

# European Politics

TTh | 2:30–3:55 | Spring 2026

**Instructor:** Professor Joseph Cerrone

**Office:** Union Hall 332

**Office Hours:** T 1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m., or by appointment

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## Overview

This course examines the European Union and its member states as a unique experiment in democratic governance, integration, and diversity. We will explore how Europe's political systems evolved historically and are tested today by nationalism, populism, migration, democratic backsliding, and war. By the end of the semester, students will be able to situate contemporary European politics within broader debates about democracy, sovereignty, and global governance—while also reflecting on what Europe's experience reveals about the future of democracy itself.

## Learning Objectives

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:

- ❖ Explain and evaluate the institutional structure of the European Union and its member states, including across the political, economic, and social spheres.
- ❖ Analytically apply the comparative method to understand how European states address the major challenges of contemporary politics.
- ❖ Synthesize and critique insights from scholarly research, policy analysis, and case studies to assess timely and pressing questions about European politics.

## Course Materials

All course materials are available on the course website. There is no textbook for this course.

## Assignments

There are four assignments for this course:

- ❖ Participation (20%)
- ❖ Comparative Country Analyst (10%)
- ❖ Analytic Memos (20%)
- ❖ Research Project (50%)

## *Participation (20%)*

It is important to come to class prepared to actively participate, including by completing the assigned readings and attending class regularly. Participation can take many forms, including asking questions, answering questions, contributing to discussions, and engaging in structured activities and exercises.

Participation will be assessed based on the consistency, quality, and thoughtfulness of students' contributions over the course of the semester. If students have concerns about their ability to participate during in-class discussions, they are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester with their concerns.

### ***Comparative Country Analyst (10%)***

Throughout the semester, each student will be responsible as the lead analyst for two European countries. For each country, students will offer a 5–7 minute presentation that introduces the country to the class and provides background on its political structure, contemporary debates, and position in the EU. Students should seek to tie the presentations to the core themes of the course. Students should also follow news related to these countries throughout the semester and act as a “steward” by raising important issues and perspectives related to their countries during class. Countries will be selected during the first week of the semester. Additional instructions are available on the course website.

### ***Analytic Memos (20%)***

To hone analytic writing skills, students will write two Analytic Memos during the semester. For each memo, students will choose one question from a list provided by the instructor (posted on the course website two weeks before the deadline). Each memo should be approximately 1,000–1,500 words and should advance a clear, well-supported argument. Memos should draw on the concepts, theories, and evidence discussed in class and the readings (including by directly citing readings from at least two class sessions). Students are not expected to fully resolve the question; memos should demonstrate the ability to: (1) articulate a clear position; (2) critically analyze competing claims; and (3) use evidence to support an argument (going beyond summarizing arguments made in the readings or class discussions). The papers will be due on March 19 and April 30.

### ***Research Project (50%)***

Throughout the semester, students will develop a research project (approximately 8–12 pages) that addresses an important and pressing question about European politics. The project will provide students the opportunity to engage in deep learning about a topic of interest to them. The assignment will be completed in several parts:

- ❖ *Research Proposal:* In the Research Proposal, students will identify a political science research question related to European politics and explain why it is interesting and important. The Research Proposal is worth 10% of the final grade and is due on February 5.
- ❖ *Research Design:* In the Research Design, students will articulate a clear hypothesis to answer the research question and suggest an analytical approach to assess it. The Research Design is worth 10% of the final grade and is due on March 5.
- ❖ *First Draft & Peer Review:* In the First Draft, students will compile the first two assignments into a research paper and add a preliminary analysis. The First Draft will be ungraded and is

due on April 9. In the Peer Review, students will practice offering and receiving constructive criticism of their research. Completion of the in-class peer review on April 14 will count toward students' participation grade.

- ❖ *Research Presentation:* In the Research Presentation, students will prepare a 10 minute presentation on their research in progress. The presentation should include slides and clearly cover all completed phases of the project. Students will sign up for the date of their presentation during the first week of class. The Research Presentation is worth 10% of the final grade and will occur on April 21 or 28.
- ❖ *Final Draft:* In the Final Draft, students will finalize their paper by completing the analysis and revising the first draft based on comments received from the instructor and during peer review. The Final Draft is worth 20% of the final grade and is due at noon on May 15.

Additional instructions are available on the course website.

## **Course Policies**

### *Absences*

Students should plan to attend all class sessions. Students will be given two free absences, after which their grade will be adversely affected. In the case of an absence, students should keep up with the class readings and consult another student for class notes. If you plan to be absent in order to observe a religious holiday, please inform the instructor—any such absences will be excused without penalty.

### *Academic Integrity*

Students are expected to be familiar with the Honor Code. Academic dishonesty or other violations of the code will be reported and penalized. Academic dishonesty includes cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.

### *Artificial Intelligence*

Students are prohibited from using generative artificial intelligence tools (including ChatGPT). If students would like to use such tools to support their research, they must receive prior authorization from the instructor. Violations of this policy will be considered acts of academic dishonesty.

### *Classroom Conduct*

All students are responsible for contributing to a professional, scholarly, and welcoming classroom environment. Rudeness, intolerance, or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated.

### *Extensions and Late Assignments*

Please consult the instructor about an extension before the deadline if you need extra time to complete an assignment. Requests for an extension following the deadline will not be granted. Late assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade each day they are late.

#### *Moodle*

Course materials—including the syllabus, assignment instructions, and additional resources—are posted on Moodle. Students should regularly check Moodle and their Haverford email address for class updates. All assignments must be submitted on Moodle.

#### *Technology in the Classroom*

In order to facilitate active engagement, students are asked to not use technology in the classroom. This includes laptops, tablets, phones, or other electronic devices. If necessary, these devices may be used sparingly to consult class readings. Students with an accommodation will be exempted from this policy.

#### *Use of Electronic Class Material*

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Video or audio recordings of class sessions without explicit permission are prohibited. Please contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials.

## Course Schedule

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### Part I — Europe and the European Union

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#### Tuesday, January 20 - Mapping Europe

Key Question: What is Europe?

Readings:

- ❖ Syllabus
- ❖ Complete [Research Presentation Survey](#)

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#### Thursday, January 22 - Building the European Union

Key Question: How should we understand “what” the European Union is?

Readings:

- ❖ *Selections from:* Bergmann, Julian, and Arne Niemann. 2015. “Theories of European Integration.” In *Sage Handbook of European Foreign Policy*. London: Sage.
- ❖ Comparative Country Analyst Instructions

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#### Tuesday, January 27 - Governing the European Union

Key Question: How are national and supranational interests represented in EU governance?

Readings:

- ❖ De Vries, Catherine E., Sara B. Hobolt, Sven-Oliver Proksch, and Jonathan B. Slapin. 2021. “Multilevel Politics in Europe.” In *Foundations of European Politics: A Comparative Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ❖ Deutsch, Jillian, and Sarah Wheaton. 2021. “How Europe Fell Behind on Vaccines.” *Politico*. <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-coronavirus-vaccine-struggle-pfizer-biontech-astrazeneca/>.

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#### Thursday, January 29 - Belonging in Europe

Key Question: How and why are national and supranational identities fostered in Europe?

Readings:

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- ❖ Aceska, Ana, and Ana-Roxana Mitroi. 2021. "Designating Heritage as European: Between the European Union's Heritage Initiatives and the Nation-State." *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 27(7): 881–891.

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### **Tuesday, February 3 - Europe in Crisis**

Key Question: How have moments of crisis shaped support for the European Union?

Readings:

- ❖ Krecké, Elisabeth. 2022. "Europe's Ever Closer Disunion." GIS.  
<https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/european-disunion/>.
- ❖ *Selection from:* De Vries, Catherine E. 2018. *Euroscepticism and the Future of European Integration*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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### **Thursday, February 5 - Democratic Deficit**

Key Question: Does the EU have a democratic deficit? If so, is it fixable?

Readings:

- ❖ Follesdal, Andrews, and Simon Hix. 2006. "Why There Is a Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44(3): 533–62.
- ❖ Bonde, Jens-Peter. 2011. "The European Union's Democratic Deficit: How to Fix It." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 17(2): 147–162.

Assignment:

- ❖ Research Proposal Due

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## **Part II — Democracy and Diversity**

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### **Tuesday, February 10 - Consociationalism and Ethnic Federalism**

Key Question: Under what conditions is sharing or dividing power the best way to manage diversity?

Readings:

- ❖ Lijphart, Arend. 2004. "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies." *Journal of Democracy* 15(2): 96–109.
- ❖ *Select at least one of the following:*
  - Belgium: Swenden, Wilfried. 2003. "Belgian Federalism: Basic Institutional Features and Potential as a Model for the European Union." Royal Institute of International Affairs.

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- *Northern Ireland*: Kelly, Conor J., Alan Renwick, and Alan Whysall. 2025. "Reform of Stormont." The Constitution Unit, University College London.
- *Spain*: Jaroszyk, Joanna. 2020. "Spain as the State of Autonomies: Principles Behind the Territorial Organization between 1978 and 1983." *Humanities and Social Sciences* XXV(27): 29–38.

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### **Thursday, February 12 - Separatism and Secession**

Key Question: Why do nationalist claims sometimes lead to secession, and even violent conflict?

Readings:

- ❖ Encarnación, Omar G. 2024. "Why Separatism Is No Match for Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 35(1): 134–146.
- ❖ Mueller, John. 2000. "The Banality of Ethnic War." *International Security* 25(1): 42–70.

*\*Skim/skip Rwanda case study\**

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### **Tuesday, February 17 - Immigration and Integration**

Key Question: How has immigrant integration changed in an era of anti-immigrant "backlash"?

Readings:

- ❖ Kymlicka, Will. 2015. "Solidarity in Diverse Societies: Beyond Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Welfare Chauvinism." *Comparative Migration Studies* 3: 1–19.
- ❖ Fouka, Vasiliki. 2024. "State Policy and Immigrant Integration." *Annual Review of Political Science* 27: 25–46.

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### **Thursday, February 19 - Religion and Secularism**

Key Question: How does democracy find a balance between religious rights and secularism?

Readings:

- ❖ Kettell, Steven. 2019. "Secularism and Religion." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ❖ *Selection from:* Scott, Joan Wallach. 2007. *The Politics of the Veil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

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### **Tuesday, February 24 - LGBTQ+ Equality**

Key Question: How has support for LGBTQ+ rights ebbed and flowed in Europe?

Readings:

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- ❖ Ayoub, Phillip, and Kristina Stoeckl. 2024. "The Global Resistance to LGBTIQ Rights." *Journal of Democracy* 35(1): 59–73.
- ❖ Magni, Gabriele, and Andrew Reynolds. 2023. "Why Europe's Right Embraces Gay Rights." *Journal of Democracy* 34(1): 50–64.

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### **Thursday, February 26 - Unity in Diversity**

Key Question: To what extent does the EU live up to its motto, "unity in diversity"?

Readings:

- ❖ NA

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### **Part III — Challenges and Changes**

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### **Tuesday, March 3 - Populism and Democracy**

Key Question: Is populism an opportunity or a threat to democracy?

Readings:

- ❖ Mudde, Cas, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2017. "Populism and Democracy." In *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ❖ Patana, Pauliina. 2024. "Clarifying the Theory and Practice of European Populism." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*. <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2024/02/22/clarifying-the-theory-and-practice-of-european-populism-with-dr-pauliina-patana/>.
- ❖ Van Kessel, Stijn. 2025. "Populism, the Far Right, and EU Integration: Beyond Simple Dichotomies." *Journal of European Integration* 47(1): 127–133.

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### **Thursday, March 5 - Democratic Backsliding**

Key Question: To what extent are backsliding countries still democratic?

Readings:

- ❖ Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. 2020. "The New Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 31 (1): 51–65.
- ❖ Krekó, Peter, and Zsolt Enyedi. 2018. "Explaining Eastern Europe: Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism." *Journal of Democracy* 29(3): 39–51.

Assignment:

- ❖ Research Design Due

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## Spring Break: March 6–15

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### Tuesday, March 17 - Far Right

Key Question: Why has support for the far right surged in recent years?

#### Readings:

- ❖ Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. Medford, MA: Polity. \*\*Read pp. 1–23.\*\*
- ❖ Albertazzi, Daniele, and Sean Mueller. 2013. “Populism and Liberal Democracy: Populists in Government in Austria, Italy, Poland, and Switzerland.” *Government and Opposition* 48(3): 343–371.

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### Thursday, March 19 - Far Left

Key Question: Why has the far left struggled compared to the far right?

#### Readings:

- ❖ March, Luke. 2009. “Contemporary Far Left Parties in Europe: From Marxism to the Mainstream?” *International Policy Analysis* 1.
- ❖ Gómez, Raúl, Luís Ramiro, and Lamprini Rori. 2025. “Critical Junctures and Party Innovation: The Transformation of Radical Left Parties in Greece, Portugal, and Spain.” *South European Society and Politics*.

#### Assignment:

- ❖ Analytic Memo I Due

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### Tuesday, March 24 - Defending Democracy I

Key Question: How do parties and voters strategically attempt to defend democracy from threats?

#### Readings:

- ❖ Turnbull-Dugarte, Stuart J. 2025. “Public Support for the *Cordon Sanitaire*: Descriptive Evidence from Spain.” *Party Politics* 31(4): 761–769.
- ❖ Henley, Jon. 2024. “French Elections: What Is the Republican Front —and Will It Head Off National Rally?” *The Guardian*, July 4.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jul/04/french-elections-what-is-the-republican-front-and-will-it-head-off-national-rally>.
- ❖ Palmer, Anna. 2023. “A Win for Democracy in Poland: How the Opposition Overcame the Authoritarian PiS Party in October Elections.” *Democratic Erosion Consortium*.

<https://democratic-erosion.org/2023/11/21/a-win-for-democracy-in-poland-how-the-opposition-overcame-the-authoritarian-pis-party-in-october-elections/>.

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### **Thursday March 26 - Defending Democracy II**

Key Question: Does militant democracy violate democratic principles in the name of democracy?

Readings:

- ❖ Capoccia, Giovanni. 2013. "Militant Democracy: The Institutional Bases of Democratic Self-Preservation." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 9: 207–26.
- ❖ Malkopoulou, Anthoula, and Ludvig Norman. 2017. "Three Models of Democratic Self-Defence: Militant Democracy and Its Alternatives." *Political Studies* 66(2).

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### ❖ **Part IV — Europe in the World**

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### **Tuesday, March 31 - EU Enlargement**

Key Question: How can/should the EU change to accommodate future enlargement?

Readings:

- ❖ Schimmelfennig, Frank. 2023. "Fit through Flexibility? Differentiated Integration and Geopolitical EU Enlargement." In *Fit for 35? Reforming the Politics and Institutions of the EU for an Enlarged Union*, Göran von Sydow and Valentin Kreilinger, eds. Svenska Institutet för Europapolitiska Studier.
- ❖ Elezi, Elona, and Sonja Klajic. 2025. "EU Enlargement in the Western Balkans: All Together Now?" *Deutsche Welle*.

<https://www.dw.com/en/eu-enlargement-in-the-western-balkans-all-together-now/a-75192906>

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### **Thursday, April 2 - EU Disintegration**

Key Question: How has Brexit affected the EU and the UK?

Readings:

- ❖ Applebaum, Anne. 2017, "Britain After Brexit: A Transformed Political Landscape." *Journal of Democracy* 28 (1): 53–58.
- ❖ Guelke, Adrian. 2017. "Britain After Brexit: The Risk to Northern Ireland." *Journal of Democracy* 28(1): 42–52.

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### **Tuesday, April 7 - Russia and Ukraine**

Key Question: How has the war in Ukraine reshaped European politics?

Readings:

- ❖ Tocci, Nathalie. 2023. "How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Has Transformed the EU." *London School of Economics*.  
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europblog/2023/11/13/how-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-has-transformed-the-eu/>.
- ❖ Koval, Nadiia, and Milada Anna Vachudova. 2024. "European Union Enlargement and Geopolitical Power in the Face of War." *Journal of Common Market Studies* (Annual Review): 1–12.

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**Thursday, April 9 - Green Transition**

Key Question: How has the EU advanced the green transition?

Readings:

- ❖ López Piquerés, Sofia, and Annika Hedberg. 2019. "The European Green Deal: A Promising Start and a Long Road Ahead." *European Policy Centre*.  
<https://www.epc.eu/publication/The-European-Green-Deal-A-promising-start-and-a-long-road-ahead-2da1a4/>.
- ❖ Rayner, Tim, and Andrew Jordan. 2013. "The European Union: The Polycentric Climate Policy Leader?" *Climate Change* 4(2): 75–90.

Assignment:

- ❖ First Draft Due

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**Tuesday, April 14 - Peer Review Session**

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**Thursday, April 16 - International Power Politics**

Key Question: Is the EU a global superpower?

Readings:

- ❖ Bradford, Anu, R. Daniel Keleman, and Tommaso Pavone. 2025. "Europe Could Lose What Makes It Great." *Foreign Affairs*.
- ❖ Meunier, Sophie, and Milada Anna Vachudova. 2018. "Liberal Intergovernmentalism, Illiberalism, and the Potential Superpower of the European Union." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56(7): 1631–1647.

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**Tuesday, April 21 - Research Presentations**

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**Thursday, April 23 — Research Day (No Class)**

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**Tuesday, April 28 - Research Presentations**

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**Thursday, April 30 - Quo Vadis Europa?**

Key Question: What should we expect for the future of the EU?

Readings:

- ❖ NA

Assignment:

- ❖ Analytic Memo II Due

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**Final Paper Due: May 15 at 12 noon**

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