

**POLSCI 358 (Winter 2007)**

# **Politics of the European Union**

**Professor Lars Rensmann**

The University of Michigan  
Department of Political Science  
Haven Hall  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1045

Class:  
Tue, Thu 10.30am – 12pm  
MLB 1220

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Ms. **Jennifer Miller**, Graduate Student at the Department of Political Science, will assist me as a Graduate Student Instructor in this class. Her email address is milljenn@umich.edu

## **Course Description**

This course will introduce to the history & main political features of European integration, the political system of the European Union, European parties & policies, and current issues of democracy in Europe. We will seek to understand and examine the political institutions, historical development, and philosophical foundations of the EU, and its relationship to the EU member states in comparative perspective. Students will become familiar with the history and the contemporary polity, politics, policy-making and policies of the European Union.

The course consists of five major sections. In the first section we will analyze and reconstruct the historical development of and the political-philosophical justifications for the European Union. Contemporary theories on European Integration, including inter-governmentalism, supra-nationalism, and multi-level governance will also be discussed. The second section scrutinizes the EU's existing major supra-national political institutions, their functions and their democratic legitimacy. Hence, the EU's current institutional frameworks and political system will be explored, and the policy- and decision-making process. Taking public opinion into account the third section deals with selected political parties, interest groups and policy areas, and the Europeanization thereof. Policy fields include common economic and monetary policy, and common foreign and security policy in the context of the EU as a global actor. The fourth section will both move "down" to the discussion of selected EU member states and their relationship to/influence on the EU, and "up" in so far as we also broaden the horizon by incorporating comparative analyses

(especially comparisons of the EU with the United States) in order to deepen the understanding of the character of the EU and, for that matter, European politics. In the last section of the course, particular attention will be paid to prospects and challenges of the EU, addressing current “hot” topics of EU politics, such as the future of the EU’s steady enlargement process; the question of Europe’s ‘cultural identity’ and the evolvement of a transnational public sphere; the changes of the decision-making process; and the failed referenda for a European constitutional treaty. Questions regarding the future of European (con-)federalism and political identity, as well as notions of European sovereignty, democratic constitutionalism, and democratic legitimacy, will also be assessed.

The class is designed for upper-level undergraduate students interested in European politics, Europeanization, and political systems.

### **Prerequisites**

POLSCI 101 or 301 or 302.

### **Readings**

All assignments are collected for you in one course pack (which you are strongly advised to buy), except for three books which you’ll need to purchase:

Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005)

John McCormick, *Understanding the European Union: A Concise Introduction 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Elizabeth Bomberg and Alexander Stubb, eds., *The European Union: How Does it Work?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Since the rest of this course’s reading materials will be in the course pack, you will have to purchase it in full. The course pack will be available at EXCEL which is located at 1117 SOUTH UNIVERSITY (Telephone number 996-1500), down the street from ESPRESSO ROYAL, across the street from GOOD TIME CHARLIE’s and right next to ULRICH’s ARTS AND CRAFTS. This is the easiest way for you to obtain the requisite course materials, and it allows you to concentrate on your own research for your papers. The book will be available at SHAMAN DRUM bookstore at the corner of STATE STREET and NORTH UNIVERSITY. Reading the books and other assigned materials is the best way to achieve your goals.

### **Course Requirements**

By design, this is an upper level writing course, and meets the ULW requirement accordingly. There will be two in-class examinations and two 8 – 10 page papers on topics discussed in the lectures and the readings of the course. There will also be a commentary

on a paper draft by a fellow student. The two research papers will each comprise 25 percent of the final grade; the exams will each comprise 20 percent of the final grade, with the commentary accounting for 10 percent. Since the lectures comprise an absolutely essential component of this course that will not be found in the readings, class attendance is strongly recommended. Thus the final grades will consist of the following:

- 1) First paper, 8 – 10 pages (25%)
- 2) Second paper, 8 – 10 pages (25%)
- 3) First exam (10%)
- 4) Second exam (20%)
- 5) Commentary on fellow student's paper draft (10%)
- 6) Participation (10%)

### Rules & Reasons

- Academic misconduct will result in your failing the course. It is fully your responsibility to avoid any sort of, or even the appearance of, such misconduct, such as stealing someone's intellectual property or any other form of cheating. It's simply unfair.
- If you find the readings, lectures or discussions too difficult, there is no need to complain *after*/at the end of the course. Instead, you should raise any question or problem that you have either during or, if you prefer, after each class session, or drop by my office any time and discuss the question or problem. Don't miss the chance of making this a good learning experience! If you have a problem, others might have it as well, so don't hesitate to address it.
- Only half of each class session will be in form of lectures. That's why it is not enough to come to class on time (you should!), but you should also be prepared and ready to actively participate, which is strongly encouraged as part of the learning process. In class, you must treat your peers and your professor in a civil and professional manner; while a lively discussion with disagreements are most welcome, you need to tolerate different point of views.
- Participation is strongly recommended. After more than four absences, your participation grade is E. There will be no exception to this rule.

### Grading Criteria

**Exams.** The mid-term and final exams in this upper level writing course count each for 20% of your final grade. They will be in-class examinations (1 ½ hours) which will primarily focus on the reading materials and lectures but will also ask for your point of view, and arguments backing it up. Good knowledge of the reading material, carefully listening to the lectures, and thinking about the issues of concern will ensure that you receive a good grade.

**Participation.** You are strongly recommended to actively participate in class, to raise questions, particularly if there is anything you didn't understand, and to make comments.

There are NO stupid questions (although there might be more or less intelligent ones). Active participation is also an essential part of the learning process: In class, you have a wonderful opportunity to exercise and enhance your ability to speak in public, which is an essential part of politics, education, and citizenship.

**Papers.** As mentioned above, the papers will be the most important element counting for your final grade. The two papers each count for 25% of the final grade. Here are some of the grading guidelines for the papers:

- A/A- The paper offers an original or interesting thesis supported by plausible and sound arguments. Its author has been thinking through the course material and demonstrates an advanced understanding of the issues at stake. The author also shows the ability to intelligently frame a problem/question that is coherently addressed in the paper, and which is supported by sound arguments and empirical evidence, in case of the final paper, by textual evidence/quotes from several different sources. In addition to that, the paper is well-structured, and writing is very good or excellent.
- B/B+ The paper offers a clear and coherent thesis which is by and large supported by plausible and sound arguments and empirical evidence. It addresses several course readings and aspects relevant to the course, and it demonstrates a solid understanding of the issues at stake. The author frames a problem/question that is for the most part coherently addressed in the paper, and which is supported by good arguments and evidence, in case of the final paper, by textual evidence/quotes from more than one source. Different arguments & approaches are considered. The paper is solidly structured and writing is good.
- B- The paper offers a thesis and supports it with arguments, but the thesis is either not coherent or not complex enough, and the arguments provided are in part incoherent or not really developed. The paper addresses course readings and aspects relevant to the course but doesn't always stay on topic. It offers basic understanding of the issues at stake. There is either no adequate framing of a problem or question, or the problem/question is insufficiently addressed in the paper. The thesis is supported by *some* good arguments and some or little evidence; even in case of the final paper, only one or two textual sources are used *or* sources are used in a weak/problematic way. Interpretations of the readings are only in part convincing, and few arguments & sources are considered. The paper is not sufficiently organized, and there are writing problems.
- C/C+ The paper offers a thesis but few or no arguments supporting it. The thesis is incoherent or simplistic. The paper hardly addresses the course readings or aspects relevant to the course. It doesn't stay on topic. It lacks understanding of the issues of concern. There is no real framing of a problem/question. Good arguments are missing; even in case of the final paper, only one or no textual evidence is accurately provided. Interpretations or summaries of the readings are, for the most part, misguided. Different arguments are hardly considered. The paper has no

coherent structure, and writing is very problematic.

- D+/C- The paper doesn't offer a thesis, or it doesn't offer arguments in its support. The paper hardly addresses anything relevant to the course. It seriously lacks understanding of the issues. Even in case of the final paper, there is little or no adequate textual evidence. Interpretations and summaries of the course readings are, for the most part, completely misguided. The paper lacks a coherent conception or organization. Writing is awkward.
- D There is no thesis, there are no arguments, there is little or no evidence, there is no conception of writing, and no organization of the paper. Interpretations and summaries of course material are completely misguided.
- E The paper shows a complete lack of understanding of the subject and of academic writing. Quotes and references are incorrect, there are significant errors in writing or in framing the paper; thesis, arguments, evidence are missing. There is no understanding of the course material and subject.

### **Syllabus: Readings and Weekly Topics**

#### INTRODUCTION

**January 4:** *Introduction to the Course I: Turning the Eye on Europe – What is the EU?*  
John McCormick, Understanding the European Union. A Concise Introduction (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), Ch.1, pp.1-26

**January 9:** *Introduction to the Course II: The EU – Basic Concepts*  
Readings: Elizabeth Bomberg/Alexander Stubb, "Introduction," in Elizabeth Bomberg/Alexander Stubb, eds., The European Union: How Does it Work? (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.3-18

#### PART I: POLITICAL HISTORY AND JUSTIFICATIONS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

**January 11:** *From the Very Origins of a European Community...*  
Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch. 1, 2, pp.11-68; Winston Churchill, "The Tragedy of Europe"; Robert Schuman, "The Schuman Declaration, Preambles to the Treaties of Paris and Rome", Jean Monnet, "A Ferment of Change," in Brent Nelson & Alexander Stubb, The European Union: Readings on the Theory and Practice of European Integration (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003), pp.7-26

**January 16:** *... to the Maastricht Treaty & the Creation of the European Union...*  
Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch. 3,4, pp.69-131; Jacques Delors, "A Necessary Union"; "Preamble to the Treaty on European Union (The Maastricht Treaty)," in Nelson & Stubb, The European Union, pp.55-66

**January 18:** NO CLASS

**January 23:** *...and to the Eastern Enlargement Process*

Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch. 5, pp.133-159; John McCormick, Understanding the European Union, Ch.3, pp.52-78

**January 25:** *Into the Present: Constitutional Change from the Amsterdam Treaty to the (failed) Constitutional Treaty*

Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch. 6, pp.161-183; Joschka Fischer, Jaques Chirac, Tony Blair, and Paavo Lipponen, "Reflections on a Constitution for Europe," in Nelson & Stubb, The European Union, pp.69-88

**January 30:** *Theories of European Integration & European Multi-Level Governance*

Frank Schimmelfennig & Berthold Rittberger, "Theories of European Integration: Assumptions and Hypotheses," in Jeremy Richardson, ed., European Union: Power and Policy-Making (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006), 73-95; Liesbet Hooghe & Gary Marks, "Multi-Level Governance in the European Union," in Nelson & Stubb, The European Union, pp.281-311

**February 1: First In-Class Examination**

**February 2:** *Europa Forum Panel: The European Union and the Challenges of Globalization*, Michigan League (optional)

PART II: THE EU'S POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

**February 6:** *The EU System and Institutions – an Overview*

Elizabeth Bomberg/Laura Cram/David Martin, "The EU's Institutions," in Elizabeth Bomberg/Alexander Stubb, eds., The European Union: How Does it Work? , pp.43-68; John McCormick, Understanding the European Union, Ch.4, pp.79-107

**February 8:** *The Executive I: The Commission*

Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch.7, pp. 187-224

**FIRST PAPER TOPIC TO BE HANDED OUT. DISCUSSION ON THE NATURE OF RESEARCH PAPERS**

**February 13:** *The Executive II: The European Council and the Council of Ministers*

Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch.8, pp.225-258

**February 15:** *The Legislative: The European Parliament*

Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch.9, pp. 259-288; Michael Shackleton, "The European Parliament," in John Peterson and Michael Shackleton, The Institutions of the European Union, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.104-125

**February 20:** *The Judiciary and other Bodies*

Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch.10, pp.289-326

**February 22:** *The Policy-making and Decision-making Process*

Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch.11, pp.326-349; Alexander Stubb, Helen Wallace, and John Peterson, "The Policy-Making Process," in Elizabeth Bomberg/Alexander Stubb, eds., The European Union: How Does it Work?, pp.136-155

**FIRST PAPER IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PERIOD.**

**February 27: SPRING BREAK**

**March 1: SPRING BREAK**

PART III: PUBLIC OPINION, PARTIES AND POLICIES IN THE EU

**March 6:** *Public Opinion in the European Union*

Simon Hix, "Public Opinion," in Hix, The Political System of the European Union 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., pp.147-174

**March 8:** *European Elections, Political Competition and Parties in the European Parliament*

Simon Hix, "Democracy, Parties, and Elections," in Hix, The Political System of the European Union 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.175-207

**SECOND PAPER TOPIC TO BE HANDED OUT.**

**March 13:** *EU Policies I: Key Policies --- Economic, Monetary and Social Regulation*

Alberta Sbragia, "Key Policies," in Elizabeth Bomberg/Alexander Stubb, eds., The European Union: How Does it Work? , pp.111-135

**March 14, 4pm:** "*Redefining the European Union: Why it Matters to the US*": *EU Center Annual Distinguished Lecture on Europe*, lecture by Joschka Fischer, former Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany (optional)

**March 15:** *EU Policies II: European Political Identity and Transatlantic Relations*

Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union, Ch.18, pp.609-637; Lars Rensmann, "Europeanism and Americanism in the Age of Globalisation", European Journal of Political Theory 5,2 (2006), pp.139-170 (advanced/additional reading)

**March 20:** *EU Policies III: The EU as a Global Actor --- Toward a Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU Polity?*

John Peterson and Michael E. Smith, "The EU as a Global Actor," in Elizabeth Bomberg/Alexander Stubb, eds., The European Union: How Does it Work? , pp.195-215; John McCormick, Understanding the European Union, Ch.9, pp.208-232;

**DRAFT OF SECOND PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PERIOD**

**March 22:** NO CLASS

PART IV: EU MEMBER STATES & THE UNION IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

**March 27:** *The Diversity of the Member States and their Relations in the EU*

Brigid Laffan & Alexander Stubb, "Member States," in Elizabeth Bomberg & Alexander Stubb, eds., The European Union: How Does it Work?, pp.69-87; John McCormick, Understanding the European Union, pp.108-130

**March 29:** *Comparing the European Union with the United States*

Sergio Fabbrini, "Is the EU Exceptional? The EU and the US in Comparative Perspective", in Sergio Fabbrini, ed., Democracy and Federalism in the European Union and the United States: Exploring Post-National Governance (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp.3-24

**March 30:** "European Week": 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome - Ambassador Bruton, Video Conference Lecture on the European Union (optional)

**April 3:** *Power, Hegemony, and the Influence of EU Member States*

Jeffrey J. Anderson, "Germany and Europe: Centrality in the EU," in Simon Bulmer & Christian Lequesne, Christian, eds., The Member States of the European Union (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 77-96; Jeffrey Lewis, "National Interests: Coreper," in John Peterson & Michael Shackleton, eds., The Institutions of the European Union (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006) 272-292

PART V: EVER CLOSER UNION? PRESENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES OF THE EU

**April 5:** *The European Union's Current and Future Enlargement*

Lykke Friis, "EU Enlargement: And the There Were 28?", in Elizabeth Bomberg/Alexander Stubb, eds., The European Union: How Does it Work?, pp.177-194

**COMMENTS ON FELLOW STUDENT'S DRAFT PAPER DUE**

**April 10:** *Towards a Transnational European Public Sphere & European Identity? Culture, Allegiances, Networks, and Sports*

Gerard Delanty and Chris Rumford, Rethinking Europe (New York: Routledge, 2005), Ch. 4, pp.69-86; Andrei S. Markovits & Steven L. Hellerman, Offside: Soccer and American Exceptionalism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) (Excerpts)

**April 12: Second In-Class Examination**

**April 17:** *Wrapping Up: The Failure of the Constitutional Treaty and the Future of the European Union --- How Democratic and Legitimate is the EU?*

Lynn Dobson and Albert Weale, "Governance and Legitimacy," in Elizabeth Bomberg/Alexander Stubb, eds., The European Union: How Does it Work?, pp.156-173; Michael Th. Greven, "Can the EU Finally Become a Democracy?" in Michael Th. Greven

and Louis W. Pauly, Democracy Beyond the Nation-State? (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), pp.35-61

**SECOND PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PERIOD**