

The Geopolitics of Borders and the Future of the European Union

EURO-3500 (3 credits)

Spain and Ireland: Geopolitics and the Future of Europe

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

During this course, students will study in a comparative perspective how current political processes shape the geopolitics of borders in contemporary Europe. How is the European Union and its citizens imagining or reimagining Europe's relationship with its members and borders? How do citizens of the European Union understand the meaning of their membership in the Union? How is the idea of the nation state evolving?

From an interdisciplinary theoretical and empirical approach, the program will help students understand processes that have produced profound changes in Spain, Ireland and Europe's social, political, cultural and economic structures. In this seminar, students will analyze the different social phenomena that have emerged in the last decades in Europe and that have represented direct challenges to issues that were thought to be consensual, such as democracy, or the struggle against discrimination of any kind, or even the meaning of Europe.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the current European Union's institutional and political organization;
- Compare the way in which borders are being understood in the EU in the context of Schengen, Brexit, and the ongoing refugee crisis and migration processes.
- Articulate the historical roots of ethnic and national conflict and the current post-conflict situation in Spain and Ireland.
- Understand current geopolitics of borders shaping contemporary Europe and the way in which the nation state is understood and is being questioned, specifically from within the European Union
- Gain country-specific knowledge regarding local efforts to defend human rights and new meanings of citizenship.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to issues concerning policy, law, human rights and social movements in Spain and the EU through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners. The methodological approach will be participatory, and experiential, and will aim to help the student develop a multidimensional understanding of, political and social expressions of regional independence movements, regional identities, institutional and societal adaptation to autonomies, and the ongoing interpellation to XX century consensus such as representative democracy.

Required Texts

- De Geneva, N. (2017). *The Borders of "Europe" Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering*, Duke University Press.
- Máiz, Ramón (2012). *The Inner Frontier. The Place of Nation in the Political Theory of Democracy and Federalism*. Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang.
- Monforte, Pierre (2015). *The border as a space of contention: the spatial strategies of protest against border controls in Europe*, *Citizenship Studies*, Volume 20, 2016 - Issue 3-4

Assignments and Evaluation

Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth, and argumentation, presentation of evidence and use of comparative perspective.

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Text Analysis (30%)

Students choose two texts from the list of their course required readings and engage with the main argument in each text. The text analysis should demonstrate the student's capacity to synthesize arguments, integrate data collected through class lectures and field visits, and provide critical insights into how issues dealt with in the two texts could be approached from a

policy or legal perspective. The paper should be 3-5 pages long and should also demonstrate the student's familiarity with policy discourse or methods of legal interpretation.

2) Oral Presentation (20%)

Students will be required to present orally and creatively at the end of the thematic seminar highlighting the most relevant and important issues discussed in class and on the different excursions. Students choose one policy or legal issue that illustrates the challenge of the nation state by the autonomy of a particular region (Basque or Catalonia) and elaborate on how course lectures, readings, and field visits have helped (or not) map viable approaches to the issue at hand.

3) Comprehensive Essay Exam (40%)

The comprehensive essay exam will consist of a 3-page essay which should demonstrate the student's capacity to synthesize and engage critically with main policy and legal arguments addressed through lectures, readings, or field visits throughout the course. Students will be provided with two essay questions to choose from.

4) Class Attendance and Participation (10%)

Attendance during the thematic seminar is mandatory and your grade will reflect your involvement in class and during other activities and excursions. This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions, and excursions using the following criteria:

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

Assessment

Text analysis	30%
Oral presentation	20%
Comprehensive essay exam	40%
Class Attendance and Participation	10%

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other

designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

Program Expectations

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.

- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.]

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

Course Schedule

Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lectures' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Post-conflict, Memory and the Nation State in Spain and Ireland

This module analyzes the basis and current manifestations of national conflicts in contemporary Europe, specifically in Spain and Ireland. The module focuses on the political and social cleavages, their roots, and impact on the current independence and self-determination movements in Basque Country, Catalonia, and other parts of Europe. The module also addresses the human rights framework, as well as post-conflict Spanish and Irish societies and the role memory and oblivion play in this context.

Sessions may include:

- Transitional justice and memory
- Ethnic Cleavages in Spanish Society and Politics
- Memory, Oblivion, and Cultural Rights in Spain

- Constitutional Law and Independence Movements in Spain
- Regional Autonomy, Conflict, and The Emergence of Plurinationality
- Justice and Human Rights in Ireland and Spain
- The Nation State and Transnational Identity in The Basque Country and Catalonia

Required Readings:

Paloma Aguilar (2017) Unwilling to Forget: Local Memory Initiatives in Post-Franco Spain, *South European Society and Politics*, 22:4, 405-426, DOI:10.1080/13608746.2017.1395078

McQuaid, S. D. & Gensburger, S., (2019), Administrations of Memory: Transcending the Nation and Bringing Back the State in *Memory Studies In: International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*. 32, 2, p. 125-143 19 p.

Keating, Michael (2001) What do the nations want? National Aspirations and Transnational Integration, in Keating, Michael (2001) *Plurinational Democracy. Stateless Nations in a Post-Sovereignty Era*, Oxford University Press.

Coppieters, B. (2018). The EU's Policies towards Contested States. In *Secession and Counter-Secession: An International Perspective*. Barcelona: CIDOB Edicions, Barcelona Center for International Affairs.

Recommended Readings:

Black, G., and Reynolds, C.(2020) Engaging Audiences with Difficult Pasts: The Voices of '68 Project at the Ulster Museum, Belfast, *The Museum Journal*, Volume 63, Issue1, Pages 21-38

Raeento, Paulina and Watson, Cameron (2000) Gernika, Guernica, Guernica? Contested meanings of a Basque place, *Political Geography* 19 (2000) 707–736.

Kelly, Garinne (2020) Reconciliation in Northern Ireland, O. Richmond, G. Visoka (eds.) (2020), *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Peace and Conflict Studies*

Module 2: European Integration, International Law, and Self-determination

This module focuses on the European Union integration process and the status of relationship between the EU and its member states. Students learn about the institutional framework of European integration and examine EU borders, constitutional framework, and international law in the context of populisms and self-determination movements.

Sessions may include:

- European Policies and the Future of the EU
- Brexit and its Implications on the EU
- Brexit and its Implications on Ireland, Northern Ireland and the EU borders.
- International Law and Regional Self-Determination Movements
- EU Institutions, National States, and Regional Autonomies: Legal and Policy Perspectives
- National Minorities and Cultural Rights in Europe
- Catalonia and the Spanish Triple Crisis: Economic, Political, and Territorial

- Self-Determination, Social Movements and Referendums

Required Readings:

- Blas, Asier (2015) The Spanish state's response to ethno-cultural diversity in Spain, in Peoples, Identities and Regions. Spain, Russia and the Challenges of the Multi-Ethnic State Moscow, Institute Ethnology and Anthropology Russian Academy of Sciences.
- Colomer, J (2017) "The Venturous bid for the independence of Catalonia", Nationalities Papers, 45:5, 950-967.
- Murphy, M. and Evershed, J. (2020) Contesting sovereignty and borders: Northern Ireland, devolution and the Union, Territory, Politics, Governance, Routledge.

Recommended Readings:

- [Macià Serra, P. Ubasart González, G. and Martí i Puig, S. \(2018\). Cataluña y la triple crisis Española. *Nueva Sociedad*, Enero – Febrero. ISSN: 0251-3552. Accessed: <http://nuso.org/articulo/cataluna-y-la-triple-crisis-espanola/>](http://nuso.org/articulo/cataluna-y-la-triple-crisis-espanola/)
- Keating, Michael (2016) Contesting European regions, Regional Studies
- Binzer, S. B. (2009). A Theory of Referendum Behaviour. In Binzer Hobolt, Sara. [*Europe in Question: Referendums on European Integration*](#). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kearney, R. (1997) Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy, London, Routledge.

Module 3: Citizenship and Human Rights in Spain and Ireland

This module examines current human rights issues in Spain and Ireland. The focus is on civil society organizational framework regarding human rights protection and claims from groups including women, immigrants, LGBTQ, and national minorities. The module also examines constitutional framework for the cultural rights protection of Indigenous populations in autonomous regions.

Sessions may include:

- Human Rights in Spain and Ireland
- Race Tensions in Current Spain and Ireland
- Minority Language Activism in Spain and Ireland (Basque, Catalan and Gaelic)
- Women Refugees in Spain
- Immigration and Human Rights in the Southern Border of Europe
- LGTBQ Rights in Spain and Ireland
- Alternatives for European Integration from Below

Required Readings:

- Barbero, I. (2015). When rights need to be (re)claimed: austerity measures, neoliberal housing policies and anti-eviction activism in Spain. *Critical Social Policy*, 35:2.
- Churruca, Cristina (2020) "Human Rights and Democracy at the Heart of the EU's Foreign Policy? An Assessment of the EU's Comprehensive Approach to Human Rights and Democratization", in Felipe Gómez Isa, Cristina Churruca Muguruza, Jan Wouters (2020) EU Human Rights and Democratization Policies Achievements and Challenges, Routledge.

Murray, C. R. G. and Rice, Clare A.G., Beyond Trade: Implementing the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol's Human Rights and Equalities Provisions (November 10, 2020). Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly, 2021

Recommended Readings:

Urla, J. (2012). *Reclaiming Basque: Language, Nation, and Cultural Activism*. Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press.

de Lucas, J. (2016). Deficits and Fallacies of Liberal Democracy in the Light of Management of Diversity: the Case of Migration and Asylum Policies. *Deusto Journal of Human Rights*, (1), 15-37. ISSN: 2530-4275

Wigger, A. (2018). From dissent to resistance: Locating patterns of horizontalist self-management crisis responses in Spain. *Comparative European Politics*, 16(1), 32-49.

Module 4: Geopolitics of Borders and Human Mobility in XXI century Europe

Among the major crisis that have affected the European Union region are the Brexit process and the ways in which different waves of migrants and refugees have become major humanitarian issues without solution until now. In this course students will be able to study and learn the multidimensional effects that these crises have over the borders of the EU and some of its members, the way in which the EU has acted from its institutions, and how civil society is organizing to protect the human rights of migrants and refugees, among others. This module includes lectures by academics, social actors, human rights activists, and field visits to social organizations.

- Sessions may include: Refugees, Immigrants, and EU Policy and Legal Framework
- International advocacy networks and immigration governance
- Human mobility, globalization, and geopolitics in the XXI century
- Mediterranean Migration: Institutions and civil society
- Feminization of Migration and refugee. A feminist perspective

Required Readings:

De Geneva, N. (2017) The borders of Europe and the European Question, in *The Borders of "Europe" Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering*, Duke University Press.

Ignacio Jurado, Sandra León, and Stefanie Walter (2021) Brexit Dilemmas: Shaping Post withdrawal Relations with a Leaving State, *International Organization*, page 1 of 32

McQuaid, S (2021) 'Walking wounded': the peace process and other collateral Brexit damages, *Open Arts Journal*. 8, p. 95-105 11 p.

Della Porta, D. (2015). *Social Movements in Times of Austerity: Bringing Capitalism back into Protest Analysis*. John Wiley & Sons. Chapter 2.

Recommended Readings:

Castells, M. (2015). *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. John Wiley & Sons.

Keating, M. (2004) Immigrant Integration and Minority Nationalism, in *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, Oxford Press.

Newby, L. (2021) Troubled Generations? (De)Constructing Narratives of Youth Experience in the Northern Ireland Conflict, *Journal of War & Culture Studies*, Volume 14