Today's Europe is in tumult and has been facing its most serious political tests since the end of WW II. These include the 2009 financial Euro-crisis, Europe's refugee crisis of 2015, the steady rise of the radical right and populist parties in western Europe, the ongoing saga of Brexit, and the emergence of authoritarian regimes in the eastern edges of the European Union. Analysts and citizens alike question the sustainability of Europe’s model of capitalism, the future of European Union, and the viability of democracy itself in Europe.

This course places these current headlines in broader and historical perspective, tracing the evolution of European political systems from their predemocratic origins to the present crises. We begin with an overview of Europe’s distinctive political legacies of feudalism, state-building, absolutism and revolution that provide key background to contemporary Europe. We then trace the difficult rise of democracy in the 19th century and fascism in the 1930s. Next we explore the post-war “rescue” of Europe through the creation of the European Union and postwar European welfare states. And, finally, we turn to study why populist, anti-immigrant, and Euroskeptic movements and parties have surged across Europe exploring what this means for European democracy today.

After taking this course, students will possess a knowledge of the political currents running through contemporary Europe, providing students with historical and analytical context for understanding contemporary European politics. The course is especially recommended for students who plan to do further work on European politics.

Requirements (and weighting in final grade)
1. Exam #1, (In-Class) Thursday February 20: 20%
2. Exam #2, (Take-Home), Due Tuesday April 1: 30%
3. Final Exam, covering the material from the entire course: 30%
4. Participation in weekly sections: 20%

Readings: readings are online except for the following books for purchase at the Harvard Coop

*Daniel Ziblatt, Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy (Cambridge University Press, 2018)

*Barry Eichengreen, *The Populist Temptation* (Oxford University Press, 2018)

**WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION**

**January 28: Introduction**

**January 30. What is the State?**


Max Weber, *Politics as Vocation*, pp.77-82


**WEEK 2: DEMOCRACY**

**February 4. What is Democracy?**


**February 6. What gives rise to democracy?**


**WEEK 3: EUROPE’S PRE-DEMOCRATIC STATES**

**February 11 Medieval Roots of Constitutionalism**


**February 13: The Absolutist Alternative**


**WEEK 4:**
February 18: President’s Day
February 20: In Class Exam #1

**WEEK 5: THE RISE OF THE STATE IN EUROPE: THREE PERSPECTIVES**
February 25: Religion and the Rise of the State

Richard Dunn, “Calvinism and Catholicism in Western Europe” and “Political Disintegration in Central and Eastern Europe” in *The Age of Religious Wars* (1978), pp. 11-102

February 27: Economic Change, Military Conflict, and the Rise of the State


**WEEK 6: ABSOLUTISM AND REVOLUTION**

March 4: Prussia as the Prototype of absolutism

Brian Downing “Brandenburg-Prussia” and “Poland” in Downing, *The Military Revolution* pp. 84-112; pp. 140-156

March 6: The Exit from Absolutism: French and English Revolutions Compared


Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Doubleday, 1955), Chapters 9 and 10
Optional Background Reading on English and French Revolutions: Sheri Berman, Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe (Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 29-76

WEEK 7: PUSH FOR MASS DEMOCRACY, PART I
March 11 and 13: Gradual Democratization in Britain


E.J. Hobsbawm, “The Industrial Revolution” (Chapter 2) in The Age of Revolution, pp. 44-73.

Stephen J. Lee (“The 1832 Reform Act” and “Parliamentary Reform: 1867 and beyond” Aspects of British Political History (1994), 1815-1914; 53-63; 136-146;


Moshe Ostrogorski, “The Party Whip” and “Registration Societies” Democracy and the Political Parties (1902), volume 1, pp. 137-143

Daniel Ziblatt, Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy, Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Spring Break: No Class on March 18/20

WEEK 8: PUSH FOR MASS DEMOCRACY, PART II

March 25: Unsettled Democratization: 1848 Revolutions and Napoleon III’s France,

John Merriman, A History of Modern Europe, chapter 16 (“The Revolutions of 1848”)

Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times (5th edition), pp. 123-144 (Chapters 11 and 12)

Optional Primary Source Reading: Karl Marx “Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon” in Karl Marx Selections.

March 27: Unsettled Democratization: the case of Imperial Germany


Daniel Ziblatt, Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy, Chapters 6 and 7

Week 9: INTERWAR YEARS: RISE AND FALL OF DEMOCRACY

**Take Home Exam (Exam #2) Due April 1 at the Beginning of Lecture

April 1/3: The Rise and Fall of the Weimar Republic in Comparative Perspective

Richard Evans, The Coming of the Third Reich, Chapter 2 and Chapter 4

Daniel Ziblatt, Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy, Chapters 8 and 9 (pp. 259-333).

Barry Eichengreen, “Unemployment and Reaction” in The Populist Temptation (Oxford University Press, 2018), Chapter 6


Week 10 POSTWAR: CAPITALISM AND DEMOCRACY COMPATIBLE FINALLY?

April 8: Transformed International Context & Transformed Political Parties


April 10: Tamed Capitalism

Barry Eichengreen, “The Age of Moderation” The Populist Temptation (Oxford University Press, 2018), Chapter 7


Watch video on Bretton Woods System (on course website)

**WEEK 11: POST-1973: GLOBALIZATION, EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND ROAD TO THE EURO-CRISIS**

April 17 and 19
John Pinder and Simon Usherwood, The European Union: A Very Short Introduction (2013), Chapter 3 and Chapter 4

Sophie Meunier, R. Daniel Keleman and Erik Jones “Failing Forward? The Euro Crisis and the Incomplete Nature of European Integration” Comparative Political Studies 49 (7) 2015:


**WEEK 12: A POPULIST BACKLASH**
April22/24: Populism in western and eastern Europe


Barry Eichengreen, The Populist Temptation, pp. 131-187

Elisabeth Zerofsky, “Viktor Orban’s Far Right Vision for Europe” The New Yorker, January 14, 2019

Daniel Keleman, “Europe’s Authoritarian Equilibrium” Foreign Affairs December 2017

**WEEK 13: A Roundtable Discussion with Guests**