POLS 4210: European Union Politics

Fall 2020

Instructor
Steffen Blings
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Office Hours:
T 1:30-2:30pm
R 10:45-11:45am
online via Zoom

Course Description

The European Union is a unique supranational institution binding together 28 member states in a political and economic union. In this class we will make use of the toolkit of the social sciences to shed light on the development of this union. Specifically, the class will address the institutions of the European Union, its policy-making process, as well as political conflict in and about the European Union. In the process we will explore and discuss questions like: does the European Union have a common foreign policy and does it constitute a “normative power?” What is the Common Agricultural Policy and are the resources dedicated to it well invested? How can citizens impact decision-making in the EU and is there a “democratic deficit” in the union? We will engage these questions through, among other things, simulations of EU decision-making and writing a policy memo suggesting institutional reforms of the EU.

Learning Goals

This class will encourage you to develop and demonstrate competency in the following areas and skills:

• Gaining an overview of the European Union including its politics, institutions, and policy-making process

• Employing the toolkit of the social sciences to think critically about European Union Politics

• Drawing on social scientific concepts and theories to analyze current events
• Improve writing short, analytic pieces through revision and feedback provided by the Writing Fellows Program

Course Structure

Each week we will cover one topic relating to the European Union. A “to-do list” of activities and assignments for each week will be made available on Canvas via the Modules tab. Most week that to-do list will consists of several tasks that should be completed in the following order:

1. Watch videos relating to the week’s topic on Youtube.
2. Watch the video lectures for the week on Canvas.
3. Complete the readings assigned for the week.
4. Post replies to the forum on Canvas in response to the discussion questions for the week.
5. In some weeks other assignments, either in addition or replacing the forum posts on discussion questions.
6. In some weeks larger assignments, like the midterm, will be due.

In some weeks the recommended order of tasks will deviate from the list above and these deviations will be highlighted in the relevant to-do lists for those weeks.

Course Requirements

Readings

The readings for this class combine a textbook with additional material from scientific books and journal articles. Please purchase the textbook listed below. All other readings will be made available online.


As noted in the section on “Course Structure” above, please complete all assigned reading before posting your contribution to the week’s discussion questions.
Assignments and Grading

There are four major course requirements, which are described in more detail below and account for the 1000 points that can be earned towards your grade in this course. Points earned through the assignments translate into grades in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points to Grade Table</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>921-1000</td>
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<tr>
<td>891-920</td>
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<tr>
<td>861-890</td>
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<tr>
<td>821-860</td>
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<td>661-690</td>
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<tr>
<td>600-660</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 600</td>
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Overview of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Grade Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Current Event Memos</td>
<td>Connecting Concepts to Current Events, Improving Writing Skills</td>
<td>150 points each including 25 each for Writing Fellow Conferences</td>
<td>September 25 &amp; November 20 by 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Contributions &amp; other Assignments</td>
<td>Formulating Arguments</td>
<td>25 points per week</td>
<td>weeks 3-7; 9-12; 14-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Demonstrating Knowledge of Course Material, Applying Theories</td>
<td>200 points</td>
<td>October 21 (10am)- October 23 (10am)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home Exam</td>
<td>Research, Argumentation, Analysis, Citing Correctly</td>
<td>225 points</td>
<td>December 15 by 5pm</td>
</tr>
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Over the course of the semester each student will write two 1-2 page “current events” memos. These memos should identify a current event of your choice related to European Union affairs covered in a newspaper article and explain how the concepts and/or theories we have covered help us to analyze that event. These memos are due on 09/25 by 5pm and 11/20 by 5pm. For each of these memos you should prepare a draft two weeks ahead of the due date and schedule a meeting with a Writing Fellow to revise that draft.
Details about the “Current Events Memo” assignment and how to schedule a meeting with the Writing Fellows Program are available in the assignment document on Canvas.

In weeks 3-7, 9-12, and 14-15 I will post either discussion questions to be answered (usually two each week) or a short assignment to be completed or a combination of the two. Answers to all discussion questions for the week and/or the completed assignment must be posted by the **Friday of the week by 5pm** (and Thursday, 5pm in week 15, since classes end on that day). Answers to the discussion questions in the Canvas forum for our class should consist of 1-2 sentences clearly laying out a position with respect to the discussion question followed by a well-reasoned argument for how you have arrived at your position (1 paragraph of about 5-10 sentences). While it is not required, you are encouraged to react to previous discussion contributions in the thread in your answer. Note that debating politics can be a divisive topic, but differences in opinion and background provide an opportunity for intellectual growth. We all stand to benefit from being aware of and welcoming these differences. All students will be referred to by the name and pronouns with which they are most comfortable. Disrespectful comments will not be tolerated. Details on the assignment for each week will be available on the “to-do list” provided for each week on Canvas on the Modules tab.

In this course you will also complete a 1-hour midterm exam to be taken at home via Canvas at a time of your choice between **10am on 10/21 and 10am on 10/23** based on the material covered up to that point. The final assignment is a take-home exam due on **December 15 by 5pm**.

All written assignments should be double-spaced, using font size 12 and 1-inch margins and be submitted via Canvas in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Late assignments will be docked by one letter grade for each 24 hours or portion thereof after the due date they are turned in. If you feel that you will not be able to submit an assignment on time due to illness or emergency please let me know as early as possible.

**Other Course Information**

**Email policy**

Feel free to email me with questions or to set up an appointment. Longer discussions and all conversations about grades must take place in person. I will guarantee a response to emails within 48 hours during the week. However, do not wait until the last minute. While I typically check emails several times a day, there is no guarantee that I will receive, read and be able to respond to last minute requests or questions.
Note to students with disabilities

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, 435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Academic integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by USU’s Student Code. All the work you submit in this course must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the Student Code and the rules for properly acknowledging the work and ideas of others. You can find information on how to cite sources and avoid plagiarism here: https://usu.instructure.com/courses/152916. During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion is not permitted during the examinations, nor may you copy from others or collaborate in any way. Any violation of the rules for academic integrity will be punished in accordance with USU’s policies.

Additional Information and Resources

Additional information about Utah State University’s policy can be found at: http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty-life/syllabus.cfm. If you any questions about the class, do not hesitate to email me.

Course Schedule

- Week 1 (08/31-09/04): Introduction to the Class
  - No required reading
- Week 2 (09/08-09/11): Europe: Origins & Development
  - Labor Day (09/07)
  - Dinan (2015)
  - Send a draft of Current Events Memo 1 to a Writing Fellow and make an appointment with them by 09/11
- Week 3 (09/14-09/18): European Institutions
  - Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapters 2 & 5
• Week 4 (09/21-09/25): Citizens & the EU
  – Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapters 4 & 7
  – Current Events Memo 1 due on 09/25 by 5pm
• Week 5 (09/28-10/02): Civil Society & the EU
  – Ayoub (2016), chapter 3
  – Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapters 3 & 6
• Week 6 (10/05-10/09): Policy-Making in the European Union
  – Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapter 8
• Week 7 (10/12-10/16): Economic Policies
  – Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapters 9 & 10
• Week 8 (10/19-10/23): Midterm
  – No required reading
  – Midterm will be available for 48 hours from 10am on 10/21 to 10am on 10/23; please complete it during that period.
• Week 9 (10/26-10/30): Internal Policies
  – Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapter 11
• Week 10 (11/02-11/06): External Policies I
  – Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapters 12 & 15
  – Send a draft of Current Events Memo 2 to a Writing Fellow and make an appointment with them by 11/06
• Week 11 (11/09-11/13): External Policies II & Introduction to Library Resources
  – Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapter 14
• Week 12 (11/16-11/20): Contemporary Issues I: Brexit
  – Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapter 16
  – Current Events Memo 2 due on 11/20 by 5pm
• Week 13 (11/23-11/24): Contemporary Issues II: Politicization of the EU
  – No required reading
  – Thanksgiving Break (11/25-11/27)
• Week 14 (11/30-12/04): Contemporary Issues III: Populism
  – Kriesi (2014)
• Week 15 (12/07-12/10): The European Union: A (Preliminary) Conclusion
  – Zimmermann and Dürr (2016), chapter 1
• Take-Home Exam due: December 15 by 5pm
Course Readings


