RPOS 351 European Politics (Class #: 10439)
Syllabus – 2018 Spring
M/W 2:45-4:05 PM HU128

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Your email will be responded within 12 hours during weekdays and within 24 hours during weekends. If you do not get my response in this time frame, send me another email.

Office Hour: Wednesday 1:40-2:40 PM at Humanities B16 (Rockefeller College Contact Office) & by appointment

Course Description
This course is a comparative introduction to the governmental systems and current political issues in Europe, with a concentration on Western Europe. The focus will be on a selection of European states and the European Union (EU) as an overarching integration project. We will start the course with a short overview of the countries and the history of Europe. We will then examine the institutions, parties and political processes that affect political behavior in representative European democracies. In the second half of the course we will explore the European Union’s development by addressing four main dimensions: its historical development, the main theories that explain its political evolution, the European institutional framework, and its main public policies. Gen. Ed: International Perspectives.

Course Objectives
The goals of this course relate both to the specific content presented and to critical thinking and communication. By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Summarize and compare the key sociopolitical attributes and dynamics of the European Union and its member states.
- Evaluate several key issues in comparative politics in the context of the EU.
- Demonstrate ability to think critically and to analyze and contextualize historical and political-cultural materials and concepts relevant to Europe.

Reading Materials

1) Textbook: Hay, Colin, and Anand Menon. European politics. Oxford University Press, 2007. (You can buy a new or used book at the University Bookstore or via online stores for example)

2) The other required readings are available as pdf files on the Blackboard system – you can either read them on-line or print them out.
3) Recommended websites and newspapers

- European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm)
- Eurostat (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat)

**Course Activities & Method of Assessment**

**Response Memos: 20%**

During the semester, students will write four weekly response memos (roughly one every three weeks) on the reading due for that week (I will divide students into groups with different schedules.) Each memo should be 300-500 words long. Students are supposed to post their memos on blackboard responding to one of the discussion questions which are based on the readings of the corresponding week. The discussion questions will be uploaded every Thursday night and students should upload their memo by Sunday 11:59pm. The purpose of this assignment is to let the students finish required readings in advance and have their own point of view on the readings and current event so that they can participate actively in the class discussion.

Your memo grade will vary depends on the quantity and quality of your work: 0 point (no submission), 1 point (submitted but the memo is not related to the readings and the discussion question), 2 points (the memo has an answer to the question but it is biased toward one direction or it is too long or too short), 3 points (the memo contains a summary of the readings but does not have a point of view), 4 points (the memo has a good answer to the discussion question), 5 points (the memo has a well-written answer which is based on the readings and/or current-event examples). Each memo takes 5% of the total grade. No late submission will be accepted.

There is a chance that you can earn bonus points: On the week that you are not assigned to write a memo, you can write your reaction to other students’ memo by replying to their posting. Good response will be rewarded with 1 bonus point (out of total grade). Students can write only one response per week and the maximum bonus points that students can earn from responding to others’ memo is 5 points.

**Group Pop-up Quiz: 10%**

Students will take four pop-up quizzes in group throughout the semester, two before the midterm point and two after the midterm point. The date for the quiz will not be announced in advance. The quiz questions will be based on the class materials of that week only. Its primary aim is to check if the students are on the right track: if they have paid attention during the class and if they have understood the key points of the course. The quiz is combination of short answer questions and multiple-choice questions and will be graded 100 points-scale. Each quiz takes 2.5% of the total grade.

The quiz groups will be announced in the second week of the class and groups can change after the
midterm point.

**Attendance (10%) & Participation (10%)**

Attendance is mandatory starting on January 29, Monday. Sign-up sheet will be passed every class period. You are allowed to miss two classes without a proper excuse. Each absence (after the two you are allowed to) will count for one point deduction from your attendance score. Being late or leaving early (cut-off is 10 minutes) for three times will be treated equally to one absence. Your default grade for attendance is 10 points. It is solely your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet. If you forget to sign, even if you attended the class, you will lose credit.

Class participation is different from attendance. Your participation grade will be based on your engagement in various class activities. If you participate actively and frequently in the class activities (ex. to ask a question on the readings or lecture, to take an active role in group discussion and debate, and etc.), you will get full participation grade (10 points). Students who do not feel comfortable speaking in class must contact me APAP.

**Three out – If you used your electronic devices and got called for three times, you will receive 0 for your participation grade. You may use a laptop in class, but only for valid class-related reasons.**

**Team Presentation: 10%**

Students will do a 15 minutes mini-presentation in group of 4-5 people on a European country of their choice with a focus of a certain public policy area (ex. refugee and immigration, welfare policy, education system, etc.). List of the countries and policies will be distributed in the second week of the class. Students can make their own team if they prefer to do so. Otherwise, all the groups will be set up by your instructor. The schedule of the presentation will be decided by drawing lots. The team members will need to send me their presentation file a week before their presentation at the latest.

A free-rider who does not fully engage him/herself in the preparation process should be reported by other team members to me. The detailed criteria of the presentation evaluation will be posted on the blackboard.

**Midterm Exam: 15%**

Students will take an in-class midterm (March 21). There will be 10-15 multiple choice questions, 5 short answer questions and 1 long answer question. Your instructor will not distribute the study guide for the midterm but will do the midterm review in class (March 19).

**Final Exam: 15%**

Students will take a take-home final exam (May 14). The final will only cover the class materials after the midterm point. The format of the final exam will be identical to that of the midterm exam.

**Two Short Papers: 10%**

Students will write two short papers of 1500 words each (5 pages, double spaced). The theme of the first paper is political system and political participation of the minority groups (ex. ethnic and religious minority, immigrants and refugees, women, people with disability, etc.). The theme of the second paper is EU's democratic deficit. Students will be asked to choose a historical moment and explain how it demonstrates democratic deficit of the EU. The deadline for the first paper is Wednesday, February 28 and the second paper is Wednesday, May 2.
**Bonus points (up to 10%)**

In addition to the class activities that are listed above, there will be several occasions where students can earn bonus points. Bonus points chances will be announced by your instructor during class meetings.

**Make Up & Late Submission Policy**

The instructor does not take late work without a documented excuse. In case of a university excused absence, students should arrange a makeup with me to more than one class period following the due date of the missed work. If you do not have an excused absence (evidence with a doctor’s note or a note from the Dean’s office) you will receive a zero for the assignment. **No Exceptions.** A computer mishap will not excuse a late paper. You should make frequent and multiple back-ups of your work, so that you never lose more than one hour’s worth of work.

**Email Etiquette:** [https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay](https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay)

**Accommodating Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented physical, sensory, systemic, cognitive, learning and psychiatric disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please notify the Director of Disabled Student Services (BA-120, 442-5490). Students are the only people who can notify a professor about his/her disability. **Be sure to discuss your accommodation letter with your professor and work out the details in the beginning of the semester.**

The University provides a great deal of information on the services it offers to disabled students which can be found on the [Disability Resource Center](#) page.

**University Policies**

It is essential that students understand, appreciate and model the highest standards of academic integrity. The University’s policy regarding what constitutes plagiarism and the penalty is available at [http://www.albany.edu/eas/104/penalty.htm](http://www.albany.edu/eas/104/penalty.htm). There is also a useful tutorial available at the University library website that can clarify the issue and provide strategies and best practices to avoid it [http://library.albany.edu/usered/ncplaga/index.html](http://library.albany.edu/usered/ncplaga/index.html). Violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Office of Undergraduate Education and will result in failure of this course. If you are not sure the limits of borrowing someone else's idea or acceptable team collaboration, please ask me.
**Week-by-week Summary (Readings are subject to change)**

**Part 1. What is Europe? How do we study Europe?**

**W1. 1/24**
- Class Introduction
- What is Europe? Where is the borderline of Europe? and Who are the Europeans?
- Historical Aspects

* Reading:
  - [https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/09/where-is-europe/?_r=0](https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/09/where-is-europe/?_r=0)
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isVdxUBAp78](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isVdxUBAp78)

**W2. 1/29 and 1/31 [A]**
- Introduction to political system (Party, government, civil society, and etc.)

* Reading:


(recommended) Hay & Menon ch12 and 14

**Part 2. Country Profile**

**W3. 2/5 and 2/7 [B]**
- Recap the Political System
- France

*Reading: Hay & Menon ch2

**W4. 2/12 and 2/14 [C]**
- Germany

*Reading: Hay & Menon ch1

**W5. 2/19 and 2/21 [A]**
- United Kingdom
- Policy issue: Brexit (Class debate)

*Reading: Hay & Menon ch4

W6. 2/26 and 2/28 (B)
- Italy, Spain and Greece
- Policy issue: Eurozone financial crisis 1 (from the PIGS perspective)

*Reading: Hay & Menon ch3, ch7, and ch8 (only the part about Greece)

First short paper due

W7. 3/5 and 3/7 (C)
- Eastern Europe and Turkey
- Policy issue: Ukraine and Russia

*Reading: Hay & Menon ch8 (only the part about Turkey), ch9 and ch21

3/12 and 3/14 => Spring Break, no class

3/19 and 3/21 => Midterm
- Midterm review & Midterm

Part 3. European Union and Common Policies
W8. 3/26 and 3/28 (A)
- History and theories of European regional integration (with major Treaties)

*Reading:
- Hay & Menon ch10
- Documentary: “Europe Through the Generations”
  (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isVdxUBAp78)
- DW Documentary: “Europe and the EU in crisis”
  (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-pjqh2UlsE)
**W9. 4/2 and 4/4 (B)**
- EU institutions and decision making process
- Democratic deficit of the EU

*Reading:
- Hay & Menon ch11

**W10. 4/9 and 4/11 (C)**
- Monetary system (Euro) and financial crisis
- Policy issue: Eurozone financial crisis 2 (from broader perspective)

*Reading:
- Hay & Menon ch16
- and TBA

*Team Presentations 1*

**W11. 4/16 and 4/18 (A)**
- Welfare Policy
- Policy issue: Erasmus

*Reading:
- Hay & Menon ch17

*Team Presentations 2*

**W12. 4/23 & 4/25 (B)**
- Common border and immigration
- Policy issue: Refugees

*Reading:
- Hay & Menon ch19
Team Presentations 3

Part 4. Euroscepticism or Europhile?

W13. 4/30 and 5/2 [C]
- European Identity and attitude toward the EU (public opinion)
- Anti-EU far-right parties and democratic deficit
- Identity survey

*Reading:

Second short paper due

W14. 5/7 & 5/9 (Last Class)
- EU and other countries (foreign policy)
- Influence of the EU on the international society (diffusion of regional integration? What’s the role of the EU?)
- Class wrap-up and evaluation

*Reading:
- Hay & Menon ch22 and ch23

May 14: Final exam (take-home)