RPOS 351: European Politics and Policy
Instructor: Dr. Katherine Truby
Spring 2015
Wednesdays 5:45-8:35
Humanities 132
Office hours: Wednesdays 5-5:40 in Humanities 16
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Course Description:

The European Union (EU) is a fascinating political and economic experiment. Since 1952, the EU has grown to include 28 countries, 24 official languages, 505 million citizens, and 4 different political systems. It is currently the largest economy in the world, with its own voice in global affairs. Despite all these successes, European countries have struggled to create a joint constitution and set of political institutions. What are the prospects for this fragile political consensus after the recent financial crisis? How are economic hardship and government debt affecting social equity, reactions to migration, and the role of European states in providing social support, healthcare and education? How does economic and political integration exacerbate or ameliorate tensions between countries? How does membership in the EU shape the way that member states interact with the rest of the world? This course tackles these core questions by analyzing the politics and policy of the European Union and its member states. This course combines elements of global politics, comparative politics and public policy, and is aimed at upper level undergraduates who want to reflect on these topics in some depth. Using a primarily policy-centered approach, we will explore the key comparative issues in Europe through an analysis of contemporary social and political dynamics in the EU.

This course has no formal prerequisites, however, it is highly recommended that students take RPOS102 Comparative and International Politics before taking this course.

Course Goals: This course fulfills the international perspectives general education requirement.

1. Articulate key concepts and debates within Political Science as they relate to the context of the European Union.
2. Use evidence from contemporary sources to explain in writing and in person the key issues facing the member states of the European Union.
3. Compare and contrast cases (e.g., policy processes and decisions) based on relevant concepts in Political Science.
4. Critically evaluate policy data and presentation.
5. Identify and draw thoughtful connections between processes at the supranational level (the EU) and the national level, using language, theories, and concepts relevant to the course.

Course Format: This class is taught using a Team Based Learning approach. What does this mean for you? You’ll spend each class session working primarily in your teams (assigned on the first day) on problem solving activities that incorporate real world policy problems and issues. By completing the required class reading for each session, you will be able to work together to complete these challenging (and fun!) tasks. After all, in the real world, political scientists and
policymakers must interpret, prioritize, summarize, analyze, negotiate, problem solve, defend, support and recommend on a daily basis. This course offers you the opportunity to begin fine-tuning these skills.

Just a note: I encourage open and honest debate throughout the course; however, I do require that you approach the issues and your classmates with respect. Rude or disrespectful comments are not conducive to learning and will not be tolerated.

**Required Textbook:** There is one required textbook for the course. In addition to readings from this book, I will provide you with additional readings from contemporary sources on blackboard.

Herman Lelieveldt and Sebastiaan Princen’s *The Politics of the European Union*. Cambridge University Press. 2012. (This appears on the syllabus as “L&P”)

You will also need to stay up-to-date on current events in the European Union to complete some of your assignments. You can do this by using online newspapers, newsmagazines and non-profit organizations. Many of these are free (with some content limitations). Some suggestions include, but are not limited to:

- The Washington Post: [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)
- Al-Jazeera (English): [www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com)
- Foreign Policy: [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com)
- The Economist: [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)
- The Council on Foreign Relations: [www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org)

You will also find the following websites of the European Union extremely helpful:

- European Union: [www.europe.eu](http://www.europe.eu)

**Course Requirements:** (Graded A-E):

*Readiness Assessment Tests* (RAT) 20%: RATs are closed book quizzes based on the readings. For each RAT, you will take the quiz first as an individual, and then as a team. Your grade for each RAT will be an average of the individual and team RAT scores.

*Safety Valve:* Sometimes things come up and students miss class. But, because there is a team component to the RAT, there are no make-up opportunities for these tests. For this reason, your lowest RAT grade will be dropped at the end of the course. So, if you miss one or have a particularly “off” week, that single lowest grade will not count against you.

*In-Class Activities* 15%: Throughout the course, you will be asked to complete several activities during class time. While not every single activity will be graded, many of these tasks will be completed for credit. I will let you know when the task will be submitted for a grade.
**Current Events Response Mini-Papers 15%**: These are brief, written assignments that require you to analyze current events by answering specific questions. There are 4 possible mini-papers; you will analyze a different event for each paper. Mini-papers are about 2-3 pages in length, but the most important thing is that you answer the question fully. While no late assignments will be accepted, I only count your best 3 paper grades towards your final grade. So if you miss one paper, or do not have your best day, your single lowest grade will not count against you.

**Mid-term Assessment 25%**: You will take an in-class mid-course exam to test your understanding of the fundamentals of the course material. Unlike the RATs, this test is entirely individual.

**Final Assessment 25%**: You will have a final assignment that will be due on Wednesday, May 13th, by 5 p.m. via **blackboard**. There will be no in-person final exam.

**Course Schedule**:  
On Wednesday of each week, you will receive your reading assignment for the following week. It will be posted on blackboard, and shared in class.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Important Dates</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>(first day of class)</td>
<td>(January 21, 2015)</td>
<td>(no required reading)</td>
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| **Unit #1**  
Political Institutions and the State in the EU | RAT on 1/28  
Mini-paper due on 2/11 | “How to Read” PDF on BBD L&P Chapters 1, 2, 3 |
| **Unit #2**  
Key Actors: Society and the EU | RAT on 2/18  
Mini-paper due on 3/18 | |
| **Midterm**: in class on 3/11  
**Spring Break**: no class 3/18 | |
| **Unit #3**  
Policymaking in the EU | RAT on 3/25  
Mini-paper due on 4/15 | |
| **Unit #4**  
Global Affairs of the EU | RAT on 4/22  
Mini-paper due on 5/6 | |
| **Final**: Final assignment due via blackboard by 5 pm on Wednesday, May 13th. | |