

CPO 3103

Western European Politics

M, W, F, period 5 (11:45-12:35)
AND 034

Professor Schirmer

Office Hours: W 2:00 – 4:00, F 10:00 – 11:00 in AND 205
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The objective of the course is to familiarize students with the varieties of democratic political systems in Western Europe. This entails discussion of the institutional structures and workings of parliamentary systems, guided by the question how democracy is enacted in different constitutional frames. A second major focus is on political economy and the question of the role of the state in the running of the economy.

Throughout the course, we shall make implicit and explicit comparisons with the political and economic system of the United States. One reason for this is that it allows us to recognize what is similar and what is different in Western Europe. The main reason, however, is that public discourse commonly treats Europe and the United States as contrasting models of how to run advanced democratic societies, playing on familiar contrasts like ‘equality vs. freedom’, ‘soft vs. hard power’, and ‘welfare-state vs. liberalism.’ This calls, on the one hand, for general reflections of normative preferences and the quality of democracy and, on the other hand, scrutiny: As we will see, simple dichotomies of the type “social Europe vs. liberal US” flatten the differences that exist among European political systems and are, in some instances, outright misleading.

“Western Europe” as a geographical, political, and cultural category is – like all regional designations – ambiguous and historically malleable. We will hence start the course by embedding contemporary Western Europe in the broader historical trajectory that has shaped it.

Course Format:

The course alternates between lecture (questions and discussion welcome) and student presentations. You will find that the course plan is interspersed with a total of nine Real World topics. These topics will be introduced and presented by groups of students. Participation in one of the Real World groups is mandatory.

Readings:

Class readings are specified on a week-by-week basis in the course plan. The bulk of the readings is drawn from the following two books:

- Gallagher, Laver, Mair: Representative Government in Modern Europe: Institutions, Parties, and Governments (Boston et al., McGraw Hill: 4th edition); and
- Tony Judt, Ill Fares the Land (New York: Penguin, 2010).

These books can be purchased at the usual outlets. In addition, purchase of the following work is recommend:

- Perry Anderson, The New Old World (London: Verso, 2009)

Additional readings will be made available online.

Students are strongly encouraged to complete the readings in advance of class.

Class Requirements:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and complete their readings in a timely manner.

Participation in one Real World-group is mandatory (sign-up will begin in the second week of the term).

Students are further required to submit three response papers. These are 2-page papers written in response to the week's topic. The form is open; they can be written as summaries of the readings/lecture or as critical think pieces or commentary. See the course plan for the due dates for the RPs.

An in-class midterm exam will be held Oct 12; the final exam will be scheduled during exam period.

e-Learning:

We use Sakai primarily for announcements and the circulation of reading materials. The gradebook will also be kept there.

Grading:

Midterm Exam	25 %
Final Exam	25 %
Participation (attendance and Real World presentation)	25 %
Response Papers	25 %

Course Plan

Week 1 *Introduction*

- 1/7 Course Topics
1/9 Course Mechanics
1/11 General Discussion (please come armed with questions and comments!)
- Reading: Gallagher et al., Representative Government, chapter 1 (1-22).

Week 2 *Which Western Europe?*

- 1/14 Geographical Scopes
1/16 So close, so far apart:
1/18 Comparing Western Europe and the United States
- Readings: Judt, Ill Fares the Land, Chapter One: The Way We Live Now (11-40),
Kagan, Power and Weakness (Sakai), Rifkin, Worlds Apart (Sakai).

Part I – Western Europe Since 1900: A Historical Approach

Week 3 *Mass Politics and Mass Destruction: 1900-1950*

- 1/21 no class (MLK-Day)
1/23 1900-1933
1/25 The Abyss
- Readings: Paul Preston, The Great Civil War: European Politics, 1914-1945, in:
Oxford Illustrated History of Modern Europe, ed. by T.C.W. Blanning, 148-181;
Harold James, The Fall and Rise of the European Economy in the Twentieth Century,
in: Oxford Illustrated History, 182-209 (read pages 182-192; the rest will follow
next week!). Readings for Week 3 will all be posted on Sakai.

Week 4 *Cold War and Prosperity: 1950-1989*

- 1/28 Post-War Reconstruction and Economic Boom
1/30 European Integration
2/1 Real World: Cold War Berlin
- Readings: James, Fall and Rise, 192-209, Judt, Ill Fares the Land, Chapter Two: The
World We Have Lost (41-80); Perry Anderson, The New Old World, chapter 1:
Origins, 3-46.

Week 5 *After the Divide: 1989 to the Present*

- 2/4 no class
2/6 no class
2/8 Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe
- Readings, Judt, Ill Fares the Land, Chapter Four: Goodbye to All That? 137-153;
Timothy Garton Ash, Ten Years After, New York Review of Books, Nov 18, 1999.

Part II – Varieties of Democracy

Week 6 ***After the Divide, cont., and Parliamentary Systems***

- 2/11 How 1989 Changed Western Europe
2/13 Real World: Solidarity and the End of State-Socialism **1st Response**
2/15 Parliamentary vs. Presidential Systems **Paper Due!**
Readings: Gallagher et al, Representative Government, chapters 2 and 3 (23-83).

Week 7 ***Parliamentary Systems, contd.***

- 2/18 Parliament and the Executive
2/20 The Making and Un-Making of Governments
2/22 Real World: An Untypical Case – The Monti-Government in Italy
Readings: Gallagher et al, Representative Government, chapter 12 (412-455).

Week 8 ***Midterm Exam Week***

- 2/25 Q & A
2/27 Exam Preview
3/1 Midterm Exam

Week 9 ***Spring Break***

Week 10 ***Party Systems***

- 3/11 Typologies of Party Systems
3/13 “Families” **2nd Response Paper Due!**
3/15 Real World: A Party System in Change? – The British Case
Readings: Gallagher et al, Representative Government, chapters 7 and 8 (195-277).

Week 11 ***Elections and Electoral Systems***

- 3/18 Majority Voting and Proportional Voting
3/20 Causes and Consequences of Electoral Systems
3/22 Real World: The Best of Both Worlds? – STV in Ireland
Readings: Gallagher et al., Representative Government, chapter 11 (366-411).

Week 11 ***How People Vote: Cleavage Structures***

- 3/25 What Cleavages Are (and how they used to be)
3/27 Changes in Cleavage Structure
3/29 Real World: Pirates (Not of the Carribean)
Readings: Gallagher et al, Representative Government, chapter 9 (278-325).

Part III – A Gentler Society?

Week 12 Equality over Individualism? Welfare Regimes

4/1 Three Types of Welfare Capitalism

4/3 The Welfare State in Retreat?

4/5 no class

Readings: G. Esping-Andersen, “Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism,” Paul Pierson, “The New Politics of the Welfare State,” and Clayton/Pontusson, “Welfare State Retrenchment Revisited,” all in: Pierson/Castles, *The Welfare State Reader* (Sakai).

Week 13 Different Kinds of Capitalist Economies

4/8 The Varieties of Capitalism-Approach

4/10 CMEs and LMEs – Corporatism and Liberalism

4/12 The Consequences

Readings: Gallagher et al, *Representative Government*, chapter 13 (459-479)

Part IV – The EU, the Common Currency, and the Financial Crisis

Week 14 “... a market, competitive and free of distortions”

4/15 The Logic of European Integration

4/17 The Institutions of the EU

4/19 Real World: The Sovereign Debt Crisis in Greece

Reading: Perry Anderson, *The New Old World*, chapter 2: Outcomes (47-78).

Week 15 The Monetary Union and the Crisis

4/22 The Euro and the ECB

4/24 Plummeting Into Crisis

3rd Response Paper Due!

Readings: t.b.a.