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| Course Title | Politics and Society in the European Union and related seminar LAS 3014 | Instructor | Fabio BOLZONAR |
| | | E-mail | fbolzonar@miu.ac.jp |
| Class Style | Lecture | Office Hours (face-to-face or online) | To be determined Or by appointment (please send an email to request an appointment) |
| Track | | Mode of Instruction | Solo |
| Credits | 2 (for the course) plus 2 (for the seminar) | Allocated Year | Fall 3 rd –4 th 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> <p>The course <u>is integrated</u> by a seminar that will deepen the discussion of the topics explained in the course.</p> | | |
| Course Objectives | <p>The intended learning outcomes of this course are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the cultural and political diversity of Europe; • Comprehending the origins and evolution of the European party systems; • Interpreting the rise of right-wing populism in contemporary Europe; • Grasping the multi-level governance of the European Union; • Enhancing communication skills in English by developing the capacity to synthesize complex arguments and expose them accurately and concisely; • Improving the ability to think critically about social and political issues in contemporary Europe. | | |
| 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>Introduction to the Course <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. |

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| | 2 | <i>Cleavage Structures: Social and Historical Foundations of the European Party Systems (first part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 3 | <i>Cleavage Structures: Social and Historical Foundations of the European Party Systems (second part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 4 | <i>Cleavage Structures: Social and Historical Foundations of the European Party Systems (third part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 5 | <i>From the Silent Revolution to the Silent Counter-Revolution (first part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 6 | <i>From the Silent Revolution to the Silent Counter-Revolution (first part)</i> | Studying for the exam. |
| | 7 | <i>What Is Populism? (first part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 8 | <i>What Is Populism (second part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 9 | <i>Mid-term Exam</i> | Studying for the exam. |
| | 10 | <i>Immigration and Islam in Europe (first part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 11 | <i>Immigration and Islam in Europe (second part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 12 | <i>The Welfare State in Europe (first part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 13 | <i>The Welfare State in Europe (second part)</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |
| | 14 | <i>Gender and Politics in Europe</i> | Critical reading of class material. Preparing questions to raise in class. |

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| | 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>WEBSITES</p> <p>The Catholic Church in the European Union, https://www.comece.eu/ European Union, https://european-union.europa.eu/index_en The European Trade Union Confederation, https://etuc.org/en European Value Studies, https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/ EUROSTAT, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat ILGA-Europe, https://www.ilga-europe.org/</p> <p>MASS MEDIA, NEWSPAPERS, AND MAGAZINES</p> <p><i>Il Corriere della Sera</i>, https://www.corriere.it/english/ <i>The Economist</i> (Europe), https://www.economist.com/europe <i>The Financial Times</i> (Europe), https://www.ft.com/europe <i>Le Monde</i> (Europe), https://www.lemonde.fr/en/europe/ <i>El País</i> (Europe), https://english.elpais.com/news/europe/ <i>Der Spiegel</i> (International), https://www.spiegel.de/international/</p> | | |

NOTES

During the course each student will be required to write short reflections (max 150 words) which are due two days before each class at the latest. If a student does not submit the short reflection their grade will be reduced by 10%.

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.

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.