New York University – Center for European and Mediterranean Studies

Prof. Dr. Christiane Lemke
Max Weber Chair for European Studies
Fall 2011-2012, Monday and Wednesday 3:30 to 4:45

EURO UA 983   European Governments and Societies

European democracies have a long and rich history. Home to some of the oldest democracies, such as the ones in Great Britain and France, the continent has also witnessed some of the most brutal dictatorships, two world wars, civil wars, and ethnic conflict during the 20th century. In 1989, peaceful revolutions in East Central Europe have transformed former communist ruled countries into viable democracies, and several of these new democracies have joined the EU as well as NATO.

The seminar will examine the formation and functioning of modern European democracies, including the transitions in post-communist Europe, and compare the role of governments, parties, and citizen participation in different countries in Europe. We will include recent social changes in European democracies, including migration, secularization, and the role of contentious politics. We will also study the significance of the European Union and the role of nation-states within the Union.

Required Readings:

Format: The course will include lectures, student presentations, and class discussions. There will be occasional guest lectures and movies during the semester.

Requirements
Class participation (30%): Prepare the readings and one “event of the week”. Note: Event of the week is a short five minute presentation addressing a current event in European politics. In addition students will be asked to prepare short presentations based on class materials.
Midterm (30%) with short essay questions (Oct 26)
Final (40%) with essay questions (Dec 14)

Course Schedule

Week 1: September 7
In Search for Europe: Geography, History and Politics
Introduction to the course topics, organization and goals of the course
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 1
Tiersky, Europe Today, chap. 1
Crepaz/Steiner, European Democracies, chap 1
Selected news paper articles

Week 2: September 12 and 14
European Democracies: Political Culture and Political Action
Topics: Aspects of political culture; Citizens participation; attitudes and political behavior; immigrants and immigrant integration; religion and politics
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 2
Klausen, The Islamic Challenge, chap. 6 (Sexual Politics and Multiculturalism)
Klausen, Why Religion has become more salient in Europe

Week 3: September 19 and 21 (reading day)
Political Parties and Interest Groups
Topics: Party cleavages and party families; parties of the Left and the Right; parties and Governments; interest groups
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 3
Crepaz/Steiner (2011) European Democracies, chap. 2, 3, 4
Newspaper articles

Week 4: September 26 and 28
Social Movements and Contentious Politics
Topics: Environmental movements and Green Parties; Women’s movement and gender equality; critique of globalization and global justice movement
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 3
Crepaz/Steiner (2011) European Democracies, chap. 7, 8, 9

Week 5: October 3 and 5
Politics in the United Kingdom
Topics: Parliamentary democracy and Westminster model; Labour, the Third Way, and new politics; the UK and the EU
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 5
Tiersky, Europe Today, chap. 2

Week 6: (Monday fall break) October 12
Politics in France
Topics: Presidential democracy, modernization of France, immigration and the far right; France’s role in the EU
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 6
Tiersky, Europe Today, chap. 1

Week 7: October 17 and 19
Politics in Germany
Topics: State-building and the search for national identity; the collapse of communism and the fall of the Wall; German unification; the Berlin Republic; Germany as an ascendant power?
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 7
Tiersky, Europe Today, chap. 3
Movie “The White Ribbon”

Week 8: October 24 and 26 (Midterm)
Mediterranean Countries; Scandinavian Model
Topics: Social Democracy and the Swedish welfare state; transitions to democracy in Southern Europe; modernization, EU-membership and current crisis
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 8 (Spain)
Tiersky, Europe Today, chap. 4 (Italy); 5 (Sweden)
Week 9: October 31 and November 2
The Collapse of Communism and the End of the Cold War
Topics: Why communism collapsed in Eastern Europe; democratic transitions, political and economic reforms; ethnic conflicts and problems of deficit democracies
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 9 (Russia)
Crepaz/Steiner, European Democracies, chap. 10

Week 10: November 7 and 9
Transition to Democracy: Politics in Poland and Hungary
Topics: The role of “Solidarity” and civil society in Poland; democratic transitions; Parties and politics in new democracies, ethnic minorities, Poland and Hungary in the EU
Readings: Almond (2010), European Politics Today, chap. 10 (Poland) and 11 (Hungary)
Crepaz/Steiner, European Democracies, chap. 11, 12, 13

Week 11: November 14 and 16
The European Union (EU): A Post-National Polity?
Topics: The forming of the European community; common market and political integration; why do states transfer sovereignty?
Readings: Almond, European Politics Today, chap. 12 (The EU)
Tiersky, Europe Today, chap. 7, 8 (EU; economic governance)
Crepaz/Steiner, European Democracies, chap. 14

Week 12: November 21 and 23
Democracy in the European Union I
Topics: The role of EU institutions (students’ projects)
Readings: Dinan, Ever Closer Union, chap. 7, 8, 9, 10 (on institutions) and EU-website

Week 13: November 28 and 30
Democracy in the European Union II
Topics: What is the role of EU institutions? Does the EU have a democratic deficit? What about citizens participation and elections?
Readings: see week 12

Week 14: December 5 and 7
Is the EU a Civilian Power? External Relations of the European Union
Topics: The role of the EU in East Central Europe and Eastern enlargement; the joining of future candidates (West Balkan; Turkey); the concept of the “civilian power”
Readings: Börzel/ Risse: Venus Approaching Mars?
Dinan, Ever Closer Union, chap. 16 (Enlargement; Other Countries)
Tiersky, Europe Today, chap. 10, 11 12 (EU-enlargement; the new member states; security)

Week 15: December 12 and 14 (Final)
European Democracies in Global Perspective
Topic: Europe and US; perceptions and comparison; Europe as a global actor
Readings: Tiersky, Europe Today, chap. 13
(Note: There will be articles on blackboard during the semester)


