At a time of economic uncertainty and growing insecurity, European politics are in flux. After a decade of crisis—really a series of separate crises—many Europeans are rejecting established parties, policies, and preferences. Perhaps the biggest upheavals have happened in France, where recent elections propelled a relative political newcomer to the presidency and a novel political party to power; and in Britain, where a majority of voters opted in a referendum in June 2016 for their country to leave the European Union (EU). Populist politicians and parties are on the rise, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, where illiberal democracy is pervasive in Hungary and Poland.

This course explores these and other developments in a comparative politics framework, and asks: what is the meaning of Europe and of being European? How do Europeans identify themselves? Are there political or other fault lines that divide countries from each other? What are the fault lines within particular countries? Have Left and Right lost their once-powerful political appeal and salience? Why is Euroskepticism—dislike of the EU—so prevalent? The course will raise a wide range of issues currently of concern to most Europeans, ranging from democratic participation and representation, to prospects for economic growth, to rising inequality and the future of the welfare state, to immigration and security.

**Instructor:** Professor Desmond Dinan, Schar School of Policy and Government (ddinan@gmu.edu).

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00-1:00pm and 3:00-4:00pm; location to be announced. Students may also see Professor Dinan, by appointment, at other times on the Arlington campus.

**Readings:**
There is one required book: Tim Bale, *European Politics: A Comparative Introduction*, 4th edition (Palgrave, 2017). There will be a number of other required items, such as newspaper, magazine and journal articles, and think-tank pieces, relating to topics covered in the course. These will be available on the Web, either in open sources or through Mason’s library databases. In addition, students should follow European politics in the media, notably in the following sources:


*EurActiv,* [https://www.euractiv.com](https://www.euractiv.com)


*Financial Times,* The Europolitans, [https://www.ft.com/europolitans](https://www.ft.com/europolitans)
Assessment: Assessment will be based on a mid-term exam (30% of course grade), a final exam (40%), and a short policy paper (30%) on one of the following topics:

- Brexit: Current State of the Negotiations
- The Migration Crisis: Update for 2017
- The Euro Crisis: Update on Greece
- European Union Sanctions against Russia: Stresses and Strains

Students will receive guidelines for the policy paper during the semester.

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

Class Schedule:

Week 1
Overview: Europe Today
Readings:
Bale, Introduction and Chapter 1

Weeks 2 and 3
Nations, States, and the Supranational European Union (including discussion of EU Commission President Jean Claude Juncker’s “State of the Union” speech)
Readings:
Bale, Chapter 2
BBC, “What is the EU and How Does it Work?” http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zgiwtyc
Week 4
Governing and Policy-Making
Readings:
Bale, Chapter 3; other readings to follow

Weeks 5 and 6
Governments and Parliaments (including discussion of the German federal elections, which take place on Sunday, September 24)
Readings:
Bale, Chapter 4; other readings to follow

Weeks 7 and 8
Political Parties (including discussion of the European Council of October 19-20)
Note: No class on October 10 due to Columbus Day recess; Mid-Term Exam, Thursday, October 19
Readings:
Bale, Chapter 5; other readings to follow

Weeks 9 and 10
Elections and Referendums
Readings:
Bale, Chapter 6; other readings to follow

Week 11
Media
Readings:
Bale, Chapter 7; other readings to follow

Week 12
Political Participation Beyond the Ballot Box
Readings:
Bale, Chapter 8; other readings to follow

Week 13
Post-Crisis Politics
Note: No class on November 23 due to Thanksgiving Day
Readings:
Bale, Chapter 9; other readings to follow

Week 14
Migration and Immigration
Deadline of Thursday, November 30, for submission of policy paper
Readings:
Bale, Chapter 10; other readings to follow
**Week 15**
**Europe and the Wider World**

**Readings:**
Bale, Chapter 11; other readings to follow

**Final Exam, December 19**

**University Policies:**

**Academic Integrity:** Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask the instructor for guidance and clarification.

**Disability:** If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; http://ods.gmu.edu) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) speak to your instructor about your accommodation needs.