

## **PSc 286.LH (Spring 2005)**

### **Comparative Legislative Systems**

**Selected problems of legislative theory and behavior from a comparative perspective, with particular reference to selected Western European parliamentary systems.**

#### **SCOPE:**

Topics for discussion include the structure and procedures of selected western European legislatures; European political institutions; contemporary European political history; political parties and electoral systems; and problems posed by European integration to representative institutions.

Evaluation will be based on short briefing papers assigned periodically, including a project on European political leadership; monitoring upcoming elections in Europe; active participation in class; and take-home mid-term and final examinations. Students are responsible for material covered in lectures and class discussions and required reading as assigned.

#### **TOPICS for Lectures and Discussion :**

Introduction to Comparative European Legislative Systems.

The Evolution of Representative Institutions in Europe.

Characteristics of Contemporary European Politics.

European Political Parties.

European Electoral Systems.

Europe since 1945: Historical Overview.

France: Who or What Represents the French People in the Fifth Republic?

Germany: Federalism and the Legislature in a Corporate Democracy.

Switzerland: Confederalism and the Legislature in a Plebiscitarian Democracy.

Belgium and the Netherlands: The Politics of Consociationalism.

The Nordic Countries: Strong Legislatures in Consensual Democracies.

Italy: A Difficult Democracy.

How the Westminster Model is Different from European Models.

The European Parliament: The Democratic Dimension of European Integration.

America's Political Investment in Europe.

### **READING:**

Required readings will be distributed at most class sessions. Students are encouraged to read *The Financial Times* daily and *The Economist* weekly and to check recent back issues of the latter. Refer to web sites listed in bibliographies circulated in class.

Recommended reading/listening/viewing includes:

#### General:

although out-dated --

Gerald DORFMAN and Peter DUIGAND, eds. *Politics in Western Europe*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1991.

Philip NORTON, ed. *Parliaments in Western Europe*. London: Frank Cass, 1990.

#### Britain:

Dennis KAVANAGH. *British Politics: Continuities and Change*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

#### France:

William SAFRAN. *The French Polity*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 2000.

Germany:

David CONRADT. *The German Polity*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 2001.

Italy:

Donald SASSOON, *Contemporary Italy: Politics, Economics and Society since 1945*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 1997.

Low Countries:

Michael O'NEILL. "Re-Imagining Belgium: New Federalism and the Political Management of Cultural Diversity," *Parliamentary Affairs*. Vol. 51, No. 2 (April 1998), 241-258.

Thomas ROCHON. *The Netherlands: Negotiating Sovereignty in an Interdependent World*. Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1999.

Nordic Countries:

Eric EINHORN and John LOGUE.. *Modern Welfare States: Scandinavian Politics and Policy in the Global Age*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Westport CT: Praeger, 2003.

Spain and Portugal:

Howard WIARDA, *Politics in Iberia: The Political Systems of Spain and Portugal*. New York: Longman, 1992.

Switzerland:

Kris KOBACH. *The Referendum: Direct Democracy in Switzerland*. Aldershot, England: Dartmouth, 1993.

European Union:

Desmond DINAN. *Ever Closer Union*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003.

Survey of European History:

Norman DAVIES. *Europe: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

David GRESS. *From Plato to NATO: The Idea of the West and Its Opponents*. New York: Free Press, 1998.

Contemporary European History:

Timothy GARTON ASH. *Free World: America, Europe, and the Surprising Future of the West*. New York: Random House, 2004.

William HITCHCOCK. *The Struggle for Europe: The Turbulent History of a Divided Continent, 1945-2002*. New York: Doubleday, 2002.

John LUKACS. *The End of the Twentieth Century and the End of the Modern Age*. New York: Tiknor&Fields, 1993.

Mark MAZOWER, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. New York: Vintage, 2003..

Michael RICHARDS and Paul WAIBEL. *Twentieth Century Europe: A Brief History*. New York: Harlan Davidson, 1999.

Richard VINEN. *A History in Fragments: Europe in the Twentieth Century*. New York: DeCapo, 2002.

Attention is directed to several periodicals: *Europe: Magazine of the European Community*; *Legislative Studies Quarterly*; *Parliamentary Affairs*; *Foreign Affairs*; and *West European Politics*.

For TV news coverage of European politics from as European perspective, watch *BBC World News* (7 PM and 10 PM, every day, WHUT-TV, ch. 32 and 6 PM, Monday-Friday, WMPT-TV, ch. 22) and tune in to *BBC World Service* and other overseas news services weekday evenings on WAMU-FM (88.5). For European elections, governments, and political parties, check out: [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org).

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Regular attendance at and active participation in class sessions.
2. Knowledge of topical readings distributed in class.

3. On-time submission of three concisely written "think-pieces" assigned from one week to the next during the semester.
4. Oral report in class on a prominent European political figure.
5. Monitoring and reporting on any general elections scheduled to be held in Europe during the semester.
6. Book review: choice of GARTON ASH, GRESS, or LUKACS cited in "Recommended Reading" above, submitted with final exam.
7. Final exam (take-home).

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