Politics 114:
POLITICAL CHANGE IN WESTERN EUROPE

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Class: King 123, Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:45am.
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Introduction

This course provides an introduction to the politics of Western Europe with particular emphasis upon changes in the contours of party politics. It is both a survey of major political institutions (parliaments, electoral systems, and so on) and political developments, and an examination of the theme of change in European party systems. In most West European countries, the stability of party systems began to break down in the 1960s, and in some cases (most notably Italy) party systems have been transformed since the end of the 1970s. This shift has involved several elements: a decline in democratic participation; a decline in the traditional parties of the Left and Right; and the rise of new kinds of parties on both the Left and the Right. These parties are organized around new social groups and new sets of issues, like immigration and environmental politics. The transformation of party politics has also involved the emergence, or rediscovery, of new forms and practices of politics, including extra-parliamentary protest and the formation of new social movements.

The dual purpose of this course – both survey and exploration of the transformation of party systems – means that the syllabus proceeds country by country, first examining the main political institutions in Britain, France, Italy and Germany, and then using those countries to illustrate significant developments in their respective party systems: the British case focuses upon neoliberalism and “Third Way” politics; the French case focuses upon Mediterranean socialism and the rise of the far-right; the Italian case focuses upon regional separatist parties and the construction of an entirely new party system after 1990; and the German case focuses upon new social movements in the form of the Green Party. There is also a brief discussion of social democracy in Sweden.

The last part of the course shifts gears to look at the process of European integration which has gathered pace in the last two decades, leading to a single European market, free movement of goods and people within the European Union, a single currency and a European constitution. We will examine why European integration has taken the form that it has, and what its implications are for European politics and party systems.
Requirements

This course does not assume or require any prior knowledge of European history or politics, though clearly any background in the history of the region would be helpful. This is primarily a lecture course, though there will be an opportunity for some discussion in class. The main requirements are that students come to class and do the assigned reading (about 150 pages a week). I use the reading both to cover material that I deal with in class and to provide detail, texture, and argument that I do not have time for in class. There are four graded assignments:

1) An in-class mid-term exam, worth 25% of the final grade, on Thursday March 20th.

2) A take-home essay/exam designed to take two hours, worth 25% of the final grade. The essay questions will be given out by the last class on May 8th, and will be due a week later.

3) A blog and presentation assignment worth 30% of the final grade. Students will regularly follow developments in the politics of one West European country, post commentary and annotated links to news articles on that country, and make occasional short class presentations on political developments in that country. Students will be expected to post more or less weekly.

4) Students will play the game Democracy 3 and write a short paper summarizing the game choices that they made and the consequences of those choices. The paper is due in class on Tuesday April 8. This assignment is worth 20% of the final grade.

A more detailed description of these two assignments will be posted on Blackboard, and we will discuss them in class. These are all requirements and late work will be penalized in the interest of equity.

There will inevitably be some changes to the course as the semester progresses that are not included on this syllabus. I will provide regular updates at the ‘Announcements’ tab of the Blackboard web site for this course. You should check it at least once a week.

Course readings

All the readings will be available electronically, and can be found at the “Course Readings” tab on Blackboard. You can then read (and if you wish, print) this material. The readings are listed alphabetically by the last name of the first author on the syllabus. Check page numbers carefully, so that you read the correct section of each reading at the correct time: in many cases I have had some sections of a book scanned in that you do not need to read, or that you read at different points in the semester.
CLASS SCHEDULE:

February 4 & 6  Rise of the Modern State


February 11  A Primer on Political Economy

Colin Crouch, “Change in European Societies Since the 1970s,” (pages 14-39), in *West European Politics* [2008].


February 13, 18, 20 & 25  Political Parties and Capitalist Democracy

[Reference Librarian Session on February 18: bring a laptop if you have one]


Ronald Inglehart, “Changing Values Among Western Publics from 1970 to 2006” (pages 130-146), in *West European Politics* [2008].

Peter Mair, “The Challenge to Party Government” (pages 211-234), in *West European Politics* [2008].

Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, chapter 1 (pages 7-46).

February 27 & March 4  Sweden: “Classic” Social Democracy

Gosta Esping-Andersen, *Politics Against Markets*, chapter 1 (pages 3-38)


**March 6, 11, 13 & 18**  
**Britain: The New Right and The Third Way**


Tony Blair, *The Third Way*, all (pages 1-20).


The Economist, “All Change: Britain is on the verge of constitutional upheaval” (pages 1-6), April 28, 2011.

**March 20**  
**In-Class Mid-Term Exam**

**April 1, 3, 8 & 10**  
**France: Communism, Socialism and the Far Right**


George Ross and Jane Jenson, *The View from Inside*, chapters 2, 3, 5, 8 & 10 (pages 27-54, 63-70, 84-89 & 100-111).


Ben Clift, “*Le Changement?* French Socialism, the 2012 Presidential Election…” (pages 106-123) in *Parliamentary Affairs* [2013].


**April 15, 17 & 22  Germany: New Social Movements and Unification**

Claus Offe, “Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics” (pages 63-105), in Charles Maier, ed. *Changing Boundaries of the Political* [1987].

Stephen Padgett, “Germany: Modernising the Left by Stealth” (pages 38-57) in *Parliamentary Affairs* [2003].

Andrei Markovits and Philip Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond*, chapters 5-6 (pages 115-185).


**April 24 & 29  Italy: A New Party System**

Ilvo Diamanti, “The Italian Centre-Right and Centre-Left” (pages 733-762), in *West European Politics* [2007].

Perry Anderson, “An Entire Order Converted into What it was Intended to End” (all) in *London Review of Books* [February 26, 2009].


John Prideaux, “Special Survey of Italy: Oh For a New Risorgimento” (all), in *The Economist* [June 11, 2011].

May 1, 6, 8  European Integration and the Future of Party Politics


Steven Hill, *Europe’s Promise*, chapters 6 and 16 (pages 107-122 & 301-318).


Susan Watkins, “Another Turn of the Screw?” (pages 5-13) in *New Left Review* [2012].

Henry Farrell and John Quiggin, How to save the Euro – and the EU” (pages 97-103) in *Foreign Affairs* [2011].