

STUDY PROGRAMME

EUROPEAN GENERAL STUDIES

ACADEMIC YEAR

2019 - 2020

SEMESTER

1

COURSE TITLE

EUROPEANS, CONTESTED POLITICS IN THE EU AND EMOTIONS

COURSE PROFESSOR

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COURSE ASSISTANT

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NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL)

FUNDAMENTAL COURSE (COMPULSORY)

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

ECTS CREDITS

LAW: 3 ECTS; ECO: 3 ECTS; POL: 4 ECTS

1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will investigate the current state of European politics and address whether we are witnessing the end of the EU, as we know it.

Together, we will examine the comparative politics of European integration, and address the course main research question: **Q: 'Is the EU doomed?'**

In particular, the course studies the impact of the EU on the domestic debates and what determines levels of support for EU integration and opposition to it. We will engage with both theoretical and empirical analysis. With the theoretical debates, we will examine the approaches to study EU integration (and disintegration), and attitudes towards European integration. By the study of empirical data and analysis – political parties and party systems (students can replicate studies and analyses); a focus on some EU Member States or area studies, Western and Central and Eastern Europe; the retreat of democracy; the role of emotions; and issues of contestation across the current developments in European politics.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course-specific learning outcomes:

On completion of this module, students will:

(Knowledge and Understanding)

- (i) Demonstrate in-depth knowledge on the interaction between EU integration and domestic politics;
- (ii) Evaluate the historical and political context in this area;
- (iii) Assess common characteristics of determinants of attitudes towards the EU and disengagement with the EU and politics in general;
- (iv) Display a systematic understanding of the use of the comparative method approach for the understanding of European politics;
- (v) Demonstrate a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights in the process of EU integration.

(Generic Intellectual Skills)

- (i) Think about the connection between theory and empirical analysis in a reflective and critical way;
- (ii) Gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of secondary and primary sources;
- (iii) Construct reasoned argument, synthesise and analyse relevant information and evaluate critically current research in the discipline (i.e.: comparative European politics);
- (iv) Reflect on their own learning and make use of constructive feedback;
- (v) Consolidate analytical skills of comparison and contrast.

(Personal Transferable Skills)

- (i) Communicate effectively in speech and writing;
- (ii) Use communication and information technology for the retrieval and presentation of information;
- (iii) Work independently, demonstrating initiative, self-organisation and time management;
- (iv) Collaborate with others to achieve common goals;
- (v) Display the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

3. COURSE CONTENTS

The course will focus on:

(1) Theories of EU integration and (dis)integration; (2) Euroscepticism: concept and definition(s); (3) EUrope and Europeans; (4) Media and democracy: friends or foes?; (5) The return to illiberal democracy (just) in post-communist Europe; (6) (Political) corruption and informality; (7) Populism: concept and definition(s), a pathological normalcy of contemporary politics?; (8) Emotions and politics.

4. TEACHING METHOD(S)

Students are asked to prepare a main reading in advance.

First, the course starts with a group discussion in order to identify the main theme(s) of the course and focus on the main course questions.

Second, a short lecture will support students' reading and learning.

Third, (*assisted*) group-work, supervised by the Professor, is expected to enhance students' learning experience and is followed by the whole group *discussion* between students (still assisted and supported, if required, by the Professor). To be noted: group work is not assessed, but it should help students' learning, enhance their presentation skills, show students' engagement with the literature (how to link theory and empirical evidence) and support their analysis of case studies presented.

Students will be invited to work in different groups every week; they can use data sets, and can prepare a short word document. This can be submitted to the Professor, who will send written feedback within a week after the lecture – with suggestions for further readings or extra comments). This is not assessed, but supports students' learning.

5. COURSE MATERIAL

There is no **compulsory reading** for this course, but it is suggested engaging with the different dimensions examined by first accessing a broad comparative text, as:

Jan Zielonka, *Is the EU doomed?*, Cambridge, Polity, 2014;

Hubert Zimmermann and Andreas Dür (eds), *Key Controversies in European Integration*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2016, (in particular chs 1, 4, 8, 13, 16).

Further useful resources:

Benjamin Leruth, Nicholas Startin and Simon Usherwood (eds), *The Routledge Handbook on Euroscepticism*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2017;

Manuela Caiani and Simona Guerra (eds), *Euroscepticism, Democracy and the Media. Communicating Europe, Contesting Europe*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology, 2017;

John FitzGibbon, Benjamin Leruth and Simon Usherwood (eds), *Euroscepticism as a Transnational and Pan-European Phenomenon*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2017;

Nathalie Brack and Nicholas Startin, 'Euroscepticism: From the margins to the mainstream', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2015.

Apart from the reading lists for individual seminars, for many topics we can regularly access issues of **journals** as:

World Politics

Politics

Journal of Common Market Studies

Party Politics
Comparative Politics
Journal of Democracy
Democratization
British Journal of Political Science
Foreign Affairs
Electoral Studies
Political Studies
European Journal of Political Research
West European Politics
European Political Science Review
Cambridge Review of International Affairs
Political Research Exchange
European Political Science

For the post-communist region:

Communist and Post-Communist Studies (formerly *Studies in Comparative Communism*)
Europe-Asia (formerly *Soviet*) *Studies*
East European Constitutional Review
East European Quarterly
Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics (formerly *Journal of Communist Studies*)
East European Politics
East European Politics and Societies

Although, please note, since the end of 1989 articles about Eastern Europe have increasingly been appearing in mainstream political science journals.

Further links will be provided by lecture 1.

6. EVALUATION

- **Short essay** (1,400-1,800 words) (including footnotes but excluding bibliography list as well as annexes, presentation page or indexes), to be written in the language of the seminar (50% of the final grade).

Questions for the essay (questions can be discussed and re-framed, after agreeing with Prof. Guerra):

- (1) Does the EU need a new theory of EU integration?
- (2) Are Europeans become all Eurosceptical?
- (3) Does European identity exist?
- (4) Examine the relation between the media and democracy.
- (5) Is democracy eroding in post-communist Europe?
- (6) Is informality a type of corruption?
- (7) Is populism a strategy, ideology or performance?
- (8) Are emotions useful to study contemporary politics?

- **Written exam** in the language of the course (50% of the final grade).