**PO341 – Western European Government & Politics**

**Section 1**

**Fall 2014**

**T/Th 2:00 – 3:15 pm Wagar Bldg, rm 132**

Instructor: Prof. Marni Berg

Office: Clark C-332

Office Hours: Tu 8:50 – 9:20 am; Th 11:00 am – noon, and by appointment

e-mail: jeffandmarni@msn.com or [marni.berg@colostate.edu](mailto:marni.berg@colostate.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**Purpose**:

This course is designed to give students insights into the way in which politics operate in

states that are generally classified as “parliamentary” because of the fusion of the powers

of the executive and the legislature (as opposed to the “separation of powers” in a

presidential system). We will examine the history and theory of parliamentary systems,

and illustrate how different democracies reflect the varying principles of representation

and accountability.

**Britain, France and Germany**

This course will compare the political structures and policies of three countries in-depth:

The United Kingdom, France and Germany. The tradition of representative,

parliamentary government originated in Great Britain, and the British “model” has likely

influenced more countries than any other political system in the world. This is despite

the fact that Britain has no formal, written constitution, and the institutions of the British

political system have evolved for over 700 years. In contrast, the French have tried

almost every political system imaginable since the French Revolution of 1789. The

current system came about with the 1958 Constitution that created the 5th Republic. This

system combines elements of the parliamentary system in Britain with a strong president

as found in the United States and also in earlier French history. In contrast to the

experiences of the United States and Great Britain political stability, especially

democratic political stability is a rarity in Germany. Throughout its history, Germany has

faced many problems of newly democratizing countries around the world: establishing a

political system that achieves a balance between consensus, liberty, and order. Moreover,

German politics has changed immensely in the past century. Finally, Germany is the

strongest country in the European Union and one of the most important market

economies in the world.

In order to understand the connections between political structures or institutions,

political processes, and public policies, the course emphasizes five themes that are

important for comparing the U.S. and other industrialized democracies.

The themes are:

1) History and Constitutions

2) Political Culture and Civil Society;

3) Legislative-Executive Balance: Representation and Accountability;

4) Public Participation – Electoral Systems and Parties;

5) The Devolution of Power: National vs. Local Power; and

**Required Texts: (Note unfortunately, the Safran 7th edition is the most recent text on the French Polity. I will add supplemental information to RAMCT to**

**update changes in governments).**

David P. Conradt and David Langenbacher, The German Polity, 10th ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013) (Cited as DC)

Philip Norton, The British Polity, 5th ed. (Longman Publishers, 2011) (Cited as N)

William Safran, The French Polity, 7th edition (Pearson Publishing, 2008) (Cited as S)

There will also be a few short handouts in-class. And some information posted on RAMCT.

Date Course Outline Assignments

8/26 Introduction to the course

8/28- **Historical Legacies and Constitutional Background:**  (N) ch 3, 4

9/16 Great Britain, France and Germany (S) ch 1

(DC) ch 1, 2

**9/9 Country choices due in-class!**

9/16 In-class assignment on your country’s

Constitution.

9/18- **Political Culture**: (N) ch 1, 2,

9/30 Great Britain, France and Germany (S) ch 2, 3

(DC) ch 3, 4

**9/25 Quiz 1**

**9/30 Paper Proposal due in class!**

10/2-  **Legislative-Executive Balance:** (N) ch 8, 12

10/16 Great Britain, France and Germany (S) ch 6, 7

(DC) ch 7, 8 pgs.

227-240

**10/16 Mid-term In-class Quiz #2**

**10/21- Mid-term essays due! No assignment Movie**

**10/23**

10/28- **Public Participation - Electoral Systems and Parties**: (N) ch 5, 6, 7

11/6 Great Britain, France and Germany (S) ch 4, 5

(DC) ch 5, 6

11/11- **The Devolution of Power/National vs. Local Power**: (N) ch 10, 11

11/ 20 Great Britain, France and Germany (S) ch 9 (DC) ch 9

**11/20 Papers due in class**

**11/21- Thanksgiving Break—Have Fun!**

**11/30**

12/2- The Impact of Economic Integration on Politics (N) ch 9

12/4 and Policy: Great Britain, France, Germany (S) ch 10 pgs 366- 378,

(DC) ch10

(Note: this is time permitting!)

12/9 Catch-up day!

**12/11- Group Presentations, no reading!**

**Final Exam week**

**12/15 (Mon.) Group Presentations 6:20 pm – 8:20 pm in our regular classroom!**

**Expectations:** This course, which combines lecture, seminar, group presentations, and

individual research, relies heavily on student participation. All students are expected to

come to class prepared and ready to discuss the assigned readings and participate in class

discussions and debates. As a courtesy to your classmates, and me please come to class

on time. In addition, each student will conduct research and complete several written

assignments as well as giving a group presentation on one of the international

organizations listed on the syllabus. Class assignments are due at the beginning of class;

late assignments will be docked **5 points per calendar day** after the due date. You should expect 2 ½- 3 hours of reading/homework for every hour you are in class. If it becomes apparent that no one has done the reading, I will give an open notes pop quiz.

**Quizzes and Exams**

There will be two quizzes consisting of short answers and identifications.

The mid-term will include identifications and short essays, and longer comparative

essays. The take-home mid-term exam will consist of two shorter essays and one longer essay

(which you will be given in class at least **7** days prior to its due date). The take-home exam is an

Individual effort, not a group collaboration!!!

**The Paper: (100 pts.)—Due in class on April 17th, 2013! Plus, a proposal for 25 pts.**

Your paper will be on a topic of your choice, based two to three issue areas (e.g. gender, ethnic nationalism, religious or ethnic conflict, political reform, economic reform, environmental issues). In your paper you should **compare your country** to any other **European parliamentary country**. The paper should be **8 – 10 pages typed, double-spaced, plus a**

**bibliography or reference list. Your reference list should include a variety of sources**

**(minimum of 10): books, journals, class notes, newspaper articles, etc.** You should

write a ½ to 1 page **paper proposal** (25 pts.) on your paper topic including the **two countries** you will compare, the issue areas you will examine (political reform, economic reform, ethnic nationalism, religious conflict, gender issues, environmental reforms, etc.) and **a preliminary bibliography ( 2 -3 sources)**; this is **due in class no later than September 30th.**

**Group Project: (100 pts.)** I will pass out a handout with more information later in the semester. All students with the same country will prepare a presentation about their country (20 minutes plus 5 minutes for Q & A) to the rest of the class during the last week of the semester and during the final exam period.

**Country choices** include: **Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Sweden**

**Due in class on September 9th!**

Country choices should be turned in on a note card with your top three choices listed

along with your name and contact information.

**Participation:** Approximately 20% of your final grade will consist of participation, including

attendance, courtesy (including on time arrival for class) and, preparation for classes and

discussions. Additionally, there will be short pop quizzes in-class on the readings; **you**

**may use your notes on the reading for the pop quizzes**: Attendance will be monitored;

if you are ill and unable to attend class, you are expected to inform the instructor **before**

**class.** More than **four unexcused absences may result in a drop of your grade by one**

**letter grade.**

**Academic Integrity**.  This course adheres to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code.  Colorado State University has long upheld values of academic and scholastic integrity. The General Catalog's "Policies and Guiding Principles" asserts that CSU "expects students to maintain standards of personal integrity that are in harmony with the educational goals of the institution" - citing "principles of academic honesty" as the first example. (1.6 Page 1).

**Grading:**

Written assignments will be assigned a point value. Grades for assignments turned in late will be lowered by **5 points** per calendar day. Make-ups for a missed mid-term exam will be arranged only for a **verifiable** illness or other emergency, which make it impossible for the student to be in class. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes; absence on a quiz day will result in a zero (0) for that quiz. Together, the written work for class count for 80% of the final course grade.

**Written assignments** are as follows:

2 quizzes at 25 points each 50 points

Mid-term exam (take home) 120 points

Paper proposal 25 points

Paper 100 points

Group project 100 points

Constitution assignment 25 points

**Written Total 420 points**

**Participation + 85 points**

**Total (Possible) Score: 505 points**

Note: Your participation grade includes both quantitative factors (such as class attendance)

And qualitative factors (such as quality of contributions to class discussions).

The final grade will be calculated as a percentage of the total points on course assignments (100% - 94% = A, 93% - 90% = A-, 89% - 87% = B+, 86% - 83% = B, 82% - 80% = B-, 79% - 77% = C+, 76% - 70% = C, etc.), as modified by the grade for participation. Note: the plus (+)/ minus (-) will be used in the final course grade.