Course Description

The United Kingdom (UK) is due to leave the European Union (EU) on January 31, 2020. The road to “Brexit” (the UK’s departure) has been tortuous. This is due not only to the complexity of a country’s withdrawal from a political entity such as the EU—a quasi-federation that binds its member states closely together in a wide range of policy fields—but also to the unexpected political fallout from Brexit within the UK. Since the referendum of June 2016, which advocates of leaving the EU won by a narrow margin, Brexit has polarized public and parliamentary opinion in the UK, and dominated national politics. Unable to win a parliamentary majority in favor of the initial EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement, which took almost two years to negotiate, the UK government missed meeting the original Brexit deadline, in March 2019. Only after the general election in December 2019—the second since the referendum—was the government able to pass a revised Withdrawal Agreement through the House of Commons.

This course examines the origins, conduct, and likely consequences of Brexit, which is one of the most momentous political, economic, and constitutional developments for both the EU and the UK. Topics include:

* Origins and development of the European Communities; the UK’s initial absence

* The road to UK membership in the European Community (1973)

* The UK’s experience of European Community membership (1973-1987)

* Margaret Thatcher; the single market and monetary union; and the birth of Euroskepticism in the UK

* The UK in the EU (1993-2010)

* The rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the resurgence of Euroskepticism (2010-2015)

* David Cameron; the New Settlement; and the origin of the 2016 referendum

* The 2016 referendum campaign and result
* Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union
* Triggering Article 50
* The UK’s 2017 general election
* Negotiating the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration
* The UK’s failure to approve the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration
* Boris Johnson; renegotiating the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration; and the December 2019 general election
* “Getting Brexit Done”
* Next steps: negotiating a post-Brexit arrangement between the EU and the UK
* Brexit and Northern Ireland
* Brexit and Scottish nationalism
* Brexit and the future of the EU: constitutional, political, economic, and security implications
* Brexit and UK-US relations

**Instructor**  
Professor Desmond Dinan (ddinan@gmu.edu)  
*Ad personam* Jean Monnet Chair, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

**Visiting European Parliament Fellow**  
Mr. Ryan Meilak  
Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University, and European Parliament, Brussels

**Office Hours**  
Wednesdays 4:00-7:00pm, Research Hall Room 359 (the open area in the Schar School office suite), or by appointment at other times on the Arlington campus

**Learning Outcomes**  
Knowledge of EU and UK politics and policy-making processes  
Knowledge of Brexit  
Ability to write policy and position papers

**Assignments**
1. Participation in class discussion (20% of course grade)
2. A paper (approximately 2,000 words) on an aspect of the UK’s involvement in the EC/EU before the onset of Brexit, chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor (30% of course grade)
   a. Deadline to agree on topic: February 5
   b. Deadline to submit paper: March 4
3. A paper (approximately 4,000 words) on a political, economic, institutional, or constitutional dimension of Brexit, chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor (50% of course grade)
   a. Deadline to agree on topic: March 4
   b. Deadline to submit paper: April 22

Readings
There is a vast literature on Brexit, including official documents and speeches, books, think tank pieces, academic journal articles, long-form newspaper and other media articles, and punditry. There are no books assigned for the course, which will draw instead on a range of other material, linked to each topic and class session. More information about class topics and sessions, including a list of required reading, will be mailed to students throughout the semester. The readings will form the basis of class discussions.

The following sources provide useful background reading on the subject of Brexit:

Official Sources
UK Government, Brexit: https://www.gov.uk/brexit
UK Prime Minister’s Office: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/prime-ministers-office-10-downing-street#content

Think Tanks
The UK in a Changing Europe: https://ukandeu.ac.uk
London School of Economics, Brexit: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/
Center for European Reform, Brexit: https://www.cer.eu/hot-topics/brexit

Media
Financial Times, Brexit: https://www.ft.com/brexit
Session 1 (January 22)
Introduction: The EU and the UK on the Eve of Brexit
This session will cover the state of play in the Brexit process, following the renegotiation of the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration and the recent UK general election.
Readings:
Media and Think Tanks:
Financial Times Brexit Briefing, “Squaring the Brexit Circle,” December 24, 2019: https://www.ft.com/content/190378de-2643-11ea-9a4f-963f0ec7e134
Financial Times Brexit Briefing, “Brexit Predictions for 2020,” December 14, 2019: https://www.ft.com/content/1ee3b0de-20cb-11ea-b8a1-584213ee7b2b
(This is a guide to the legislative steps necessary in the UK in order to facilitate the country’s withdrawal from the EU on January 31, 2020)
Official Sources:
(This is the official outcome of the discussion of Brexit, by leaders of the EU27, on December 13, 2019)
(This info-graphic provides useful background information on how the EU has dealt with Brexit)
(This briefing, by the European Parliamentary Research Service, sets out the agenda of the current presidency of the Council of the EU. It puts Brexit in the perspective of what the EU needs to address in the coming six months)
The following documents explain the difference between the original and the revised Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration:
House of Commons: Revisions to the Political Declaration, 18 October 2019 (summary of full report): https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8714
Letter from Commission President Juncker to European Council President Tusk, 19 October 2019: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/letter_president_juncker_to_president_tusk_0.pdf
European Council, Revised text on Northern Ireland:
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/revised_withdrawal_agreement_including_protocol_on_ireland_and_nothern_ireland.pdf
European Council, revised political declaration:
Commission President Ursula von der Leyen’s visit to London, 8 January 2020
Speech at the London School of Economics:
FT article on the speech: https://www.ft.com/content/76624cac-3238-11ea-a329-0bcf87a328f2
Official UK government report on the meeting with PM Boris Johnson:
Official Commission readout of the meeting:
FT report on the meeting: https://www.ft.com/content/a0190f9a-3206-11ea-a329-0bcf87a328f2
Guardian report on the meeting:

Session 2 (January 29)
Origins and development of the European Communities; the UK’s initial absence
Britain was the leading Western European power after the Second World War, at a time of profound change in the international political and economic system. One of those changes resulted in the emergence of the European Communities: first the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952; then the European Economic Community in 1958. Britain’s decision not to join either Community set the stage for Britain’s troubled connection with the course of European political and economic integration in the decades ahead. It is impossible to understand Brexit without first understanding Britain’s involvement (or non-involvement) in the European project in the late 1940s and the 1950s.
Readings:
Historical Overview
Desmond Dinan, “How did we get here?” in Daniel Kenealy, et al, The European Union: How Does it Work? 5th edition, Oxford University Press, 2018; will be e-mailed to students (Please read pp. 25-33)
Tony Connelly, “Britain’s tortured relationship with Europe,” RTE, March 14, 2017:
https://www.rte.ie/news/analysis-and-comment/2017/0225/855110-britain-and-europe/ (a review of Britain’s relationship with the European Communities from the late 1940s to the early 1960s)

*Original Documents*

Churchill speech, Zurich, September 19, 1946:  
https://rm.coe.int/16806981f3

Marshall speech, Harvard University, June 5, 1947:  

Hoffman statement on the European economy, October 31, 1949:  

Schuman Declaration, May 9, 1950:  
https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en

Record of a conversation between Acheson, Bevin, and Schuman in London, May 11, 1950:  
https://www.cvce.eu/en/unit-content/-/unit/5cc6b004-33b7-4e44-b6db-f5f9e6c01023/9f64d11c-0f79-4eeb-983d-b2700fc62cdf/Resources#fa9738ad-a94d-4c91-99da-0b7a115cdec1a_en&overlay

Review of preliminary discussions on the Schuman Plan by the UK Ambassador in Paris, June 6, 1950:  
https://www.cvce.eu/en/unit-content/-/unit/5cc6b004-33b7-4e44-b6db-f5f9e6c01023/9f64d11c-0f79-4eeb-983d-b2700fc62cdf/Resources#69254314-4b85-43ef-85fb-f5de0353e49_en&overlay

Benelux memorandum, May 1955  
https://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_benelux_memorandum-en-58119e2d-faf6-4faa-9bc1-d1918343bb6e.html

UK note to German government on non-participation in EEC negotiations, November 1955:  
https://www.cvce.eu/en/collections/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58ad468a3e68ff/1c0fe062-3bbd-4e91-a307-06b99b70fd66/Resources#5ca6902-3b04-4a79-9a6d-4cd8144b8cece_en&overlay

Rome Treaty, March 1957:  

(Please read the preamble and principles, pp. 2-6)

*Commentary and Book Reviews*


Helen Parr, review of Continental Drift, *English Historical Review*, 133/563 (2018), pp. 1009-1011; will be e-mailed to students (a review of three books on Britain’s approach to European political and economic integration in the postwar years)

*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.