

Course Title	Politics and Society in the European Union LAS 3014	Instructor	Fabio BOLZONAR
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Class Style	Lecture	Office Hours (face-to-face or online)	Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> period (senior theses students) Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> period (all students) Or by appointment (please send an email to request an appointment)
Track		Mode of Instruction	Solo/team
Credits	2	Allocated Year	Fall 3 <sup>rd</sup> year
Active Learning	Category 2: 3 Category 3: 2, 3, 4 Category 4: 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10	Compulsory or Elective	
Course Overview	<p>This course is designed to introduce students to the understanding of the current dynamics of European politics and society with specific attention to those countries that belong to the European Union. The course is composed of three modules. The first module covers some of the most salient historical developments in European politics and it explains their underlying social factors. The classes focus on the social cleavages that provoked the emergence of the European party systems, the decline of the post-war consensus, and the causes of right-wing populism. The second module considers some questions that have recently opened highly divisive public debates in most European societies, notably immigration, the religious identity of Europe, gender equality, LGBTQ rights, and the future of European welfare states. Finally, the third module discusses what the European Union is, how its complex multi-level institutional system works, and its likely future. The course instructor presents theoretical and empirical works, reviews social research methods and, through an active learning approach, encourages students to think critically about the political and societal issues in contemporary Europe.</p>		
Course Objectives	<p>The intended learning outcomes of this course are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the cultural and political diversity of Europe;</li> <li>• Comprehending the origins and evolution of the European party systems;</li> <li>• Interpreting the rise of right-wing populism in contemporary Europe;</li> <li>• Grasping the multi-level governance of the European Union;</li> <li>• Enhancing communication skills in English by developing the capacity to synthesize complex arguments and expose them accurately and concisely;</li> <li>• Improving the ability to think critically about social and political issues in contemporary Europe.</li> </ul>		
Prerequisite	<p>The course is open to any student who has taken a class in political science or an equivalent subject. Those students who do not have the required background knowledge of sociology and are interested in attending the classes are invited to contact the course instructor.</p>		

Course Schedule	No	Contents	Homework
	1	<p><b>Introduction to the Course</b>  <i>What is Europe? Looking in the Right Direction for Asking the Right Questions.</i>            The first part of this lecture explains the structure of the course, the work that is expected by each student, and the grading system. The second part introduces students to European politics.</p>	Reading for the next class.
	2	<p><b>Module 1: Historical Developments of European Politics</b>  <i>Cleavage Structures: Social and Historical Foundations of the European Party Systems</i>            This lecture explains the various cleavages (e.g. economic, religious, territorial, ethnic) in European countries that led to the expression of social interests in different political parties and interest groups.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.
	3	<p><i>The Rise and Decline of the Post-War Consensus</i>  <i>Short Reflection 1 (due by Monday 23:59)</i>            The historical development and the decline of the post-war European party systems and their functioning are discussed in this lecture.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class.
	4	<p><i>From the Silent Revolution to the Silent Counter-Revolution</i>            The lecture explains the turns in value orientations in European countries since the mid 1960s and their political outcomes.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.
	5	<p><i>Populism and Authoritarianism in Contemporary Europe</i>  <i>Short Reflection 1 (due by Monday 23:59)</i>            The lecture analyzes the rise of populism in contemporary Europe, its most salient characteristics, and the challenges it poses to liberal democracies.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class.
	6	<i>Midterm Exam</i>	Studying for the exam.
	7	<p><b>Module 2: Controversies and Issues in European Politics and Society</b>  <i>Immigration and Islam in Europe</i>            The lecture debates how European countries deal with immigration and Islam and it explains how public policies on these matters have changed.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.
	8	<p><i>Is Europe Secular or Christian?</i>  <i>Short Reflection 3 (due by Monday 23:59)</i>            Although Europe is one of the most secularized continents in the world, the growing influx of migrants, particularly from Muslim countries, has opened highly divisive debates on the identity of Europe. This lecture discusses the role played by religion in contemporary Europe to assess whether and to what extent Christianity still defines the cultural and religious identity of Europe.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class.

	9	<p><i>Has Western Europe become a Gayrope? Social and Political Conflicts over LGBTQ rights in Europe</i></p> <p>This lecture discusses the social and political struggles that led to the recognition of LGBTQ rights in Western Europe, it debates the public policies introduced to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and it assesses the limits of these policies.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.
	10	<p><b>Module 3: The European Union</b></p> <p><i>What Is the European Union?</i></p> <p><i>Short Reflection 4 (due by Monday 23:59)</i></p> <p>This lecture explains what the European Union is, outlines some of its landmark historical developments, and explains its current institutional and political developments.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class.
	11	<p><i>How Does the European Union Work?</i></p> <p>The European Union is embedded in a complex system of multi-level governance that involves different actors with distinct prerogatives. This lecture outlines and explains the key principles of EU governance.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class and reflection.
	12	<p><i>The Future of the European Union after the Russo-Ukrainian War</i></p> <p><i>Short Reflection 5 (due by Monday 23:59)</i></p> <p>The outbreak of Russo-Ukrainian had a deep political impact on European politics and led European institutions and leading political actors to reconsider the future of Europe. Although the outcomes of these developments are still uncertain, this lecture ventures into considering the future of Europe after the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.</p>	Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class.
	13	<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p><i>Student Presentations 1</i></p> <p>This class is devoted to student presentations.</p>	Studying for the presentation and class discussion.
	14	<p><i>Student Presentation 2</i></p> <p>This class is devoted to student presentations.</p>	Studying for the presentation and class discussion.
	15	<p><i>Wrap Up</i></p> <p>This final lecture summarizes and reviews what we have learnt about the relationships between politics and society in Europe. Students will also have the opportunity to raise further questions about the class material and the course instructor will provide some advice for the preparation of the final assignment.</p>	Debate and course overview.
		<p><i>Final Exam</i></p>	Studying for the final exam.

Grading	<p>Class Participation: 30 %</p> <p>Students are expected to engage in discussions. Participation will be evaluated on the basis of the contribution to collective learning. If a student does not feel comfortable speaking in class, she/he is encouraged to contact the course instructor to arrange an alternative way to participate in discussions. The course instructor would do his best to accommodate students' requests. Student presentations will be counted as extra participation.</p> <p>Midterm exam: 30%</p> <p>There will be a midterm exam related to the course material discussed in Module 1. This exam will be composed of several multiple choice and true/false quizzes and one open questions. Grades will be based on the understanding of the course material and the answers given by each student.</p> <p>Final exam: 40%</p> <p>There will be a final exam related to the course material discussed in Module 2. This exam will be composed of several multiple choice and true/false quizzes and three open questions. Grades will be based on the understanding of the course material and the answers given by each student.</p>
Textbooks	A detailed list of readings will be provided by the instructor on Moodle.
References	<p>A detailed list of references will be provided on Moodle.</p> <p><b>WEBSITES</b></p> <p>The Catholic Church in the European Union, <a href="https://www.comece.eu/">https://www.comece.eu/</a></p> <p>European Union, <a href="https://european-union.europa.eu/index_en">https://european-union.europa.eu/index_en</a></p> <p>The European Trade Union Confederation, <a href="https://etuc.org/en">https://etuc.org/en</a></p> <p>European Value Studies, <a href="https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/">https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/</a></p> <p>EUROSTAT, <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat">https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat</a></p> <p>ILGA-Europe, <a href="https://www.ilga-europe.org/">https://www.ilga-europe.org/</a></p> <p><b>MASS MEDIA, NEWSPAPERS, AND MAGAZINES</b></p> <p>Il Corriere della Sera, <a href="https://www.corriere.it/english/">https://www.corriere.it/english/</a></p> <p>The Economist (Europe), <a href="https://www.economist.com/europe">https://www.economist.com/europe</a></p> <p>The Financial Times (Europe), <a href="https://www.ft.com/europe">https://www.ft.com/europe</a></p> <p>Le Monde (Europe), <a href="https://www.lemonde.fr/en/europe/">https://www.lemonde.fr/en/europe/</a></p> <p>El País (Europe), <a href="https://english.elpais.com/news/europe/">https://english.elpais.com/news/europe/</a></p> <p>Der Spiegel (International), <a href="https://www.spiegel.de/international/">https://www.spiegel.de/international/</a></p>
NOTES	<p>Short reflections (max 150 words) aim to evaluate student understanding of the course material and participation. They are due two days before each class at the latest.</p> <p>Students with disabilities or special needs (including stress and anxiety problems) should talk to the course instructor as soon as possible to discuss likely arrangements to let them attend the course properly. Confidentiality will be granted to all students.</p> <p>Plagiarism is not tolerated under any circumstance. If students have any queries about plagiarism and the quotation style, please do not hesitate to contact the course instructor.</p> <p>Artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini) for learning purposes should be used cautiously. Even though AI tools can explain complex concepts, organize workload efficiently, and enhance writing skills, they can also provide inaccurate information, lead to unintended plagiarism, and undermine the enhancement of critical thinking. If students wish to use AI tools, they are strongly encouraged to discuss this topic with the course instructor.</p>