

West European Politics

Spring 2026 – CPO 3103/ EUS 3930

Professor: Hannah M. Alarian
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Office Hours: Tu 12:30pm-2:30pm
Office Location: 004 Anderson
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Class Time: Tu 10:40 AM – 11:30 AM
Th 10:40 AM – 12:35 PM

Class Location: FLI 0117

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1. General Information

Course Description

This course focuses on the comparative representative democracies of West Europe. This course stresses party systems and the social bases of politics in industrialized societies. Throughout the course, students will critically examine the structure and operation of Western European institutions and the implications such institutions have for political and policy outcomes. This knowledge will enable students to think analytically about Western European institutions for present-day European politics, as well as to think critically regarding political and policy issues in West European states and throughout the wider European Union.

Course Pre-Requisites/ Co-Requisites

CPO2001 is required.

General Education Designation

None.

Course Materials

The bulk of the assigned readings will come from the following text (GLM in the semester schedule).

1. Gallagher, M., Laver, M., & Mair, P. (2011). [Representative government in modern Europe](#). McGraw-Hill.

This book is an excellent introduction to the concepts we will discuss in class as well as a great resource as you consider your final paper. In addition to the assigned textbook, I will post required readings from academic journals or excerpts of larger works to Canvas. Additionally, students are expected to keep abreast of current affairs related to Europe and the EU from reputable news sources, including but not limited to the New York Times, Guardian, BBC, and the Washington Post. As this class covers current and on-going events across Western Europe, the syllabus is subject to change should any new event occur during our semester which requires our in-depth discussion and analysis.

Availability

The required textbook is available through the UF bookstore and other reputable booksellers. Other materials are available through the following means:

1. UF Library ([link](#))
 - Off-campus access ([link](#))
2. Course Reserves ([link](#))
3. Google Scholar ([link](#))

Materials Fee

None. Students must, however, download the phone iClicker app. Learn more about setting up iClicker at this [link](#). You can download the iClicker app from the Google Play or Apple app Store.

2. Course Goals

Course Objectives

In this course, we will learn about the West European politics and political structures. The course is divided into three modules through which we will explore key themes necessary to the study of West Europe: Institutions, Cases, and Modern Europe.

Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate awareness of prominent theories of West European politics globally
2. Understand new research in West European politics
3. Refine skills required to engage in civil, professional discourse that is essential to any career

3. Graded Work

Course Evaluation Criteria

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade	Due Date
Attendance & Participation	20%	Weekly
Exam 1	5%	February 19
Research Paper	35%	—
<i>Proposal</i>	3%	February 24
<i>Draft</i>	8%	March 30
<i>Review</i>	4%	April 9
<i>Final</i>	20%	April 28
Exam 2	10%	March 26
Presentation	15%	April 17-21
Exam 3	15%	April 24

Course Evaluation Details

Attendance & Participation – 20%

Course attendance accounts for 5% of your total grade. Attendance includes showing up to class on time and staying in class throughout the entire scheduled course period (i.e., no late arrivals or early exits). Attendance will be assessed using the iClicker app. **Scores will be adjusted daily for partial credit for late arrivals and early class exits.** All students are permitted to miss two classes without penalty (see [Absence Policy](#)).

Participation accounts for 15% of the evaluation. You should attend class prepared to discuss the assigned reading for that class meeting. Participation may include providing personal insight to the material, outside articles, current events, or responding to classmates. iClicker and in-class quizzes will also be used to track participation.

In addition to class participation, several in-class activities will occur throughout the semester. **No laptops or printed material are to be used during in-class activity days.** Usage of handwritten notes is graduated throughout the semester: full usage of any handwritten notes for activity 1; one page of handwritten notes allowed for activity 2; no notes for activity 3.

- **Debates** will require students to argue for or against a question provided in the syllabus. Roles will be assigned in class and students should come prepared to take either side of the debate.
- **Policy Proposals** will require students to discuss and present a policy proposal for a given actor (e.g., a country or the EU) in response to the question posed in the syllabus. Roles will be assigned in class. Students should be prepared to present to either audience.

Exams – 30%

There will be a total of three open-book exams throughout the course, taken in class. Students must come to the test day with 1) a BlueBook and 2) ample writing utensils. Students may use printed notes, but cannot consult any online or outside-class material during the exam. These exams will cover material from required readings and lectures cumulatively. These tests offer an opportunity to display your application and analysis of important concepts and themes discussed in class. Tests are staggered in point value to reflect growing confidence with the material and course structure. The first test constitutes 5%, the second 10%, and the third 15% of your total grade. No late or makeup tests will be accepted.

Final Paper – 20%

The final **paired** paper is the main writing activity for the course. This 20-to-22-page paper will be worth 20% of your grade. In this policy-oriented research paper, students will engage in a detailed analysis of one policy event currently facing modern Western Europe, in a case of their choice. Students will have the choice of one of three broad topics: the Eurozone crisis, far-right populist movements, or immigration. You may speak to any actor (e.g., the EU, Germany) and involve any other ongoing event (e.g., Brexit), but must primarily discuss your chosen event, case, and include readings from the course in your analysis.

All paper topics **must be approved by the end of week three**. You are expected to begin working on this project early on in the course. We will have multiple opportunities to discuss this paper throughout the course, individually and as a group. Electronic copies of the final paper must be turned in by the [final date and time](#). No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval.

Students will also include a response to their peer review comments attached to their final paper submission as a letter to the editor (to be discussed in class). **Submissions without these responses will have 5% deducted from their final paper grade.**

Details of submission for all aspects of this written assignment are available on Canvas. Assignments without a peer evaluation form (see Canvas) will not receive credit.

Final Research Paper Proposal, Draft and Review– 15%

Students will write and submit a brief **two-page maximum** proposal to move toward a successful final paper. At a minimum, this proposal should include a proposed title, question, theories, and cases you will consider in your final paper. Students will post their proposal to Canvas by 11:59pm on the due date (3%).

Students will additionally move to write a brief draft of their final paper to assist them in writing their final paper. The draft should be 8 pages, with a 1-page reference list. Drafts of these final papers will focus on defining the problem/puzzle examined, the argument proposed, and most importantly, the proposed study design to test the hypotheses. Students will post their draft to Canvas by 11:59pm on the due date (8%).

After submission of the Final Paper draft, students will provide comments to two of their fellow classmates' drafts on Canvas (11:59pm on the due date). This response is worth 4% of your total grade. This response should be at least two pages and include: 1) a summary of the argument, 2) indicate strong components of the piece; 3) highlight elements that require additional discussion and; 4) suggestions for improvement.

Final Paper Presentations – 15%

This assignment will require students present on 1) your modern problem facing Europe and 2) the main findings of your final paper. This **eight-minute** presentation should be a coherent and collective analysis of your independent research on the same topic. Students will be evaluated on the clarity and content of their presentation as well as their ability to ask and answer questions to and from their fellow classmates.

Presentations will be submitted Canvas one full day before your scheduled presentation day. For example, if you are scheduled on Thursday, you must post your presentation on Wednesday prior to 12:35 pm.

Absences

All students are awarded two unexcused absences without penalty to attendance and participation. You do not need to contact the professor or the grader to use these unexcused absences. Excused absences are those that meet university policy. No additional options for excused absences are available beyond those mandated by ([university policy](#)). Planned excused absences must be communicated before the start of class.

Late or Make-up Assignments

No late or make-up assignments will be accepted without prior approval. There is a one-hour grace period in which 10% will be deducted from your final grade. If an assignment is submitted late without prior approval **beyond one hour, it will receive a 0.** There are no exceptions.

At least one week's notice is required for an assignment or exam extension request. Acceptable reasons for exam or assignment extension are in accordance with the university attendance policy. Assignment deadlines for other courses are not valid excuses for any assignment or exam extension request.

Grading Policy

I do not under any circumstances round or adjust grades. This policy is not an attempt to be harsh, but to treat all students equally.

Grading Scale

Percent	Grade	Grade Points	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
94.0–100	A	4.00	74–76.9	C	2.00
90–93.9	A-	3.67	70–73.9	C-	1.67
87–89.9	B+	3.33	67–69.9	D+	1.33
84–86.9	B	3.00	64–66.9	D	1.00
80–83.9	B-	2.67	60–63.9	D-	0.67
77–79.9	C+	2.33	0 – 59.9	E	0.00

4. Class Policies

Syllabus

This syllabus is a living document. This means it is subject to change. All potential changes will be communicated to you in our class meetings and on Canvas.

Expected Workload

You should be aware that our course requires a significant amount of outside work including reading, writing, analysis, and preparing comments. As a Carnegie I, research-intensive university, UF is required by federal law to assign at least 2 hours of work outside of class for every contact hour. Work done in these hours may include reading/viewing assigned material, completing explicitly assigned individual or group work, reviewing class notes, synthesizing information in advance of exams or papers, and other self-determined study tasks.

For our 3-credit class, this means you should expect to spend 6-9 hours per week outside of class. This can of course vary by week, but plan accordingly. I strongly encourage you to speak to me during office hours if you encounter any struggles or difficulties.

Lecture Slides

I will post redacted lecture slides on a password protected link on my website at the conclusion of each class meeting. The password will be provided on the second day of class. The slides are meant as a guide and are in no way a substitute for lecture. My hope is that by providing redacted slides – which will often have definitions – you will not have to spend the entire class furiously note taking and can pay close attention to the lecture, ask questions, and participate deeply in class discussion. If, however, class participation or attendance wanes, I retain the right to end sharing lecture slides.

Technology Policy

Research shows students learn and retain information best taking notes by hand (see [Scientific American: A Learning Secret - Don't take Notes with a Laptop](#)). As I want to provide the best learning environment, I prefer your laptops stay in your bag or at home throughout the duration of our class. At times, we may use cell phones to conduct real time polling or quizzes during class. I expect your phone to be put away outside of these times. **Laptops are forbidden during in-class debates and policy proposal exercises.**

The use of ChatGPT or other AI assistance for any assignment is strictly prohibited. There is no assignment throughout this course in which any generative AI is acceptable. Use of these AI tools for the completion of any assignment will be treated as a violation of academic integrity. These tools often provide overly confident, biased information, and generate fictional references. The tools also have limited or no knowledge of recent events. **The Professor reserves the right to move the modality of assignments if the use of ChatGPT etc., is suspected (e.g., oral exams).**

Referencing the Professor

Often, students have questions over proper naming or titling etiquette for communicating with their professors. In an effort to remove this confusion and reduce email anxiety, you may use any of the following acceptable references in all communication with me throughout the course.

- Professor Alarian
- Dr. Alarian
- Prof. A.
- Dr. A.

Contacting the Professor

Students should use professional communication norms when contacting me. This means including a professional salutation (e.g., “Dear Professor) and signature (e.g., Best wishes, NAME). Students should use Canvas to contact me. Although you may email me at my UF email account, the university strongly encourages that we communicate via Canvas to avoid the potential of violations of student confidentiality protected by [FERPA](#). I strongly encourage students to visit my office hours virtually or in person, scheduled [here](#), to discuss any course questions, comments, or concerns. **Please keep in mind that I am a Title IX mandatory reporter.**

Email/Messaging Hours

You may contact me at any time that is convenient to you. I will respond within one business day between the hours of 8am and 5pm. If you do not receive a reply from me after 48 hours, please resend your message. Although I may sometimes reply outside of these designated hours, responses cannot be guaranteed after 5pm on weekdays, on weekends, or holidays. Please plan accordingly to have your questions answered in advance of assignment and exam deadlines.

Letters of Recommendation

If you anticipate requesting that I write a letter on your behalf, please note that I expect you to have attended multiple office hours and actively participated in class discussions throughout the course. It is unlikely I will be able to write a letter on your behalf without satisfying both of these conditions. **Attending class itself, in other words, is not sufficient for a letter of recommendation.** You can read more about my letter of recommendation policy on my [website](#).

Special Note regarding EU Studies students

This course is applicable for the EU Studies minor and certificate. To receive credit for the minor, students must receive permission from me in advance and indicate their participation in the course with CES. CES also asks students to submit their final paper to the Academic Programs Coordinator for confirmation of appropriate content. Students may choose any of the paper topics but must write with the paper with a strong emphasis on the EU.

5. University Policies and Resources

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see this [link](#).

6. Semester Schedule

I. Institutions of Western Europe

Week 1: Introduction

January 13 – Introducing the Course

- Syllabus
- Green, Amelia. 2013. How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps.

January 15 – *Class canceled*

Week 2: The European State

January 20 – Introducing Western Europe

- Lijphart, A. (1969). Consociational democracy. *World Politics*, 21 (02), 207-225.
- GLM Ch 1

January 22 - European States

- GLM Ch 2, 3, 4

Week 3: European Governance

January 27 - Debate

Debate: Parliamentary systems are better than presidential ones. - *Handwritten notes permitted*

January 29 – European Union

- GLM Ch 5
- Pollack, M. A. (2005). Theorizing the European Union: international organization, domestic polity, or experiment in new governance? *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, 8, 357-398.

Week 4: European Integration

February 3

- Dinan, D. (1999). 'Introduction.' Ever closer union: an introduction to European integration. Boulder: London.
- Majone, G. (1998). Europe's 'democratic deficit': The question of standards. *European law journal*, 4(1), 5-28.

February 5

Policy proposal: When should the EU 'integrate' or 'de-integrate'? – *1 note page is permitted*

Week 5: Party Politics and Governmental Formation

February 10

- GLM Ch 7 & 8

February 12: Party Systems & Elections

- GLM Ch 9 & 11

Week 6: Debate & Exam

February 17

Debate: Political parties doomed to extinction. - *No notes are permitted*

February 19

EXAM I

I. Case Studies

Week 7: Germany

February 24 - Identity and Nationality

- Dalton, R. J. (2014). Interpreting partisan dealignment in Germany. *German Politics*, 23(1-2), 134-144.
- Alarian, H. Cause or Consequence? The AfD and Attitudes toward Migration Policy. *German Politics and Society*.

FINAL PAPER [PROPOSAL](#) DUE BY MIDNIGHT

February 26

- “Europe’s reluctant hegemon.” *The Economist*, June 14, 2013.
- Matthijs, M. (2016). The three faces of German leadership. *Survival*, 58(2), 135-154.

Week 8: The Low Country

March 3 – The Netherlands & Belgium

- Billiet, J., Maddens, B., & Frogner, A. P. (2013). Does Belgium (still) exist? Differences in political culture between Flemings and Walloons. In *The politics of Belgium* (pp. 50-70). Routledge.
- Mair, P. (2008). Electoral volatility and the Dutch party system: A comparative perspective. *Acta Politica*, 43(2-3), 235-253.

March 5 – Netherlands & Belgium Governance

- Yukleyen, A. (2010). State policies and Islam in Europe: Milli Gorus in Germany and the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 36(3), 445-463.
- Devos, C., & Sinardet, D. (2012). Governing without a government: The Belgian experiment. *Governance*, 25(2), 167-171.

Week 9: United Kingdom – Independence and Referendums

March 10 – Identity and Power in the UK

- Henderson, A., Jeffery, C., Liñeira, R., Scully, R., Wincott, D., & Wyn Jones, R. (2016). England, Englishness and Brexit. *Political Quarterly*, 87(2), 187-199.
- Colley, L. (2014). ‘Scotland was never a colony. *The Economist*.
- Cairney, P. (2015). The Scottish independence referendum: what are the implications of a No Vote? *Political Quarterly*, 86(2), 186-191.

March 12 – Brexit

- Hobolt, S. B. (2016). The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(9), 1259-1277.
- Goodwin, M., & Heath, O. (2016). The 2016 Referendum, Brexit, and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-Level Analysis of the Result. *The Political Quarterly*, 87(3), 323-332.
- Curtice, J. (2016). Brexit: Behind the referendum. *Political Insight*, 7(2), 4-7.

Week 10: Debate

March 24

[Debate](#): Scotland should hold a 2nd independence referendum regardless of the U.K. - *No notes*

March 26– [EXAM II](#)

FINAL [PAPER DRAFT](#) DUE March 30th

II. Modern Issues of Western Europe

Week 11: Eurozone Crisis

March 31

- Matthijs, M., & McNamara, K. (2015). The euro crisis' theory effect: northern saints, southern sinners, and the demise of the eurobond. *Journal of European Integration*, 37(2), 229-245.
- Greenspan, A. (2011), 'Europe's Crisis is All about the North-South Split', Financial Times.
- Blyth, M. (2013). The austerity delusion: why a bad idea won over the west. *Foreign Affairs*, 92, 41.

April 3

Debate: The Greenspan plan was the right choice for Europe. - *No notes*

- Hoynes, H., Miller, D. L., & Schaller, J. (2012). Who suffers during recessions? *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 26(3), 27-47.
- Hobolt, S. B., & Tilley, J. (2016). Fleeing the centre: the rise of challenger parties in the aftermath of the euro crisis. *West European Politics*, 39(5), 971-991.

Week 12: Immigration and Far-Right Populism

April 7

- Börzel, T. A., & Risse, T. (2017). From the euro to the Schengen crises: European integration theories, politicization, and identity politics. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1-26.
- Esses, V. M., Hamilton, L. K., & Gaucher, D. (2017). The global refugee crisis: empirical evidence and policy implications for improving public attitudes and facilitating refugee resettlement. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 11(1), 78-123.
- Brubaker, R. (2001). The return of assimilation? Changing perspectives on immigration and its sequels in France, Germany, and the United States. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 24(4), 531-548.

April 9

- Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2016). Trump, Brexit, and the rise of populism: Economic have-nots and cultural backlash.
- Kitschelt, H. (2007). "Growth and persistence of the radical right in postindustrial democracies: Advances and challenges in comparative research." *West European Politics*, 30(5), 1176-1206.
- Boomgaarden, H. G., & Vliegenthart, R. (2007). Explaining the rise of anti-immigrant parties: The role of news media content. *Electoral studies*, 26(2), 404-417.

FINAL PAPER DRAFT COMMENTS DUE AT 11:59 PM

Week 13: Solving European Problems

April 14

Policy proposal: How should Europe deal with the threat of far-right populism? - *No notes*

April 17

Presentation Eurozone Crisis Papers

Presentation Immigration Papers

Week 14: Presentations

April 21

Presentation Far-right Papers

Final Exam

April 28, 3-5pm

EXAM III

Final Papers due April 24th (11:59pm)