



## **CIEE Barcelona, Spain**

<b>Course title:</b>	The Politics of Western Europe
<b>Course code:</b>	POLI 3001 BASP
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Business and Culture, Economics and Culture, Global Architecture and Design, Language and Culture
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. semester credits:</b>	3.00
<b>Contact hours:</b>	45.00
<b>Term:</b>	Fall 2023

### **Course Description**

This course provides an overview of fundamental issues in the study of Western European politics. Topics include the nature and functioning of the three paradigmatic Western European democratic systems (France, Great Britain, and Germany) since the Second World War and the creation and enlargement of the European Union (EU): processes, institutions, important figures, political culture, formation of political parties, and citizens' electoral behavior. Also, the course explores issues related to the development of current political and social conflicts, such as immigration, security and the threat of terrorism, European identity and citizenship, the founding fathers' dream of a United States of Europe, the hopes, obstacles and failures of European political integration, and the Brexit.

### **Learning Objectives**

By completing this course, students will:

- Evaluate the core debates in the field of the politics of Western Europe as they relate to its most recent history after World War II and the creation and development of the European Union.
- Argue about the main policies implemented by Western European governments in relation to the most relevant political issues, such as terrorism, immigration, security, the Brexit, and European identity and citizenship.
- Design a research paper related to a topic discussed in a class activity (lecture, reading or film presentation).
- Compare the main liberal democracies studied in the course (France, the Great Britain, Germany, and the EU) from the point of view of their model of state (federal, confederal or unitary), their electoral regime (proportional, majoritarian, or mixed) and their form of executive (parliamentary, semi-presidential or presidential).
- Analyze the institutional architecture of the EU (the European Council, the European Commission, the Council, the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice) and the key concepts related to the formation and development of the EU (spillover, supranationalism, intergovernmentalism, neofunctionalism, confederation, federalism, single market, political union, democratic deficit).

### **Course Prerequisites**

None

### **Methods of Instruction**

This course requires active participation in class discussions based on assigned readings, two presentations, the completion of two academic article reviews, a midterm, and a final examination.

Classes will typically consist in:

- short lectures: content knowledge and assimilation by students are graded through the midterm and the final exam;
- discussions on academic articles presented by students (not necessarily linked directly to the day's lecture) graded through participation; and
- presentations by students on films related to Politics and/or History of Western Europe.

Electronic devices are not allowed in class (laptops, tablets, cell phones...) unless expressly permitted for punctual activities

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

1.	Two Oral Presentations	20%
2.	Midterm	20%
3.	Final Exam	20%
4.	Article and Film Reviews (2)	20%
5.	Participation	20%
	TOTAL	100%

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Two Oral Presentations**

The oral presentations (2) will focus on one reading and one film related to the Politics and/or History of Western Europe listed in this syllabus (see bibliography and class schedule below). Depending on the number of students in the class, the presentations will be carried out in pairs. Each presentation should be no longer than 15 minutes – with additional 15-20 minutes of selected clips in the case of the film to be shown to the class to provoke discussion – plus 15 minutes of debate.

Some specific points that the film presentation should include:

- Brief film review: director, synopsis, etc.
- Context, historical background; Political significance of the film; how it relates to the Politics of Western Europe. The students must extract the main theme or topic covered in the film and elaborate on it, doing some research to be presented independently from the film. This should take up around 3/4 of the presentation (10-12 minutes).
- Accuracy, plausibility, credibility.
- Storytelling: what is the global story the film intends to convey, the last meaning of the relate, what the film provokes in the viewer; and not only the “what”, but also the “how” and the point of view.
- Recapitulation and conclusions; here, you may compare with your vision of American Politics (how it resembles or differs);
- Why you would recommend others to watch (or not to watch) the film; why it might interest people concerned about European politics/history;
- 2-3 or two questions for debate: to provoke discussion, it is highly recommended to pose analytic open-ended questions (What, When, Who, Where, Why...), rather than synthetic yes-or-no questions.

As for the reading presentation:

- Each session, students will be asked to present on the assigned reading/s and raise one or two analytical questions arising from the readings to lead class discussion.
- The presentation of the analytical questions should be preceded by a brief description of the author’s (or authors’) main argument; the evidence used to support the main argument; and a discussion of how well the evidence supports the argument (e.g., are there any examples of bias or faulty reasoning found in the reading, or if it is convincing, why it is convincing).
- Each student presentation should be no longer than 15 minutes.
- To foster a dynamic and informed classroom dialogue, all students are expected to have read the assigned readings prior to each class session.

#### **Midterm**

#### **Final Exam**

Both the midterm and the final examination are close-book exams. The students will be asked to answer a questionnaire of 20 multiple-choice questions in each exam plus the development of 2 short-essay questions based on the issues covered in the lectures (not on class readings, film discussions, or fieldtrips). The lesson notes will be posted on canvas and will suffice to respond all the questions. The midterm covers weeks 1 to 6 (France & Great Britain), while the final examination covers weeks 7 to 13 (Germany & the European Union).

No changes to the exam dates are allowed (emergency situations will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director, as stated below).

#### **Article and Film Reviews (2)**

The assignment consists of at least two critical reviews (**1,000 words each**) of:

- one of the articles or chapter books assigned as readings for each session (beware that not all articles are allowed for this activity: you cannot pick those articles marked with an \*); and
- one of the films listed in the class schedule and assigned as presentations for each session.

Students must submit one review before the midterm and the second one before the final exam –but you may submit them earlier as you complete them.

Extra credit will be given for further article or film reviews submitted by students (5 points out of 100 on the CIEE grade scale for each additional review).

The reviews must be submitted through Canvas.

Formatting: double spaced, Times New Roman or Arial 12 font, 1" margins.

This assignment does not require extra research or reading.

Guidelines for suggestions about what constitutes a good critical article review:

- Include the exact title of the article and the details of publication, including the year, since the time at which an author writes an article is revealing of the presented views.
- The main object of an article review is not just to summarize, but to comment critically on what an author has said. Ask yourself why the author wrote this article, who is the article addressed to, what main themes, leading ideas or proposals the author is presenting, etc.
- Don't simply summarize the article. Don't either summarize the author's view in the first half of the criticism, and then comment in the second half. Rather, present the author's view as they go along as part of the process of commenting on them.
- Don't rely on published (or web, blog, Amazon, etc.) reviews of the same article (beware of plagiarism in this context!).
- Don't take up too much space quoting from the article, since article reviews are limited in length. Only quote passages that you think have never been expressed so well, or statements that you plan to criticize.
- Don't be too general in your comments: pick important but specific points or ideas for discussion.
- The focus must be on the content of the article, rather than the author's style or form of presentation.

## **Participation**

Participation will be based on the contributions of the students to the debates around the articles assigned for each class. The quality of the contributions to class discussions will make up this grade. Although class participation involves attendance, a mere presence in class is a necessary but not enough condition for a participation grade (for the purposes of this course, participation is independent from the CIEE attendance policy stated below). Participation requires informed discussion of the material: taking an active part in the discussion and asking and answering thoughtful and meaningful questions about the debate topics. Therefore, while silent, participation requires paying attention to others' contributions and strictly excludes using cellular or other devices for texting, messaging, checking social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), or just searching the web for extra class purposes.

## **Attendance**

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

***N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.***

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1**

Class: 1.1 Introduction to the Course

Syllabus review (topics, dates, assignments)

Film: Land and Freedom (1995).

Class: 1.2 France I: The context of French Politics

France has experienced an extraordinary multiplicity of political regimes over the past 200-plus years, from organized republics to authoritarian regimes.

Readings: Kelly 2008. Hoffmann 1961.

Film: Land and Freedom (1995).

### **Week 2**

Class: 2.1 France II: The President and the Government

The Fifth Republic replaced the former parliamentary republic with a semi-presidential system that split powers between a prime minister and a president.

Readings: Levy 1999.

Film: Land and Freedom (1995).

Class: 2.2 France III: Legislative Branch

The Parliament of France consists of two houses: The National Assembly and the Senate.

Readings: Levy 2008

Film: Land and Freedom (1995)

### **Week 3**

Class: 3.1 France IV: The Electoral System and Political Parties

Presidential elections rank as the most important elections for French voters. However, elections are held with considerable frequency at every territorial level.

Readings: Meunier 2004

Presentation: The French Minister (2013)

Class: 3.2 FIELD TRIP: Spanish Civil War air raid shelter at Plaça del Diamant

### **Week 4**

Class: 4.1 Great Britain I: The Context of British Politics

## The British Constitution

Britain has the oldest system of representative democracy, with elections to the UK parliament held for many centuries before the French and American Revolutions. The UK's constitution rests on a combination of parliamentary statute law, the courts and convention. Does it need renovation?

Readings: Frazer 2000. Heath 1999

Presentation: The Special Relationship (2010)

### Class: 4.2 Great Britain II: The Monarchy

#### Parliament Supremacy

Unlike many other Western countries, Britain did not get rid of its monarchy. Instead, the institution transformed into a constitutional monarchy in which Parliament makes the law for the UK and has precedent over all other parts of the constitution.

Readings: Durham 1997. Laffin 2000.

Presentation: Bloody Sunday (2002).

## Week 5

### Class: 5.1 Great Britain III: The Electoral System

#### Political Parties; Parliament

The long-used British electoral system is commonly known as first past the post, because it has all the characteristics of a race. The UK parliament is often referred to as the 'mother of parliaments' because of its long history and because people around the globe have copied and admired its traditions and approach to the execution of democracy.

Readings: Bogdanor 1997. Moran 2001.

Presentation: In the Name of the Father (1993)

### Class: 5.2 Great Britain IV: The Executive: Prime Minister and Cabinet

The prime minister is the most important person in British politics. The PM decides who will and will not be a member of the cabinet, a group of the top politicians from the ruling political party and its members, who are called government ministers.

Readings: Starmer 1997

Presentation: Hidden Agenda (1990)

## Week 6

### Class: 6.1 Great Britain V: Review

Readings: Weir 1997

Presentation: Hitler: the rise of evil (I)

FIRST REVIEW DUE THROUGH CANVAS!

### Class: 6.2 Germany I: The Context of German Politics

The German historical experience differs considerably from most other European democracies. The social and political forces that modernized the rest of Europe came much later in Germany and had a less certain effect.

Readings: Evans 2005. Fritzsche 1996

Presentation: Hitler: the rise of evil (II)

## Week 7

### Class: 7.1 MIDTERM REVIEW: France and Great Britain

Presentation: *Swing Kids* (1993)

Class: 7.2 MIDTERM EXAM

## **Week 8**

Class: 8.1 Germany II: A Federal System

The Bundesrat; the Bundestag

The Basic Law created one of the few federal political systems in Europe, with a bicameral parliament: the Bundestag is the primary legislative body, and the Bundesrat represents the state governments at the federal level.

Readings: Feigel 2016. Lowe 2017

Presentation: *Judgement at Nuremberg* (1961)

Class: 8.2 Germany III: The Federal Chancellor and Cabinet

The Federal President

The Federal Republic has a dual executive, but the Basic Law gives substantially greater formal powers to the federal chancellor (Bundeskanzler) as the chief executive.

Readings: Jann 2003

Presentation: *The Iron Lady* (2013)

## **Week 9**

Class: 9.1 Germany IV: Political Parties

The Electoral System

Political parties in Germany deserve special emphasis: some observers describe the political system as government for the parties, by the parties, and of the parties.

Readings: McAdams 2010

Presentation: *The Third Man* (1949)

Class: 9.2 Germany V: Review

Readings: Maier 2009

Presentation: *The Lives of Others* (2006)

## **Week 10**

Class: 10.1 The EU I: History: From the End of the War to the Schuman Plan

In 1945 the European Continent emerged exhausted from the World War II. It was soon to be divided between the capitalist West and the communist East. Yet, in the west something happened that was without historical precedent: some of the states took the first steps towards surrendering their sovereignty in pursuit of European integration.

Readings: Lowe 2017. Maier 1981

Presentation: *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997)

Class: 10.2 The EU II: Institutional Architecture (1)

This lesson examines the pattern of two of the main institutions and the formal rules that govern them: The Commission and the Council of Ministers (or 'Council').

Readings: Majone 1998. Moravcsik 2003.

Presentation: *Good Bye Lenin!* (2003)

## **Week 11**

Class: 11.1 The EU III: Institutional Architecture (2)

This lesson examines the pattern of another two institutions and the formal rules that govern them: The European Council and the European Parliament.

Readings: Burley 1993. Follesdal and Hix 2006.

Presentation: *I, Daniel Blake* (2016)

Class: 11.2 The EU IV: The European Court of Justice

EU law

Much of the work of the EU is undertaken through legislation and other legal acts. Therefore, its legal system is an important feature. At the apex of that system sits the 'Court of Justice'.

Readings: Garrett 1995

Presentation: Marionettes (*The Crown*, S2E05)

## **Week 12**

Class: 12.1 The EU V: Policies and Policy making

Starting in 1958, the EC/EU has gradually acquired competence in more and more areas of policy. A complex system of policy making has emerged to deal with these responsibilities.

Readings: Mattli 1995

Presentation: *The Iron Lady* (2011)

SECOND REVIEW DUE THROUGH CANVAS!

Class: 12.2 The EU VI: The EU in Crisis

The period after the Lisbon Treaty was adopted in 2009 was dominated by the eurozone crisis. This crisis presented a range of challenges for the European institutions. More recently, the Brexit presents new challenges for the European project.

Readings: Hobolt 2016. Smith 1992.

Presentation: *La Haine* (1995)

## **Week 13**

Class: 13.1 FINAL EXAM REVIEW: Germany & the EU

Presentation: *Bridge of Spies* (2016)

Class: 13.2 FINAL EXAM

## **Course Materials**

### **Readings**

Bonney, Norman. 2010. "The monarchy, the state and religion: Modernising the relationships." *The Political Quarterly* 81.2: 199-204.

Bogdanor, Vernon. 1997. "Ministerial Accountability," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 50.1: 71-83

Burley, Anne-Marie, and Walter Mattli. 1993. "Europe before the Court: a political theory of legal integration." *International organization* 47.1: 41-76.

Dalton, Russell J. 2015. "Politics in Germany." In *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, edited by G. Bingham Powell, Jr. Russell J. Dalton and Kaare Strom. Pearson, 11th edition

Durham, Martin. 1997. "'God Wants Us to Be in Different Parties': Religion and Politics in Britain Today,"

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- Frazer, Elizabeth. 2000. "Citizenship Education: Anti-political Culture and Political Education in Britain," *Political Studies*, 48.1: 88-103.
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- Follesdal, Andreas, and Simon Hix. 2006. "Why there is a democratic deficit in the EU: A response to Majone and Moravcsik." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 44.3: 533-562.
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- Levy, Jonah D. 1999. "Vice into Virtue? Progressive Politics and Welfare Reform in Continental Europe," *Politics and Society* 27.2: 239-273.
- Levy, Jonah D. 2008. "From the Dirigiste State to the Social Anesthesia State and Beyond: French Economic Policy in the Longue Durée" *Modern and Contemporary France* 16. 4: 417-435.
- Lowe, Keith. 2017. "European Nationalism" In *The Fear and the Freedom. How the Second World War Changed Us*, 347-361. Viking-Penguin Random House
- Lowe, Keith. 2017. "World Law." In *The Fear and the Freedom. How the Second World War Changed Us*, 196-214. Viking-Penguin Random House
- Maier, Charles S. 1981. "The Two Postwar Eras and the Conditions for Stability in Twentieth-Century Western Europe" *American Historical Review* 86. 2: 327-52.
- Maier, Charles S. 2009. What have we learned since 1989? In *Revisiting 1989: Causes, Course and Consequences*, special issue, *Contemporary European History* 18. 3: 253-269.
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