



CIEE Barcelona, Spain

Course name:	The Politics of Western Europe
Course number:	POLI 3001 BASP
Programs offering course:	Barcelona Business and Culture, Barcelona Economics and Culture, Barcelona Global Architecture and Design, Barcelona Language and Culture
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2020

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 Western European democratic system since the two Postwar periods and the creation and enlargement of the European Union (EU), with an emphasis on the processes, institutions, important figures, political culture, and citizens' electoral behavior. The process of the nationalization of the electorates and the development of universal suffrage and the creation of the current parliaments and governments are also studied. Other topics addressed in the course include the formation of political parties and the development of current political and social conflicts.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, the students will be familiar with key debates in the field of 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 (EU). Also, students are expected to develop analytical skills and intellectual understanding of liberal democracies framework in a comparative context.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

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

Students will be assessed through the following methods:

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| 1. | Two Oral Presentations | |
| 2. | (one film and one article): | 20% |
| 3. | Midterm: | 20% |
| 4. | Article and film reviews (2): | 20% |
| 5. | Final exam: | 20% |
| 6. | Participation: | 20% |

Course Requirements

Two oral presentations (20% of course grade)

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.

Article and film reviews (20% of course grade)

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.

Midterm and Final Examination (20% + 20% of course grade)

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).

Participation (20% of course grade)

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.

CIEE Barcelona Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and prepared for the day's class activities. CIEE does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences, whether due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transport delay and/or other impediments. You are considered responsible of managing your own absences. Please keep in mind that exams, paper submission dates, presentations and any other course work deadlines cannot be changed.

No academic penalty will be applied if students miss up to 3 class sessions. If students miss up to 5 class sessions, students' final course grade will drop 5 points out of 100 on the CIEE grade scale for each additional absence beyond 3 (for example a 95 will become a 90 if they reach the 4th absence, and an 85 if they reach the 5th absence). **Students will automatically fail the course if they miss more than 20% of total class hours (i.e. if they exceed 5 absences).**

For students who miss up to 20% of the total course hours due to extenuating circumstances, the Academic Director may allow for exceptions to the local attendance policy based on documentation such as proof of bereavement, religious observances, hospitalization etc.



Students arriving more than 10 minutes late to the class will be considered absent for a day.

Late assignments will be marked down 10% after the first day and 5% every day afterwards.

No coursework will be accepted after the last day of class.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

- 1.1 Introduction to the course: Syllabus review (topics, dates, assignments)
Film: *Land and Freedom* (1995).

- 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

- 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).

- 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

- 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)

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

Week 4

- 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)

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

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)

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

6.1 Great Britain V: Review

Readings: Weir 1997

Presentation: *Hitler: the rise of evil* (I)

FIRST REVIEW DUE THROUGH CANVAS!

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

7.1 MIDTERM REVIEW: France and Great Britain

Presentation: *Swing Kids* (1993)

7.2 MIDTERM EXAM

Week 8

- 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)
- 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

- 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)
- 9.2 Germany V: Review
Readings: Maier 2009
Presentation: *The Lives of Others* (2006)

Week 10

- 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)
- 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

- 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)
- 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

- 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!
- 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

- 13.1 FINAL EXAM REVIEW: Germany & the EU
Presentation: *Bridge of Spies* (2016)
- 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
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- Evans, Richard J. 2005. "A 'Revolution of Destruction'?" In *The Coming of the Third Reich*, 441-461. London: Penguin Books
- Frazer, Elizabeth. 2000. "Citizenship Education: Anti-political Culture and Political Education in Britain," *Political Studies*, 48.1: 88-103.
- Feigel, Lara. 2016. "If this is a war who is our enemy." In *The Bitter Taste of Victory: Life, Love, and Art in the Ruins of the Reich*, 305-334. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- 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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- Galpin, Charlotte. 2015. "Has Germany Fallen Out of Love with Europe?" *The Euro Crisis and European Identities. German Politics and Society*, 114.33, No. 1/2: 25-41
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- Hobolt, Sara B. 2016. "The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent." *Journal of European Public Policy* 23.9: 1259-1277.
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- Jann, Werner. 2003. "State, administration and governance in Germany: competing traditions and dominant narratives," *Public Administration*, 81.1: 95-118
- Janning, Josef, and Almut Möller. 2016. "Leading from the Center: Germany's New Role in Europe." *ECFR-European Council on Foreign Relations*.
- Kelly, Michael. 2008. War and culture: The lessons of post-war France. *Synergies Royaume-Uni et Irlande*, 1: 91-100.
- Laffin, Martin. 2000. "Constitutional Design: A Framework for Analysis," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 53.3: 532-541.
- 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.
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- Consequences, special issue, *Contemporary European History* 18. 3: 253-269.
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