Syllabus for PS 136
Autumn 1997
Comparative Politics: Western Europe
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Synopsis of Course Content:
The course is focused on post-WWII Western European politics with a special emphasis on political institutions and political change in the last twenty years or so. Attention will also be focused on recent developments in the European Union (EU). Four countries: Britain, France, Germany and Italy will be examined in the context of more general comparative issues. Among the topics to be covered are: constitutional orders, political parties and party systems, electoral behavior, legislatures and executives, and political economy. We will examine these individually and then seek to understand how the differences between countries affect public policy. We will also look at how the traditional domestic processes and policies of these countries are affected by their integration into the EU.

Organization: There will be two lectures and one discussion section each week.

Textbooks:
Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver and Peter Mair, Representative Government in Modern Europe (2nd Edition)
Arend Lijphart, Democracies

Assignments:
Reading Load is generally 120-150 pages per week. Students will be given questions for discussion in section each week.

Short Papers: There will be short (1-2 pages) writing assignments for sections on a rotating basis every other week with peer review of these assignments. The short paper assignments are an experiment, intended to promote writing skills and student interactions as well as to improve understanding of the materials taught and assigned.

Exams: A mid-term one-hour exam and a final exam. The latter will have possible questions for the essay portion distributed beforehand.

Term Papers: None
Grade will be based on: Mid-term: 30%; Section participation and short papers: 20%; Final: 50%

Course Content:

Week I: Introduction and History
Reading: Gallagher et. al. Chapter 1  
Lijphart Chapters 1 and 2  
Kesselman et al.: Chapters 1,6,11,16  

Questions for Section: Why do we study Western Europe? What makes Western Europe an area to study? What have been the major issues in Western Europe since World War II, how have they affected the development of West European states and what are the critical areas of contemporary change?

Week II: Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems
Reading: Gallagher et al. Chapters 2 and 3  
Lijphart Chapters 5 and 6  

Questions for Section: What are the fundamental differences between Parliamentary and Presidential structures? Would you prefer to live in a presidential system or a parliamentary one? Why? What is the relative power of the executive within Parliamentary and Presidential systems? How do these differences affect individual politicians and legislators? What kinds of emphasis are placed on the notions of representation and efficiency?

Week III: Parties, Cleavages, and Identity
Reading: Gallagher et. al. Chapters 7 and 8  
Kesselman et al. pp.107-115, 208-215, 310-322, 423-441  
Otto Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of the West European Party Systems” in Political Parties and Political Development (On Reserve)  

Questions for Section: What have been the sources of the major divisions found in European politics since World War II. How have voters been tied to parties? What is the mass party and what are its origins? How might it be changing?

Week IV: Voting Patterns and Partisan Change
Reading: Gallagher et. al. Chapters 9 and 10  
Lijphart Chapter 8  
Kesselman et.al.: pp. 102-105, 115-119, 215-224, 322-326, 441-448  
Dalton, Flanagan and Beck: Chapters 1 and 15 (On Reserve)
**Questions for Section:** Are voter identities changing in Europe? In fact, does the concept of party identity have a real significance any longer? Is European politics becoming like American politics? Is the European political system experiencing realignment or dealignment? (What do these terms mean?) Is class still a salient issue?

**Week V: Elections and Electoral Systems**
Reading: Gallagher et al. Chapter 11  
Lijphart Chapters 7 and 9

**Questions for Section:** What is the role of elections in different European political systems? How is this role affected by differences in type of electoral system? How do electoral systems affect party, and candidate strategies, and the structure of choices facing voters? How do they affect party discipline?

**Week VI: Governments and Coalitions**
Reading: Gallagher et al. Chapter 12  
Lijphart Chapter 4.

**Questions for Section:** How are coalitions formed? How do they function? What determines how long they last?, How “representative” are coalition governments? How do political leaders utilize spoils to consolidate political support? Why should minority governments ever be formed?

**Week VII: Representation at the End of the 20th Century** *(MIDTERM EXAM on Friday)*
Reading: Kesselman et. al.: Chapters 5, 10, 15, 20  
Tarrow: Chapter 11 (On Reserve)  
Suzanne Berger: “Politics and Antipolitics in Western Europe in the Seventies” (On Reserve)

**Questions for Section:** What are the major issues in Contemporary European Politics and how do they compare to traditional issues? How has representation outside of formal governmental structure changed since the beginning of the post-war period?

**Week VIII: Political Economy I: Institutions**
Reading: Kesselman et al. Chapters 2, 7, 12, 17  
Geoffrey Garrett and Peter Lange, “Internationalization, Institutions and Political Change” in Internationalization and Domestic Politics (On Reserve)  
Peter Hall: Governing the Economy Chapters 9 and 10 (On Reserve)
**Questions for Section:** Do institutions affect how the economy works and how well it works? How do economic policy-making institutions vary across countries? Is there only one “good” kind of institution: few institutions?

**Week IX: Political Economy II: Labor and Macroeconomic Policy (Reading to be Added)**
Reading: Gallagher et.al. Chapter 14
- David Cameron, “Social Democracy, Corporatism, Labor Quiescence and the Representation of Economic Interests in Advanced Capitalist Society” in *Order and Conflict in Contemporary Capitalism*
- National Surveys from the *Economist*

**Questions for Section:** What is Corporatism? Is there a European “model”? If so, what is it? If not, what explains differences across countries?

**Week X: Political Economy III: Welfare State (Reading to be Added)**
Over two weeks: Gosta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* Chapters 1 and 9 (On Reserve)

**Questions for Section:** Why might there be a decline of the Welfare State? Is a strong safety net bad for economic performance? How do welfare state traditions differ and what explains the differences?

**Week XI: European Union I: History**
Reading: McCormick Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

**Week XI: European Union II: How does it Work?**
Reading: McCormick Chapters 6, 7, 8, 10

**Questions for Section:** How has the European Union developed since World War II? What are the major institutions? How is European Union policy made and implemented?

**Week XII: European Union II: Where is it going?**
Reading: McCormick Chapters 12, 15 and Conclusion
- Kesselman et al.: pp. 630-654
- Supplementary: Gallagher Chapter 5

**Questions for Section:** Can we speak of “United States of Europe” or is Europe merely a confederation of independent states? Should states still be considered the major actors in European Union politics (neo-realism) or are they on the decline as subnational and transnational forces ascend (neo-functionalism)?

**Week XIII: Europe: Challenges for the Future (Reading to be added)**
Nugent, Chapters 14 and 16

Questions for Section: To Be Determined