

Spring 2012  
Comparative European Politics (GO 203)—Prof. Ginsberg—MW 2:30-3:50 pm—Ladd 307

Office Hours (Ladd 314) M 5:30-7:00 pm, Tue 11:00 am-noon, TT 9:00-9:30 am, and W 12:00-2:00 pm  
and by appointment; x5245 (rginsber@skidmore.edu)

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### **Eight Course Objectives**

- introduce students to comparative politics as a subfield of political science to reveal similarities and differences among liberal democracies;
- identify, examine, critique, and use key concepts and methods of comparative political inquiry to expand, enrich, and improve students' knowledge of political systems;
- compare and contrast governments and politics in Britain, France, Germany, and other European states with focus on political culture, political socialization, and political development; political, electoral, and party systems; and major political, economic, social, and foreign policies and issues;
- examine the growing importance of the European Union to the domestic politics and national interests of the individual European nation-states;
- engage students in a better understanding of their own political system by comparing it to those of other states;
- sensitize students to common problems facing their own and other advanced post-industrial democracies and, using the comparative method, weigh the merits of different policy responses to those problems;
- sharpen writing, research, analytical, and oral presentation skills; and
- prepare students for more advanced coursework and careers in government and international affairs.

### **Course Requirements**

- one comparative politics paper (40 percent)
- two exams (20 percent each)
- participation (20 percent)

### **Texts and Websites**

- Hancock et al. *Politics in Europe* (required)
- Ginsberg, *Demystifying the European Union* (recommended for those with little EU background)

European Union	<a href="http://europa.eu/">http://europa.eu/</a>
CIA World Fact Book	<a href="https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/">https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/</a>
BBC Country Reports	<a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1054681.stm">http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1054681.stm</a>
BBC News	<a href="http://news.bbc.co.uk/">http://news.bbc.co.uk/</a>

British Embassy	<a href="http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en">http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en</a>
10 Downing Street	<a href="http://www.number10.gov.uk/">http://www.number10.gov.uk/</a>
House of Commons	<a href="http://www.parliament.uk/commons/index.cfm">http://www.parliament.uk/commons/index.cfm</a>
House of Lords	<a href="http://www.parliament.uk/lords/index.cfm">http://www.parliament.uk/lords/index.cfm</a>
Conservatives	<a href="http://www.conservatives.com/default.aspx">http://www.conservatives.com/default.aspx</a>
Labour	<a href="http://www.labour.org.uk/">http://www.labour.org.uk/</a>
Liberal Democrats	<a href="http://liberal.org.uk/index.htm">http://liberal.org.uk/index.htm</a>

French Embassy	<a href="http://info-France-usa.org/">http://info-France-usa.org/</a>
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Government Institutions	<a href="http://www.ambafrance-us.org/spip.php?article507">http://www.ambafrance-us.org/spip.php?article507</a>
Presidency	<a href="http://www.elysee.fr/accueil/">http://www.elysee.fr/accueil/</a>
Prime Minister	<a href="http://www.gouvernement.fr/">http://www.gouvernement.fr/</a>
Constitutional Council	<a href="http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/">http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/</a>
National Assembly	<a href="http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/">http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/</a>
Senate	<a href="http://www.senat.fr/">http://www.senat.fr/</a>
German Embassy	<a href="http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/Startseite.html">http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/Startseite.html</a>
Federal Government	<a href="http://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/EN/Homepage/home.html">http://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/EN/Homepage/home.html</a>
Presidency	<a href="http://www.bundespraesident.de/en">http://www.bundespraesident.de/en</a>
Bundestag	<a href="http://www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/index.html">http://www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/index.html</a>
Bundesrat	<a href="http://www.bundesrat.de/EN/Home/homepage__node.html">http://www.bundesrat.de/EN/Home/homepage__node.html</a>
Greens	<a href="http://www.gruene.de/">http://www.gruene.de/</a>
Social Democrats	<a href="http://www.spdfraktion.de/cnt/rs/rs_rubrik/0,,1901,00.htm">http://www.spdfraktion.de/cnt/rs/rs_rubrik/0,,1901,00.htm</a>
Christian Democrats	<a href="http://www.cdu.de/homepage.htm">http://www.cdu.de/homepage.htm</a>

### Schedule of Readings and Lectures

1-23	What is Comparative Politics and Why is it Important to Study?
1-25	Method of Study and Primer on the EU, pp. 1-10, 639-655; Ginsberg, Chs. 5-6 recommended for students with little EU background
1-30	First Foray: Sweden, pp. 437-456
2-1	Sweden, pp. 457-495
2-6	Poland, pp. 567-594
2-8	Poland, pp. 595-617
2-13	Russia, pp. 501-530
2-15	Russia, pp. 532-562
2-20	Comparative Observations: A Roundtable
2-22	UK, pp. 15-56
2-29	UK, pp. 59-80
3-5	UK, pp. 82-104
3-7	Exam
3-19	France, pp. 109-144
3-21	France, pp. 147-181
3-26	France, pp. 185-206
3-28	Germany, pp. 213-253
4-2	Germany, pp. 255-280
4-4	Germany, pp. 282-307
4-9	Comparative Observations: A Roundtable
4-11	EU Revisited, pp. 657-664, 697-702
4-16	Exam
4-18	Lessons Learned: A Roundtable. Begin Paper Presentations
4-23 to 4-30	Paper Presentations

### Key Concepts

#### Generic

comparative politics	political culture	political socialization
political development	federal/unity system	constitutional monarchy
geography in political develop.	republic	judicial review
head of government/head of state	cabinet	nationalization/privatization
presidential system	parliamentary system	coalition government
democratic corporatism	electoral system	minority government
pluralism	civil society	democratization
proportional representation	single-member district	political party
interest group	political party system	political ideology

voter turnout referendum	universal suffrage constructive vote of no confidence	vote of no confidence
<u>Sweden</u>		
Constitutional Settlement (1809) neutrality	Great Compromise (1907-09) comprehensive welfare system	politics of compromise consensual democracy
<u>Poland</u>		
Jagiellonian Dynasty partitions Nazi and Soviet invasions	Battle of Grunwald Katyn Solidarity	defeat of the Turks cohabitation
<u>Russia</u>		
1905 Reforms collectivization of agriculture “riddle in a mystery wrapped in an enigma”	March & November Revolutions glasnost/perestroika/new thinking incomplete (illiberal) democracy	Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact collapse of USSR lack of civil society/engagement
<u>UK</u>		
Norman Conquest English Civil War Union with Wales, Scotland Westminster and Whitehall shadow minister/cabinet <i>primus inter pares</i> party government unwritten constitution	<i>Magna Carta</i> deference Irish Question 10 Downing Street Thatcherism devolution question time “organic link”	Glorious Revolution unwritten constitution parliamentary sovereignty Buckingham Palace New Labour collective responsibility shadow cabinet
<u>France</u>		
French Revolution Gaullism <i>dirigisme</i>	Dreyfus Affair Algeria Crisis Constitutional Council	incompatibility rule cohabitation Quai d’Orsay, Elysee & Matignon
<u>Germany</u>		
<i>Zollverein</i> <i>Wirtschaftswunder</i> social democracy social market economy	wars of German nat’l unification Basic Law chancellor democracy	German (re)unification militant democracy Bonn and Berlin Republics

### Instructions for Assignments

#### Student Participation

Students are expected to bring the relevant reading to class each day, arrive on time to discuss reading and other assignments, and submit responses to study questions and key concepts as assigned. No unexcused absences are permitted. Missing class before/after Spring break is not an excused absence. Each unexcused absence beyond the first instance will result in a full letter drop in the participation grade. Three or more unexcused absences will result in a full-letter drop in the final grade. Four or more unexcused absences will result in failure in the course. If students cannot make class, for whatever reason, they are required to let Dr. G. know before the start of class by phone. Since late arrivals to class are disruptive, students must arrive on time. For each late arrival beyond the first two, the student will suffer a half-letter grade drop in the participation grade. Due dates for assignments and scheduled exams, which are detailed in the syllabus, are fixed and cannot be changed. Submissions are due at the start of class. No late submissions of work will be accepted. To anticipate last minute hitches, do not wait until it is too late to print out a document. Students are asked not to send the professor written work by electronic mail.

Students are expected to report to class on current events in the countries we are studying and in the two countries they have chosen for their comparative politics project. *The Financial Times* and *The Economist* are highly recommended. Students should also view BBC World News online and other relevant sources.

### Key Concepts

Key concepts are building blocks in students' understanding of comparative politics. Key concepts are assigned for each country. For each key concept students should provide a brief definition, offer a date and an example when appropriate, and explain how the concept is relevant to the study of comparative politics or the politics of the specific country. For some key concepts, students will need to distinguish among different categories or types for definition (e.g., political culture includes such variants as consensual and conflictual political culture or a vote of no confidence includes a constructive vote of no confidence). Students are more apt to learn, define, and remember key concepts if they first understand the context and significance of those concepts. Students may wish to reserve a section in their notebooks for a glossary or use note cards. Students should find their definitions only in the assigned text or in the lectures (and **not** other non-course sources). Dr. G. may require students either to submit their key concepts for evaluation or to come to class prepared to define key concepts in the course of discussion.

### Exams

The exams cover (a) key concepts; (b) questions pertaining to the field of comparative government; and (c) questions pertaining to the following for each of the political systems studied:

- political culture, political socialization, and political development
- governmental powers and decisionmaking by institution/branch
- electoral and political party systems

### Comparative Government Paper

Choose two European states (other than those covered in class) and, in a 20-page paper, compare and contrast their systems of government using the comparative government methods and terms we learned in class. Make appointment with Dr. G. by **February 8** to seek approval of your choice of states and to seek counsel on use of sources. Submit paper outline by **February 22**, annotated bibliography by **March 21**, and clean draft of first chapter by **April 9**. Final paper due on or before 4:00 pm **May 4** in Dr. G.'s.

#### Evaluative Criteria Checklist for Successful Comparative Government Paper

Paper Title/Subtitle/Cover Page	_____	Response to Query	_____
Cohesion/Structure	_____	Accuracy of Content	_____
Parts Relate to Whole	_____	Good Transitions	_____
Spelling and Grammar	_____	Clear Introduction	_____
Margins/Clarity of Print Out	_____	Clear Conclusion	_____
Paragraphs/Page Numbers	_____	Link Between Intro/End	_____
Page Length	_____	Substantiation/Examples	_____
Proper Bibliography	_____	Quality of Comparisons	_____
Margins/Clarity of Print Out	_____	Double-Spaced	_____
Oral Presentation Quality	_____	Consultation with Dr. G.	_____
Quality of Deadline Submissions	_____	Met all Deadlines	_____