

Prof. Luciano Bardi

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Office hours: by appointment

EUROPEAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS - SSC 310
Monday 8,30 – 11,15

This course will focus on West European political systems and will be divided into two parts. The first part is intended to provide students with the conceptual tools and the basic factual knowledge that are necessary for the understanding of political systems in West European democracies. In particular, students will become acquainted with the major historical determinants of Europe's societal structure. These notions will constitute the frame of reference for the study of Europe's dominant governmental models (Westminster and consensus) and the genesis and development of European political parties and political systems. The second part of the course will focus on the political systems of three major countries: the United Kingdom, France and Germany. The conceptual tools provided by the Westminster and consensus models will be applied to the three systems' societal and institutional features. Comparisons with the US model of government will be made whenever possible.

REQUIREMENTS:

Completing ALL the readings and regular attendance will be required of all students. Material covered in class will not always be covered in the readings and vice versa; students will be responsible for all material regardless of where presented. Active participation in class discussions is strongly urged. Questions and comments will always be welcome.

Grades will be based on a mid-term exam and on a final exam, both based on readings and lectures. Each will consist of an obligatory essay, a choice essay and a number of multiple-choice/true-false questions or identifications. The mid-term exam will be worth 40% and the final exam will be worth 60% of the final grade.

GRADING

Final scores will be translated into grades on the basis of a consideration of the class' overall performance. However, a full A grade will be awarded exclusively to students whose total scores are 91 and above. Likewise, a total final score of at least 60 points will be necessary to obtain a passing grade. Outstanding class participation and reports could result in a 5 point bonus. Poor class participation/reports AND lack of punctuality could each result in a 5 point penalization.

ATTENDANCE AND OTHER CLASS POLICIES

A) Attendance to all CSU courses is mandatory. Two unexcused absences are allowed during the semester but more than two unexcused absences will lower your grade (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies) as follows: 3 unexcused absences, lowers one letter grade; 4 unexcused absences, lowers two letter grades; 5 unexcused absences, lowers 3 letter grades. More than **five unexcused absences will result in failure of the course**.

B) In order not to disrupt the class, punctuality is required. Students are expected to be in class at the beginning of the class hour; any delay exceeding ten minutes will be considered an absence.

C) Dates of mid-term and final exams **cannot** be changed for individual travel plans or personal needs. Missing the midterm or the final exam will mean failure of the course.

D) During the academic year photocopies and other material may be distributed in class by the instructors. Students who were not in class are responsible for getting the material from their classmates and making their own photocopies.

E) Use of laptop computers in class is not permitted, unless previously approved by the professor.

F) Eating is NOT allowed in class.

G) Cellular phones must be **turned off** or placed on **silent mode** during class.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL COSTS

Theater admissions for one or two films (€ 6,00-8,00 each)

Bibliography

Gallagher, M., M. Laver, and P. Mair, Representative Government in Western Europe, 4th edition, New York, McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Hancock, M. D., and others, Politics in Europe, 4th Edition CQ Press, 2009 or, if available, 5th edition SAGE, 2011.

Lipset, S. M. and S. Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments" in P. Mair ed., The West European Party System, Oxford, Oxford U. P., 1990.

Ljiphart, A., Democracies, New Haven, Yale U.P., 1984.

TOPICS:

I. Fundamental Features of European Political Systems.

1. Historical introduction: European identity and diversity.
2. The geo-politics of Western Europe.
3. The development of mass democracy.
4. Parliamentarism.
5. Multi-partism (social cleavages and political families).
6. Proportionalism.

Readings: Lipset and Rokkan (whole article on reserve); Lijphart chaps. 5-9.
Gallagher, Laver, and Mair: chaps. 1-4, 7-12.

II. The British political system.

7. Foundations of British politics.
8. Political parties and electoral system.
9. Pressure groups.
10. Constitutional balance.
11. Parliamentary institutions.

Readings: Hancock and others, pt 1. Video: "The Navigators"

III. The German political system.

12. Historical background.
13. Political parties and pressure groups.
14. Electoral law and elections.
15. Federalism.
16. The parliamentary system.

Readings: Hancock and others, pt 3. Video: "Goodbye Lenin"

IV. The French political system.

17. Foundations of French politics.
18. Political parties and pressure groups.
19. Electoral system and elections (IV and V Republic).
20. Parliamentarism vs. Presidentialism.

Readings: Hancock and others, pt. 2. Possible video to be announced.

V. Conclusion.

21. The European polity model vs. the U.S. polity model.