

**COMPARATIVE WESTERN EUROPEAN POLITICS**  
**CPO 3103**

**FALL 2008**  
**MW 6.25- 7.40 pm**  
**PC 424**

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**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 overarching integration project. Through a comparative approach, domestic politics and policymaking, structures and functions of political institutions and political transitions will be analyzed with particular attention to political culture, governance and political parties. The course will include a combination of lecture and discussions as well as active learning exercises.

**Course Objectives**

The primary purpose of this course is to provide students with the analytical tools to understand the current state of politics in Europe. In this course students will:

1. gain a good understanding of the different political systems in (Western) Europe;
2. become familiar with the workings of the European Union and its impact on member states;
3. become equipped with conceptual tools necessary to explain and compare European political systems;

**Required Texts:** (available in the FIU bookstore or through online booksellers)

Gabriel A. Almond, Russell J. Dalton, G. Bingham Powell, Jr., and Kaare Strøm (eds.). *European Politics Today* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). New York: Longman, 2006.

Bale, Tim. *European Politics. A comparative introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> (!) edition New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2008.

**Strongly Recommended:** In order to keep up with current events:

**The New York Times** [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)    **The Economist**, [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

**Plus:** A style-grammar guide (eg. Schaum's guide to writing great research papers, MLA Handbook)

## Course Requirements:

### Class Participation and Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory. Each student is expected to come to class having done the assigned readings and prepared to actively participate in class room discussions. If you cannot attend class because of emergencies or special circumstances, let the instructor know about it in advance. Attendance and participation will account for 10% of the final grade.

### Mid-Term Examination (& Quiz)

The Quiz, worth 10%, will consist of multiple-choice questions and a map portion - you can 'train' with the help of this site:

<http://www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/euroquiz.html>.

The mid-term examination will be a combination of short answer, multiple choice and essay type questions, which will be held in class. Students will be expected to combine assigned readings, class materials, lectures and discussions to critically analyze issues in European politics. This examination accounts for 25% of the final grade. The midterm and the final exam need to be taken on the scheduled days. A makeup exam will only be allowed if the student provides documentation of an 'official' scheduling conflict, serious illness or family emergency. Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities.

Make sure you can access WebCT, <http://www.online.fiu.edu/login.html> !

### Research Paper

Students are expected to write a research paper on a European politics topic of their choice, which should demonstrate research and a critical analysis based on the literature and knowledge gained throughout the course. It is worth 25 % of the grade. It should be around 12 pages in length, double-spaced and follow standard writing and citation guidelines (see recommended style guides above). A 1-page outline, containing 2-3 bibliographical sources, is due after the first third of the course. **Plagiarism (= citing of text without a source or copying from the internet) is unacceptable and online submission to 'Turnitin' ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)) is mandatory !**

### Final Examination

The final examination will cover all materials presented during the course but will focus on the material covered after the mid term through the end of the course, again consisting of a mix of short answer, essay and multiple-choice questions. This examination is worth 30%.

### Evaluation Summary:

Quiz	10%
Mid term exam	25%
Research Paper	25 %
Final exam	30%
Attendance & participation	10%

### Grading/Evaluation System:

Students will be evaluated on the following grade scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

### Reading Assignments and Examination Outline

- MON, 8/25 Course overview/Introduction to European Politics
- WED, 8/27 World War II, the Marshall Plan, and European Post-War Recovery
- MON, 9/1 Labor Day – no class
- WED, 9/3 Traditions and Transitions in European Politics  
Reading: Almond, et al., 1-22; Bale, Chapter 1
- MON, 9/8 Democracy and Political Parties  
Reading: Almond, et al., 23-61; Bale, Chapter 5 & 6
- WED, 9/10 Electoral Processes, Governments, and Coalitions  
Reading: Almond, et al., 62-83; Bale, Chapter 3 & 4
- MON, 9/15 Introduction to European Integration  
Reading: Almond, et al., 457-481; Bale, Chapter 2
- WED, 9/17 European Union – Enlargements and Institutions **+ QUIZ**  
Reading: <http://www.eurunion.org/infores/euguide/euguide.htm>
- MON, 9/22 United Kingdom – Westminster Model  
Reading: Almond, et al., 84-118
- WED, 9/24 United Kingdom – Tories, Tony Blair, Terrorism  
Reading: Almond, et al., 118-133

MON, 9/29 France – Semi-Presidential System, Cohabitation

Reading: Almond, et al., 134-157

>>> ***1-page paper outline due (including 2-3 sources)!***

WED, 10/1 France – Rise of the Right, Sarkozy's new style

Reading: Almond, et al., 158-159

MON, 10/6 Germany – Basic Law, Bundestag, Bundesrat

Reading: Almond, et al., 190-221

WED, 10/8 Germany – After Reunification

Reading: Almond, et al., 221-245

MON, 10/13 Italy – post-war DC dominance

Reading: Bale, pp. 136-138

WED, 10/15 Italy – Northern League & Berlusconi's reign

Reading: Handout provided in previous class

### **MON, 10/20 MIDTERM**

WED, 10/22 Spain – Gen. Franco, Constitutional Monarchy

Reading: Almond, et al., 246-273

MON, 10/27 Spain – Aznar to Zapatero, Terrorism

Reading: Almond., et al., 273-299

WED, 10/29 Issues in West European Politics: Migrants & Minorities

Reading: Bale, Ch. 10

MON, 11/3 Sweden – the 'ideal' European country?

Reading: Bale, p. 267, 187

WED, 11/5 Sweden & the Scandinavian region

Reading: Economist.com: “A midsummer night’s dream: A survey of the Nordic region”,  
[http://www.economist.com/surveys/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=1825016](http://www.economist.com/surveys/displaystory.cfm?story_id=1825016)

MON, 11/10 Poland – Democratization and Civil Society

Reading: Almond, et al., 382-401 & Bale, Ch. 8

WED, 11/12 Hungary – Goulash Communism, and post-comm. Privatization

Reading: Almond, et al., 402-456 & Bale, Ch. 9

MON, 11/ 17 European Union – Internal and External Policies

Reading: Almond, et al., 496-509

WED, 11/19 Europe’s international relations

Reading: Bale, Ch. 11

MON, 11/ 24 The diversity of Europe’s governmental systems

>>> ***Final Paper due!***

WED, 11/26 Comparisons (between East & West) : the quality of democracy

MON, 12/1 Last class – Review

**FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD: DEC 8-13, prob: WED, Dec 10, 5-7pm**

**A few tips for a good research paper:**

**For the outline: consider which country/ies or which politics-related topic is of interest to you. Papers in the past dealt with terrorism, immigration, unemployment, religion, polarized parties in various countries in Western Europe etc**

1. Research a variety of credible sources (Green library catalogue: books & journals, electronic journals accessible through the library website, careful online search: quality newspapers, European politics think tanks, official governmental documents) and supply at least 5 sources for the paper.
2. In the outline, start with an introduction, an analytical main part (who? What? When? Why? what can be done?), and a conclusion with your ‘expert’ opinion.
3. Conduct a grammar check before submission (no repetitions, analytical language)
4. Don’t get started on the last day before the due date!