

PS306: Contemporary Issues

The Political Evolution of Europe Since World War II

Summer European Academy Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg

Summer I 2008

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Course Credit: 3 Hrs.

This is beginning course introduction to the European Union, and is designed to complement and supplement the various field trips, appointments, and guest lectures included in the Summer European Academy. It surveys the basics of the EU, and in so doing, provides critical background to the partner PS306 course offered on the Summer European Academy. Specifically, this class explores the political, economic and security issues which have shaped the political evolution of Europe, from a destroyed continent dependent upon the US for its prosperity and security, to a unique trans-national power replete with its own reserve currency, a massive political-economic market, and a growing will to global power. Our goal is to understand how and why these changes matter not only to Europe, but to the US, as well, and to place into proper historical perspective the significance of Europe's evolution as a major political-economic actor on the global scene. It provides the context and backgrounds within which to better understand and appreciate the politics and institutions of the European Union.

Learning outcomes in POLS306 and the Summer European Academy relevant to Social and Behavior Sciences per Texas A&M University Guidelines:

Students can expect to learn the following by the end of this course:

- (1) to define, understand, and use concepts and terms relevant to the study of the European Union and its major member states;
- (2) to apply a body of factual knowledge directly relevant to understanding the role of the major policy institutions of the European union, and the primary treaty obligations of member states within the EU;
- (3) To understand and critically evaluate how and why different recent (post-WWII) historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces have shaped political institutions and policy formation of the European Union and its member nation-states.

Learning outcomes relevant to International and Cultural Diversity:

- (1) to analyze alternative explanations for differences among governmental institutions in major democratic political systems within the European Union
- (2) to apply alternative explanations for different types and levels of political participation and policy formation in the European Union and the major member states of the EU.
- (3) to compare and contrast alternative political cultures found within the major member nation-states of the European Union
- (4) to compare and contrast the different historical, cultural and political experiences and the shared political and economic priorities among major member nation-states of the European Union

Part I: The International Scene: Europe Divided: 1945-1955 East-West Equilibrium: 1955-1975 A New Europe Emerges, Germany Unified and End of Cold War: 1980 – 2000

Text Reading: Tiersky, Chap. 1

Additional Recommended Reading: “Europe: Century of Commonalities and Conflict” (CD Program Literature, BACKGROUND READINGS, and various articles included in the section on the CD)

Field Trip Focus:

- Rhineland (peruse CD literature in CULTURAL EVENTS IN EAO)
- Alsace-Lorraine (peruse CD literature in GENERAL AND CULTURAL)
- Berlin (peruse CD literature in GENERAL AND CULTURAL and BERLIN PROGRAM)

Part Two: The Logic and Foundations of Union: From the Declaration of Europe to the Convention on the Future of Europe

History of Union (1950 - 2008, overview)

Introduction to the Institutions of Union (Court, Council, Council of Ministers, Commission, Parliament, Committee of Regions)

Introduction to the Pillar Structure

Text Readings: Tiersky, Chap. 2.

Additional Background Reading: CD program Literature: EU BASICS

Field Trip Focus:

- Brussels and appointments/lectures at Commission, Council, Saarland Representation Office, Parliament and Mons-NATO (peruse CD literature in GENERAL AND CULTURAL and BRUSSELS PROGRAM)
- Luxembourg and appointments/lectures at European Court of Justice (peruse CD literature in GENERAL AND CULTURAL and JOINT SEMINAR EAO – COURTS AND LAW)
- Strasbourg and appointments/lectures at Council of Europe and European Court of Human Rights (peruse CD literature in GENERAL AND CULTURAL and STRASBOURG PROGRAM)

Part Three: The Union in Context: Whence Europe, Whither Union, and the Immediate Future: Enlargement, Security and the Trans-Atlantic Relationship

Text Reading: Tiersky, Chaps. 4, 5

Additional Background Reading: CD program literature: France Basics, Germany Basics

Field Trip Focus:

- Berlin and appointments/lectures at Foreign Ministry, Chancellery, Bundestag, Bundesrat, Saarland Representation Office, Berlin State Parliament (peruse CD literature on BERLIN PROGRAM)
- Paris and appointments/lectures at Senat, National Assembly, Robert Schuman Foundation, Foreign Ministry (peruse CD literature on PARIS PROGRAM)

Required Readings

- *Ronald Tiersky, ed. Europe Today: A Twenty-First Century Introduction. . 3rd ed. Roman Littlefield, 2007.*
- Additional readings provided to students on program CD
- On all field trips, several guest lecturers and official appointments supplement course material

Course Requirements: Discussion Participation (20%), Quizzes after each field trip (30%); academic journal (20%); final essay (30%) assessing major themes of assigned readings (Tiersky) and guest lectures.