

West European Comparative Politics

Spring 2010

Lecturer: Prof.PhDr.Lenka Rovná,CSc., Jean Monnet Chair *Ad Personam*

Mondays & Wednesdays 10:30 – 11:50

Office hours: Mondays after the class or according to the agreement

Place: Rytířská 31, Praha 1, room 208

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Course description:

The course West European Comparative Politics will concentrate on the analysis of the pursuits of democracy in Western Europe. Firstly, the conception of Europe will be explored in its historical perspective and different perceptions: territorial, political, spiritual, cultural etc. Secondly, the characterizing social cleavages of Europe will be introduced: territorial, economic, religious, national, ethnic etc. Furthermore, we will discuss how these cleavages get expressed in the formation of different social interests and lead to the organization of interests groups, political parties and NGOs. Thirdly, turning towards the institutional structures of West European parliamentary democracies, we will address the existence of political party systems, as well as the executive and legislative powers represented by government and parliament. Fourthly, we will explore the rules and outcomes of different electoral systems, which ensure regular rotation of political elites at power – however, under different principles. Finally, we will assess the enrichment of the classical models of government in Western Europe, which have in the last 20 years been supplemented by additional players participating in the decision making processes on different levels (local, regional, national and European) – leading to new political conceptualization of ‘governance’. Also, while European states remain core units of European integration, they are also influenced by the EU, leading to their Europeanization. The new challenges facing Western Europe, such as globalization, financial crisis, continuing European integration, regionalization, restructuring of social welfare systems and the issues of identity, will be discussed.

Every student will be responsible for:

1) *Class Participation*

Each student will prepare for class by doing the designated readings and actively participating in class discussions. Two unexcused absences can be tolerated.

In addition, each student will become a specialist on one Western European country of his/her choice. He/she will be responsible for enriching our discussion of different aspects (party politics, executive-legislative relations, electoral systems etc.) of the course by giving examples from his/her country

2) *Midterm exam* (March 10)

The midterm exam will cover material up to the exam and will consist of a mixture of short identification questions and essays.

3) Paper

Each student will write an 8page (double-spaced) comparative research paper. Each student will select two political parties belonging to the same party family (social-democratic, conservative, liberal, green etc.), however, from a different Western European country (you may for example compare British Labour and Swedish SAP). The paper will then compare the parties' political views. How are the visions and policy prescriptions of these two parties similar or different? Why? How do their views fit the general values of their party family? You may narrow your comparison to a specific policy area.

Quotations and the complete list of sources are compulsory.

4) Final exam (May 5)

The final exam will be cumulative and will consist of short answer identification questions and essay questions.

Requirements for the class:

Midterm exam	20 %
Paper (8 pages)	30%
Final exam	20%
Participation in the class	30%

January 25 Introduction

January 27 History, modernity and the multiple conceptions of Europe, in: Gerard Delanty and Chris Rumford, *Rethinking Europe, Societal theory and the implications of Europeanization*, Routledge, London and New York, 2005, pp. 28 - 49

February 1 Democratic political culture and political action in Western Europe, in: Gabriel A.Almond, Russel J.Dalton, G.Bingham Powell, Jr., Kaare Strom, *European Politics Today*, Pearson Longman, New York, 3rd edition, 2006, pp.23 – 45

February 3 European Interest Groups and Parties in: Gabriel A.Almond, Russel J.Dalton, G.Bingham Powell, Jr., Kaare Strom, *European Politics Today*, Pearson Longman, New York, 3rd edition, 2006, pp.46 - 61

February 8 Party systems, Electoral cleavages and government stability, in: Edited by Paul Heywood, Erik Jones and Martin Rhodes, *Developments in West European Politics 2*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002, pp. 115 – 134

February 10 Inside Western European Political parties, in: Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver, Peter Mair, *Representative Government in Modern Europe, Institutions, parties and Governments*, Boston, McGraw Hill, 4th edition, 2005, pp. 307-339

February 15 Elections and Electoral systems, in: Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver, Peter Mair, *Representative Government in Modern Europe, Institutions, parties and Governments*, Boston, McGraw Hill, 4th edition, 2005, pp. 340-380
in: Edited by Paul Heywood, Erik Jones and Martin Rhodes, *Developments in West European Politics 2*, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002, pp. 94 - 114

February 17 Building and Maintaining the government, in: Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver, Peter Mair, Representative Government in Modern Europe, Institutions, parties and Governments, Boston, McGraw Hill, 4th edition, 2005, pp. 381-421
in: Gabriel A.Almond, Russel J.Dalton, G.Bingham Powell, Jr., Kaare Strom, European Politics Today, Pearson Longman, New York, 3rd edition, 2006, pp.62 - 83

February 22 Politics outside Parliament, in: Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver, Peter Mair, Representative Government in Modern Europe, Institutions, parties and Governments, Boston, McGraw Hill, 4th edition, 2005, pp. 441-461

February 24 From Government to governance, in: Edited by Paul Heywood, Erik Jones and Martin Rhodes, Developments in West European Politics 2, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002, pp. 151 - 183

March 1 Territorial Politics and the New Regionalism, in: Edited by Paul Heywood, Erik Jones and Martin Rhodes, Developments in West European Politics 2, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002, pp. 201 - 220

March 3 European Integration and the nation state, in: Simon Bulmer and Christian Lequesne , The Member States of the European Union, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 25-69

March 8 Politics in the European Union from the member state point of view, in: Gabriel A.Almond, Russel J.Dalton, G.Bingham Powell, Jr., Kaare Strom, European Politics Today, Pearson Longman, New York, 3rd edition, 2006, pp.457 - 509

March 10 **Midterm Exam**

March 15, 17 Political System of Great Britain, Britain and Europe, in: Gabriel A.Almond, Russel J.Dalton, G.Bingham Powell, Jr., Kaare Strom, European Politics Today, Pearson Longman, New York, 3rd edition, 2006, pp.84 – 133
Plus recommended readings

March 22, 24 **Spring Break**

March 29, 31 Political System of France, in: Gabriel A.Almond, Russel J.Dalton, G.Bingham Powell, Jr., Kaare Strom, European Politics Today, Pearson Longman, New York, 3rd edition, 2006, pp. 134 – 189
Plus recommended readings

April 7, 12 Political System of Germany, in: Gabriel A.Almond, Russel J.Dalton, G.Bingham Powell, Jr., Kaare Strom, European Politics Today, Pearson Longman, New York, 3rd edition, 2006, pp.190 – 245
Plus recommended readings

April 14, 19 Political Systems of Scandinavian countries or Political Systems of Benelux countries or Political Systems of Southern European Countries
(guest lecturers) Readings will be handed in before the class

April 21, 26 New Challenges for Western Europe, in: Edited by Paul Heywood, Erik Jones and Martin Rhodes, Developments in West European Politics 2, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002, pp. 221 – 238
Plus additional recommended readings

April 28, May 3 European versus national identities, in: Edited by Paul Heywood, Erik Jones and Martin Rhodes, Developments in West European Politics 2, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2002, pp. 77 – 93
in: Gerard Delanty and Chris Rumford, Rethinking Europe, Societal theory and the implications of Europeanization, Routledge, London and New York, 2005, pp. 50 - 68

May 5 Revision of the subject matter of the course

May 10 **Final Exam**