Western European Politics
Wednesdays, 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

In this course, the main aspects of contemporary Western European politics are introduced. The adjective “Western” is not only understood in a geographical sense, but also conceptually: the Western European political model has been defined as a specific type of political arrangement which contrasts in important points with other forms, such as the American (= US) system. The single sessions present the main topics of contemporary Western European politics. It is not only the goal to teach the basic knowledge about political facts, but also to introduce Comparative Politics as a subfield of Political Science.

For each session, four readings are given. One is a textbook reading, taken from Bale, Tim (2008). European Politics. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. The texts taken from the textbook will not be included in the course reader. They should enable the students to prepare the two written exams and refer to the lecture part of the course. Furthermore, two discussion texts are indicated which have to be read before the session. This is necessary for an active class participation. Finally, a forth text presents a country case study, usually connected to the topic of the session. This serves as an application of the theoretical concepts and can be useful for the development of course papers.

There are several forms of assessment: two essay quizzes (both worth 20% of the final grade; three out of four questions); a course paper (worth 30% of the final grade; approximately 10 pp.; deadline December 1) on a topic to be chosen together with the instructor (proposal and outline to be submitted on October 13); a critical assessment of one of the texts indicated as ‘discussion text’ (worth 10% of the final grade; 2 or 3 pp., including a short summary of the text and a short note on the author(s), due at the session after the discussion of the text); and active class participation (20% of the final grade). Active class participation also includes a news bulletin at the beginning of the session (5 minutes) which should summarize the European political news of the previous week, and the oral presentation of one of the country case studies (15 minutes).

[Sept 8, 2010] Introduction and Overview

No readings

[Sept 10, 2010] European History and Contemporary European (Social) Reality
THIS IS A FRIDAY!
MAKE-UP CLASS FOR DECEMBER 8!

Textbook:

Discussion Texts:


[Case Study Northern Europe:]
[Sept 13, 2010] LA PIETRA POLICY DIALOGUES with Chief Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, 6 p.m., Villa La Pietra
THIS IS A MONDAY!
MAKE-UP CLASS FOR OCTOBER 6!

Presence is mandatory. In case of an overlap with another course, please contact the Office for Academic Support.

[Sept 15, 2010] The European Nation State Under Pressure

Textbook:

Discussion Texts:


Case Study Spain:

[Sept 22, 2010] Policy-Making, Governance and Judicial Systems

Textbook:

Discussion Texts:


Case Study Germany:

[Sept 29, 2010] Heads of State, Cabinets, Parliaments

Textbook:

Discussion Texts:


Case Study United Kingdom:

[Oct 6, 2010] no class
[Oct 13, 2010] Political Parties

Textbook:

Discussion Texts:

Case Study Eastern Europe:

[Oct 20, 2010] MIDTERM EXAM

[Oct 27, 2010] no class: Fall break

[Nov 3, 2010] Elections and Referendums

Textbook:

Discussion Texts:

Case Study Switzerland:


Textbook:

Discussion Texts:

Case Study Italy:

[Nov 17, 2010] Interest Groups and Social Movements

Textbook:
Discussion Texts:


Case Study Austria:

[Nov 24, 2010] Left and Right Today

Textbook:

Discussion Texts:


Case Study Netherlands:

[Dec 1, 2010] Migration

Textbook:

Discussion Texts:


Case Study France:

Review

PAPERS DUE

[Dec 8, 2010] no class: Public holiday

[Dec 15, 2010] FINAL EXAM