:
Watch:
Jeremy Paxman interviews Ed Miliband, March 26, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voyDsvSNnuA

Recommended Web Sites:

Assessment: November 19 deadline for policy paper

Week 12 (November 17 and 19): Spain and Mediterranean Europe
Read for Week 12:
EIU country analysis (Spain): http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/spain
The Economist: Spanish Politics: http://www.economist.com/topics/spanish-politics
“The Podemos Revolution: How a small group of radical academics changed European politics,”
EIU country analysis (Portugal): http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/portugal
The Economist: Portuguese Politics: http://www.economist.com/topics/portugal-1
EIU country analysis (Italy): http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/italy
The Economist: Italian Politics: http://www.economist.com/topics/italian-politics

**Assessment:** December 3, 1:30-2:00pm third in-class exam

Weeks 13 and 14 (November 24, December 1 and 3; no class November 26): Central and Eastern Europe
Read for Weeks 13 and 14:
EIU country analysis: http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/poland
EIU country analysis: http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/hungary
EIU country analysis: http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/czech-republic
EIU country analysis: http://country.eiu.com.mutex.gmu.edu/slovakia
(Additional reading to be announced)

Week 15 (December 8 and 10): Conclusion and course review

**Final exam:** October 15

**General election watch:**
Portugal, due by October 2015
Spain, due by December 2015
Poland, due by December 2015

**Web sites to watch:**
Social Europe, http://www.socialeurope.eu/