Spain and the European Union: Political and Economic Issues

Class code POL-UA 9595

Instructor Details
Instructor: Dr. Jason Xidias
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-3:00
Classroom: C-1/2

Class Details
Spain and the European Union: Political and Economic Issues
Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites N/A

Class Description
Since 1945, European countries have sought to develop closer political, economic, legal, social, and cultural ties. This ambition has rested on the liberalist assumption that, by working together, Europe’s great powers – particularly France and Germany – could prevent a resurgence of nationalism and war.

European integration was also a means by which Europe’s most powerful nations could rebuild their war-torn economies and counter imperial losses in Africa and Asia in order to regain legitimacy and influence against the backdrop of Cold War superpower rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union. Historian Alan Milward has referred to this as “the European rescue of the nation-state.”

Over time, European integration has experienced many milestones – a few examples are the common market, a common trade policy, the reunification of West and East Germany, and the integration of former communist countries in Eastern Europe. At the same time, integration has experienced many setbacks – two prominent examples have been the inability to form a more cohesive political union and Britain’s recent exit from the European Union.

For Spain, European integration was an essential part of moving beyond three and a half decades of military dictatorship under Francisco Franco. That is to say, after Spain officially became a democracy in 1978, joining the European project ensured greater modernization, integration into the global economy, and security.

Since becoming a member of the European Community in 1986, Spain has reaped great economic and social benefits. It has experienced significant increases in GDP, per capita income, export revenue, and welfare provisions, and its infrastructure has benefitted enormously from EU grants. Yet, the 2007-8 Global Financial Crisis struck a major blow to the Spanish economy. The unemployment rate has risen
to over 20%, and youth unemployment is 45%.

The European Central Bank’s austerity policies have further exacerbated insecurity by encouraging wage cuts, layoffs, and reductions in worker rights. This has conditioned an unprecedented rise of Euroskepticism in Spain. In a 2016 survey conducted by Pew, 65% of Spaniards polled disapproved of the way European institutions have been handling European economic issues. This is an important statistic in a country where the majority of the population has continually seen the EU as an engine for progress.

In the first half of this course, we will start the course by looking at Spain’s transition from dictatorship to democracy and its path to EU membership. We will then focus on the origins of European integration and the different theories that have sought to explain its progress and setbacks over time. Finally, we will discuss the structure and functioning of EU institutions and learn how they interact with the Spanish state, as well as Spain’s regional governments – in particular, Catalonia.

In the second half of the course, we will examine key challenges that Spain and the European Union mutually face at present. Among the topics we will discuss are: the economic crisis, austerity and the welfare state, terrorism, the refugee crisis, Russia’s resurgence in Eastern Europe, Brexit, and Spain’s current political situation.

**Desired Outcomes**

To demonstrate a thorough understanding of the history and institutions of the European Community/Union.

To demonstrate a thorough understanding of the relationship between Spain and the European Community/Union since the end of the Franco dictatorship.

To assess the past, present, and future processes of European integration in relation to the main theories, models, and concepts.

To examine how European integration relates to broader global developments.

To assess Spain and the European Union’s current opportunities and challenges.

**Assessment Components**

1. Course Paper 1: 20%

The first course paper will consist of two parts:

- Part 1: choose one of the topics below. Write a one-page outline explaining the topic and your approach to addressing it (5% of final grade).
- Part 2: working from your outline, write a 7-9 page essay on your topic (15% of final grade).
Topics:

1. Which political and economic factors best explain the decision of Europe’s six founding members to integrate following World War II?
2. Since Spain joined the EU in 1986, what have been the most important benefits and costs of its membership?
3. Compare and contrast the institutional structures of the United States and the European Union. Is the idea of a “United States of Europe” feasible?
4. Present the arguments for and against Catalan independence from Spain. Which argument is more convincing, and why?

Your outline is due on September 28th. Your first course paper is due on October 10th. Please send these via email to: jasonxidias@nyu.edu. All documents should be typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spaced. All sources should be cited in footnotes using MLA or Chicago Manual of Style. The style guides for these formats are available online.

2. Course Paper 2: 20%

The second course paper will follow the same format and grading system as the first.

Topics:

1. Analyze one EU policy area (agriculture, trade, external action, etc.). Examine the process of policy making, its institutional structures, the key actors involved, the bargaining process, its successes and shortcomings, and potential future developments.
2. Assess Spain’s geopolitical and economic importance to the European Union. How has the EU benefitted from Spain’s membership since it joined in 1986?
3. Turkey, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Serbia are all candidates for future EU enlargement. Assess the benefits and costs of offering EU membership to these countries.
4. Provide an overview of EU-Russian Relations since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Assess the current cooperation and conflict between the two parties.

The due dates for these assignments are: outline (November 16th); second course essay (November 30th).

3. Midterm Exam: 20%

The midterm exam will consist of written responses to questions about themes we have covered in the first half of the course.

4. Final Exam: 30%

The final exam will be cumulative and will consist of written responses to questions about themes we have covered in the course.
5. Class Participation: 10%

Your class participation grade will be based on a combination of your two oral presentations and in-class discussions.

To achieve a maximum class participation grade, you must come to class prepared and participate actively.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component will result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

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**Grading Policy**

As documented above, students’ grades will consist of the following: midterm exam (20%), final exam (30%), class participation (10%), first course paper (20%), second course paper (20%).

**Statement on Provisions to Students with Disabilities**

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 or see their website (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

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**Attendance Policy**

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in harsher penalties including failure.

Unexcused absences affect students’ grades: In classes meeting twice a week, a 1% deduction from the student’s final course grade occurs on the occasion of each unexcused absence.

Absences are excused only for illness, religious observance, and emergencies.
Illness: For a single absence, students may be required to provide a doctor’s note, at the discretion of the Assistant Directors of Academics. In the case of two consecutive absences, students must provide a doctor’s note. Exams, quizzes, and presentations will not be made up without a doctor’s note.

Religious Observance: Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their instructor and the Academic Office in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose. If exams, quizzes, and presentations are scheduled on a holiday a student will observe, the Assistant Directors, in coordination with the instructor, will reschedule them.

Please note: if you are unable to attend class, you are required to email your professors directly and notify them.

Late Submission of Work

Students will lose one letter grade per day for late assignments. The failure to submit or fulfill any required course component mentioned above will result in the failure of the class, regardless of the grades achieved on the other assignments.

Plagiarism Policy

At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community.

Plagiarism: presenting others' work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one’s own. Plagiarism is a form of fraud. We all stand on the shoulders of others, and we must give credit to the creators of the works that we incorporate into products that we call our own. Some examples of plagiarism:

- a sequence of words incorporated without quotation marks
- an unacknowledged passage paraphrased from another's work
- the use of ideas, sound recordings, computer data or images created by others as though it were one’s own
- submitting evaluations of group members’ work for an assigned group project which misrepresent the work that was performed by another group member
- altering or forging academic documents, including but not limited to admissions materials, academic records, grade reports, add/drop forms, course registration forms, etc.
- using language translation software.

For further information, students are encouraged to check [www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html](http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html)
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Fisher, J. “From Confederacy to Federation: Thoughts on the Finality of European Integration.” Speech at Humboldt University in Berlin, May 12, 2000 (10 pp.).


Knight, Laurence. “Spanish Economy: What is to Blame for its Troubles?” *BBC News,* May 18, 2012 (3 pp., available online).


Session 1
Wednesday, August 31st

From Franco to Democracy: Spain’s Path to EU Membership

In this class, we will examine Spain’s transition from the Franco dictatorship to democracy and its integration into the European Community in 1986.

Required Reading:


Session 2
Friday, September 2nd

The Schuman Plan and the Concept of European Unity

In this class, we will examine French Foreign Minister Robert Shuman’s plan for a united and peaceful Europe following the economic and human destruction of the Second World War.

Required Readings:


**Session 3**

**Monday, September 5th**

**The Political and Economic Foundations of European Integration**

In this session, we will discuss the most important political and economic factors that shaped post-war European integration.

Required Readings:


**Session 4**

**Wednesday, September 7th**

**European Integration: Key Milestones and Shortcomings**

In this class, we will look at the major milestones and shortcomings of European integration since 1945. We will discuss such themes as the Treaty of Rome, the Single European Act, and the Maastricht Treaty.

Required Reading:


**Session 5**

**Monday, September 12th**

**Theoretical Perspectives on European Integration**

In this class, we will discuss how competing theories of European integration – neofunctionalism, intergovernmentalism, and multi-level governance – have sought to explain the major milestones and setbacks in the evolution of European integration.

Required Readings:


### Session 6  
**Wednesday, September 14th**  
**European Union Institutions and Policy-Making: Part I**  
In this first of two classes on European institutions and policy-making, we will look at the structure of the EU legislature and executive bodies and discuss how they work together to create and implement policies.

**Required Reading:**


### Session 7  
**Monday, September 19th**  
**European Union Institutions and Policy-Making: Part II**  
In this class, we will continue our discussion from the previous session on the EU legislative and executive bodies. We will also look at how the EU judiciary works and how its rulings affect member-states.

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


### Session 8  
**Wednesday, September 21st**  
**Is the EU a Federal System?**  
In this session, we will explore the notion of the European Union as a federal system. We will examine how power is distributed among the European, state, and sub-state levels and compare the structure of the EU with other federations – the United States, Canada, and Switzerland.

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

Session 9
Monday, September 26th

Is the EU Democratic?

In this class, we will discuss the different elements that constitute the EU’s so-called democratic deficit – the argument that EU institutions and their decision-making procedures suffer from a lack of democracy.

Required Readings:


Session 10
Wednesday, September 28th

Europeanization and the Spanish Economic Boom: 1986-2007

In this session, we will examine Spain’s integration into the European Community in 1986 and how this shaped two decades of modernization, growth, and integration into the global economy.

One-page outline of first course paper due.

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


Session 11
Monday, October 3rd

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Spain

In this session, we will examine the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy. We will look at its effects on jobs, sustainability, and modernization in Spain.

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


**Session 12**

**Wednesday, October 5th**

**Regions and Multi-Level Governance: The Case of Catalonia**

In this session, we will look in more depth at the issue of multi-level governance. We will put this into context by studying the case of Catalonia and its relationship with the Spanish state and its regions.

Required readings:


Recommended Readings:


**Session 13**

**Monday, October 10th**

**First Course Paper Presentation and Discussion**

**Session 14**

**Friday, October 14th**

**First Course Paper Presentation and Discussion**

**Session 15**

**Monday, October 17th**

**Midterm Exam**
**Session 16**

**Wednesday, October 19th**

**Spain, the Financial Crisis, and the EU: 2007-2016**

In this class, we will focus on the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-8 and its prolonged effects in Spain. Furthermore, we will discuss the European Central Bank’s focus on austerity and the consequences of this on the Spanish economy and the attitude of Spaniards toward the EU.

**Required Readings:**


Knight, Laurence. “Spanish Economy: What is to Blame for its Troubles?” *BBC News*, May 18, 2012 (3 pp., available online).


**Recommended Reading:**


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**Session 17**

**Monday, October 24th**

**European Monetary Policy: Austerity and the Welfare State**

In this session, we will look at the EU’s institutional response to the economic crisis, its austerity policies, and the effects of these policies on European welfare states.

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

**Session 18**
Wednesday, October 26th

**Migration and Asylum in the EU**
In this session, we will examine the extent to which EU member-states have a common migration and asylum policy and the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in these areas.

**Required Readings:**


**Session 19**
Wednesday, November 2nd

**Spain, Immigration, and Emigration**
In this session, we will discuss Spain’s historical position as a country of emigration, the “Spanish economic miracle” and its immigration boom, and its return to a country of emigration since the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-8.

**Required Reading:**


**Session 20**
Monday, November 7th

**European Foreign Policy**
In this class, we will discuss the structure, strategy, successes, and shortcomings of the EU’s foreign policy.

**Required Readings:**


**Session 21**
Monday, November 14th

**Spain, the EU, and Terrorism**
In this class, we will examine the historical conflict between the Spanish state and the terrorist group *ETA*. Then, we will then look at terrorism in Europe today and Spain and the EU’s response to it.
Required Readings:


**Session 22**  
**Wednesday, November 16th**

**The Arab Spring and the European Refugee Crisis**

In this class, we will look at the failures of the Arab Spring and the refugee crisis this has produced. We will then discuss Spain and Europe’s response to this.

Optional course paper due.

Required Readings:


Recommended Reading:


**Monday, Session 23**  
**November 21st**

**Russia’s Resurgence in Eastern Europe**

In this session, we will look at Russia’s imperialistic resurgence in Eastern Europe and how the EU is responding to this phenomenon.

Required Readings:


**Wednesday, Session 24**  
**November 23rd**

**Brexit and its Consequences for Spain and Europe**

In this class, we will look at the UK’s recent decision to leave the European Union and the potential impact of this on Spain and the EU.
Required Readings:


**Session 25**
Monday, November 28th
**The 2016 Spanish Elections**

In this class, we will look at the recent shift from a two-party to a four-party political system in Spain and the current tensions this is creating in terms of power and leadership.

Required Readings:


**Session 26**
Wednesday, November 30th

Second Course Paper Presentation and Discussion

**Session 27**
Monday, December 5th

Second Course Paper Presentation and Discussion

**Session 28**
Wednesday, December 7th

**Conclusions: The Future of the EU: Opportunities and Challenges**

Fisher, J. “From Confederacy to Federation: Thoughts on the Finality of European Integration.” Speech at Humboldt University in Berlin, May 12, 2000 (10 pp.).


Final Exam (date TBA)