This course is designed to introduce students to some of the central concepts and issues in the study of comparative politics, while providing an in depth analysis of politics in some of the main states of Contemporary Europe. During the semester, we will pay particular attention to the project of European integration and the development of European wide institutions and the European Union. Given this orientation, our readings and discussions will focus on the major states of Western Europe, which have been the source of much of the origins of American politics and society, and have been the key players in the formation of the European Union. With our location in London in particular, we will have the opportunity to study up close the forces behind “Brexit” and their connection to similar movements, conflicts, and challenges in the other major European countries. The course is designed to help students understand contemporary European politics, ending with a survey of the most significant contemporary issues in Europe.

Because this is a rather small class, the organization and my approach will be different from the traditional Westminster class. Instead, I hope to model the class after the “tutorial” approach used in a number of British and American universities. This means a number of things. First, each student will be required to submit a short paper once every two to three weeks (typically) on some aspect of the material we are discussing. Each week of class will be divided between discussions of the reading and related material (on Tuesday), and a review of your ongoing research (on Thursday…though the division is not absolute). You will also be putting together a more substantial research project over the course of the semester, and this project will also be part of our discussions on Thursdays. The overall approach will be at once more informal and more intensive than the usual classes you have had at Westminster. I am excited about this approach and believe it will provide a stimulating and engaging learning experience for all of us.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will demonstrate increased knowledge about the political systems of European countries.

2. Students will comprehend the processes of European integration and be able to explain the features of the European Union and its major institutions.

3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of some of the forces behind “Brexit.”

4. Students will be able to apply concepts from theories of comparative politics to explain a variety of contemporary issues in European politics.
Readings:


All additional course readings will be available through the D2L system and/or through handouts over the semester. Since we are in London, I will expect you to keep up with UK and European newspapers and websites. In the UK, the Guardian, the Independent (online only), and the Times of London (from left to right, more or less) are reliable sources. The Economist is an influential weekly magazine, and the Financial Times (my favorite) is particularly good on economic and financial matters, but an excellent newspaper overall.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

This outline is organized in one, two, or three week blocks. I will be more specific with the readings as we go along, and will likely add additional readings for many sections.

**A) Fundamentals of European Politics.**

1. **September 5-7 – What is Europe? What are European Politics?**
   **Reading:** Olsen and McCormick, Part One.
   Hancock, et al., Introduction.

2. **September 12-21 – Politics in the United Kingdom: Still United?**
   **Reading:** Hancock, et al., Part One.

3. **September 26-October 5 – Politics in France: Continuity Amidst Radical Change.**
   **Reading:** Hancock, et al., Part Two.

4. **October 10-19 – Politics in Germany: The New Leader of the West?**
   **Reading:** Hancock et al., Part Three.

**Fall Break – Week of October 23-27: Travel, Enjoy!**

**B) The European Union: The Politics of Unification and Fragmentation.**

5. **October 31-November 9 – The European Project and the European Union.**
   **Reading:** Hancock, et al., Part Eight.
   Olsen and McCormick, Parts Two and Three.

6. **November 14-16 – Brexit!**
Reading: TBA


   Reading: Hancock, et al., Part Four.

   Reading: Hancock, et al., Part Seven.

   Reading: Hancock, et al., Part Six.

Final Exams – Week of December 11-15.

Saturday, December 16 – Return Home!

ASSIGNMENTS:

Your grade for this course will be based on your work on the following assignments:

1. There will be four (4) short essays of about 8-10 pages, each focusing on an issue/or topic we will be discussing in a section of the course outline, due over the course of the semester. The due dates are (all Thursdays) September 21, October 5, November 16, November 30. Your grade on each paper will count for 10% of your total grade in the class.

2. Each student will submit a substantial research paper – about 20-25 pages in length – by the end of the semester. I am flexible on the topic (as long as it is closely related to course themes) but the general guidance is to focus on some aspect of the crises and challenges facing the European Union today. You will submit an initial draft of the paper on Thursday, October 19, and the final version will be due on Tuesday, December 12. Your grade on this paper will count for 40% of your total grade in the class.

3. A final exam, which will cover the main themes and material of the course, will be given during the final exam week at the end of the semester. More details to come.

NOTE: Two qualifications here. First, there is no specific grade for participation, but given the small size of the class it simply cannot work unless we all are active participants in discussions (and presentations). The preparation for and quality of your participation will impact your final grade, however. Second, at this point I’m not committed to the final exam...we will see how the semester goes. If we don’t have a final, I will adjust the grading percentages accordingly.
GRADING SYSTEM:

Each assignment will be graded on a point system, with 100 points being the maximum possible. You will then be given a letter grade that matches the score. I will use the following grading scale on each assignment:

A    = 100-93
A-   = 92-90
B+   = 89-87
B    = 86-83
B-   = 82-80
C+   = 79-77
C    = 76-73
C-   = 72-70
D+   = 69-67
D    = 66-63

D-   = 62-60
F    = 59 and below

In calculating your final grade, I will average and weight the numerical totals, and assign the appropriate letter grade.

NOTE: The major assignments of this class will require you to present ideas and arguments in written form, and in grading your work, I will be looking primarily at the quality and persuasiveness of your analyses and arguments, your ability to clearly support your opinions and conclusions. As a result, the quality of your writing, in addition to the quality of your analysis and arguments, will be weighed in determining your grade on each assignment.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONESTY:

All students should note and consider carefully the following policies:

- Absences from Exams: “Absence from an announced examination results in a failing grade for the examination, unless suitable arrangements are made for a special examination.” (*Westminster College Undergraduate Catalog*, p. 71) For this course, I will recommend a make-up exam only if I am notified more than 12 hours in advance of the scheduled exam, and the reasons for missing the exam are sufficiently compelling.

- Plagiarism and Cheating: These and any other forms of academic dishonesty and theft will not be tolerated in this class. They are a violation of the norms of mutual respect, individual integrity, and the open exchange of ideas, and are subject to severe penalties, including automatic failure in the class. We will discuss the meaning and importance of academic honesty early in the class, and you can also consult the *Westminster College Undergraduate Catalog*, pp. 71-75 for the Westminster College Academic Integrity Policy. This Policy will be followed in our class.
HOW TO FIND ME:

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Office Hours – M,W 1-2 pm
  T, Th 10:30 am-12 noon
  And by Appointment
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