

## Comparative Regional Autonomy and Independence Movements in Europe

EURO-POLI3000 (3 credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
Spain: Policy, Law, and Regional Autonomy in Europe

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

### Description

This seminar provides a comparative approach to the analysis and comprehension of national minorities, pro-independence movements, and the emerging new regionalism in the context of the European Union. The Basque, Catalanian, and Scottish cases provide excellent case studies for an understanding of the underlying dynamics between EU members and national minorities and ways in which ethnic and national cleavages shape European contemporary policy, legal, political systems, and societal dynamics. The seminar also describes and analyzes the impact of macroeconomic policies and neoliberal austerity measures imposed by the EU on the Spanish, Catalan, and Scottish peoples and the effect that the latter have had pro-independence claims. Overall, the seminar provides a comparative overview of the different perspectives about the struggle for self-determination and pro-independence in Spain and Scotland.

### Learning Outcomes

The Comparative Approach to European Regional Autonomies and Independence Movements course comprises 45 hours of instruction (3 credits). Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- List pro-independence claims of national minorities in Spain, Scotland, and other European countries;
- Compare the way ethnic and national cleavages are shaping European politics;
- Understand the legal and constitutional frameworks in which conflicts between pro-independence movements and states emerge;
- Develop a theoretical and empirical viewpoint of the impact of regional independence movements on European integration austerity measures imposed by the EU on Spain and Scotland;
- Critically engage with the impact of regional independence movements on regional integration and the future of Europe.

### Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English. Students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and locales.

### **Course Modules:**

This course is delivered in five modules as described below. The methodological approach will be integrative, participatory, and experiential, and will aim to help the student develop a political, legal, and historical understanding of the rise of regional autonomies, political and cultural expressions of regional independence movements, and institutional adaptation to the state of advanced autonomies, and emerging map of new regional autonomies in Europe. The modules include field visits and meetings with academics, politicians, and policy makers.

### **Course Schedule**

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

### **Module 1: Comparative Approach to European Regional Autonomy**

This module will introduce students to the current complexities of the construction of citizenship and its relationship with national minorities in the context of the European Union. Through the cases of Spain and Scotland, this module seeks to analyze, not only the specificities of these two paradigmatic cases, but also from a comparative perspective, issues such as emerging self-determination and pro-independence movements, identity preservation, and collective rights.

Sessions may include:

- Spain, European Integration, and Regional Autonomy
- European Integration and Minority Nationalist Parties
- Regional Autonomy and Institutional Adaptation in Europe
- Self-Determination and Pro-Independence Movements in Europe
- Public Policies in the Context of Autonomy Movements in Europe
- Political Expressions of the Ethnic/National cleavage
- Comparative Approach to Social Policy: Spain and Scotland
- Cultural Identity and Regional minorities in Spain and Scotland
- Collective and Political Rights of Regional Minorities in Europe
- EU Neoliberal Economic Measures and Regional Autonomy: Spain and Scotland
- EU Policies and Spanish Regional Autonomy

#### *Required Readings:*

Downs, W. M. (2002). Regionalism in the European Union: Key concepts and project overview. *Journal of European Integration*, 24(3), 171-177. DOI:10.1080/07036330220152204

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.

Louarn, A. (2017). Other European Regions Continue to Push for More Autonomy. Retrieved: <http://www.france24.com/en/20171029-catalonia-influence-other-european-independence-separatist-movements-basque-lombardy-scotland>

Schmitt, S. (2012). Comparative approaches to the study of public policy-making. *Routledge Handbook of Public Policy*. Routledge. Retrieved from: <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203097571.ch3>

### *Recommended Readings*

- Letamendia, F. (2000). *Game of mirrors: centre-periphery national conflicts*. Ashgate Pub Ltd., Farnham.
- Watson, M. (Ed.). (1990). *Contemporary minority nationalism*. Psychology Press, New York.
- Eklundh, E. (2017). Populism, Hegemony, and the Phantasmatic Sovereign: The Ties Between Nationalism and Left-Wing Populism. In *Podemos and the New Political Cycle*. Springer, New York, 123-146.
- Coller, X., and Cordero, G. and Echavarren, J. (2017). National and Regional Identity. In *Political Power in Spain: The Multiple Divides between MPs and Citizens*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Coller, X., Jaime-Castillo, A. M., & Mota, F. (Eds.). (2017). *Political Power in Spain: The Multiple Divides Between Mps and Citizens*. Springer.
- León, S., Mota, F., & Salvador, M. (2018). The Organization of Spain: Ideology, Territory and Representation in the State of Autonomies. In *Political Power in Spain*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 245-264.
- Elias, A. (2013). *Minority nationalist parties and European integration: a comparative study*. Routledge, London and New York.

## **Module 2: The Basque: Regional Autonomy and Nationalism**

This module focuses on the historical construction of Basque identity, Basque identity markers, and historical signposts leading up to the emergence and development of Basque nationalism. Lectures, field visits, and meetings with politicians and theorists of Basque regional autonomy provide insights into the rise and dissolution of ETA organization and specificities of the Basque regional autonomy model, known as the Ibarretxe Plan. The Ibarretxe Plan, approved by the Basque parliament in 2004, has since guided the relation between the Basque Country and the central government in Madrid.

Sessions may include:

- Constructing Basque Nationalism
- ETA and the Central State: from Violence to Negotiation
- Cultural Rights and the Right to Independence
- The Basque Model of Regional Autonomy (the Ibarretxe Plan)
- Field excursion to the French Basque region
- Basque Perception of the Catalan Independence Referendum
- The Political Economy of Basque Regional Autonomy
- Basque Political Parties and the Nationalist Movement

### *Required Readings:*

- Gillespie, R., & Gray, C. (Eds.). (2015). *Contesting Spain? The Dynamics of Nationalist Movements in Catalonia and the Basque Country*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Anton, E. G. (2012). The analysis of the framing processes of the Basque peace movement: The way Lokarri and Gesto por la Paz changed society. *ICIP Working Papers*, (1), 1-44.

### *Recommended Readings:*

- Roach, S. C. (2017). *Cultural Autonomy, Minority Rights and Globalization*. New York: Routledge.
- Núñez, L. C. (1997). *The Basques: Their Struggle for Independence*. (Translated by Meie Stephens). Welsh Academic Press.

Murua, I. (2017). Ending ETA's Armed Campaign. *How and Why the Basque Armed Group Abandoned Violence*. London and New York: Routledge.

### **Module 3: Catalonia: Autonomy and the Constitutional Debate about Independence**

This module which is offered during the excursion to Girona and Barcelona aims to provide students with an understanding of the constitutional and legal referents framing the debate around Catalonian claim for self-determination and the independence referendum. Through meetings with policy makers and academics, students appraise the legal and constitutional complexities of Catalonia's unilateral claim for independence and the power struggle between the national government and Catalonia's parliament.

Sessions may include:

- Franco Regime and Catalan Identity
- National Identity and Cultural Policy in Catalonia
- The Political Economy of Catalonian Identity
- Catalan Parliament, Political Parties, and National Government
- Catalonia's Independence Movement and Constitutional Crisis in Spain
- International law and Catalonia's Declaration of Independence

*Required Readings:*

Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., Ribas, A. S., & Portos, M. (2017). *Social movements and referendums from below: direct democracy in the neoliberal crisis*. Policy Press.

Gillespie, R., & Gray, C. (Eds.). (2015). *Contesting Spain? The Dynamics of Nationalist Movements in Catalonia and the Basque Country*. Routledge.

Bourne, A. K. (2014). Europeanization and secession: The cases of Catalonia and Scotland. *JEMIE*, 13, 94. Retrieved from: <http://forskning.ruc.dk/site/files/53319182/Bourne.pdf>

Zheng, X. (B.). (2014). Can Catalonia achieve independence through a unilateral declaration of independence under international law? *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*. Accessed: <http://jtl.columbia.edu/can-catalonia-achieve-independence-through-a-unilateral-declaration-of-independence-under-international-law/>

*Recommended Readings:*

Cramer, K. (2008). *Catalonia: National identity and cultural policy 1980-2003*. University of Wales Press.

Dalle Mule, E. (2017). *The Nationalism of the Rich: Discourses and Strategies of Separatist Parties in Catalonia, Flanders, Northern Italy and Scotland*. London and New York: Routledge.

Zamorano, M. M. (2017). Cultural policy governance, sub-state actors, and nationalism: a comparative analysis based on the Spanish case. *Debats. Revista de cultura, poder i societat*. 2. 79-94. 10.28939/iam.debats-en.2017-5.

Gross, L. (1984). The right of self-determination in international law. In *Essays on International Law and Organization*. Springer, Dordrecht. 257-275.

Levrat, N., Antunes, S., Tusseau, G., and Williams, P. (2017). Catalonia's Legitimate Right to Decide: Paths to Self-Determination. A Report by a Commission of International Experts. Accessed:

[https://www.unige.ch/gsi/files/9115/0461/7417/EXECUTIVE\\_SUMMARY\\_Catalogne.pdf](https://www.unige.ch/gsi/files/9115/0461/7417/EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY_Catalogne.pdf)

#### **Module 4: Scotland: The Independence Movement after the 2014 Referendum**

This module, which is delivered during the excursion to Scotland, aims to provide a comparative perspective to the Basque and Catalan nationalism and possible trajectories pro-independence movements might take in the context of European regionalism. In Scotland, since the defeat of the independence referendum of September 2014 (IndyRef), the enthusiasm the movement generated seems to have waned and the discussion about an IndyRef2 is postponed. The module provides students with the opportunity to learn about local, national, and regional factors that led to the defeat of the 2014 independence referendum, how this defeat has shaped the discussion about Scottish statehood and Scottish national identity, and the legal and constitutional implications of Scotland's position in the Union in the post-Brexit context. The module includes lectures by academics and meetings with Scottish politicians and policy makers who support independence and those who are in support of the union.

Sessions may include:

- Historical Overview of the Scottish Independence Movement
- The Constitutional Case for Scottish Independence
- The European Question in the Scottish Independence Debate
- Impact of Brexit on the Scottish Independence Movement
- Scottish Identity and the Rise of the Scottish National Party (SNP)
- The Economics of Scottish Pro-Independence Movement
- Scottish Independence Movement and Democratic Governance
- Media and the 2014 Independence Referendum Debate
- The EU, Brexit, and the Future of Scottish Nationalism

*Required Readings:*

McHarg, A., Mullen, T., Page, A., & Walker, N. (Eds.). (2016). *The Scottish Independence Referendum: Constitutional and Political Implications*. Oxford University Press.

Lock, T. (2017). Scotland's Place in Europe after Brexit: Between a Rock and a Hard Place? A Legal Scoping Exercise. *European Papers*, 2:1, 183-200. DOI: 10.15166/2499-8249/146. Retrieved: [https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/files/38212429/EP\\_EJ\\_2017\\_1\\_12\\_Agenda\\_Tobias\\_Lock.pdf](https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/files/38212429/EP_EJ_2017_1_12_Agenda_Tobias_Lock.pdf)

McEwen, N. (2018). Insights from the Scottish independence referendum. In *Secession and Counter-Secession: An International Perspective*. Barcelona Center for International Affairs.

*Recommended Readings:*

Dalle Mulle, E. (2017). *The Nationalism of the Rich: Discourses and Strategies of Separatist Parties in Catalonia, Flanders, Northern Italy and Scotland*. Routledge.

Greer, S. L. (2012). *Nationalism and self-government: the politics of autonomy in Scotland and Catalonia*. SUNY Press.

Keating, M. (Ed.). (2017). *Debating Scotland: Issues of Independence and Union in the 2014 Referendum*. Oxford University Press.

#### **Module 5: Regional Autonomy, EU Policy, and the Future of Europe**

This module focuses on a critical assessment of Europe's regional autonomy model and explores possible institutional reforms to accommodate rising regional independence

movements. Students explore other regional autonomy models such as the Belgian and Swiss models and discuss alternative innovative models of regional autonomy

Sessions may include:

- EU Institutional Reform in the Context of Regional Autonomy
- European Union or “Europe of the Region”?
- Working European Models of Regional Autonomy? Belgium and Switzerland
- Brexit and the Future of the EU
- Alternative Policies for New Regional Autonomy Models
- Is the Referendum the Effective Plebiscite Model to Conflict Resolution?

*Required Readings:*

Ruiz Robledo, A. (2013). Spanish Autonomous Communities and EU Policies. *Perspectives on Federalism*, 5:2, 29-50. Retrieved: [http://www.on-federalism.eu/attachments/160\\_download.pdf](http://www.on-federalism.eu/attachments/160_download.pdf)

Baier, E., Kroll, H., & Zenker, A. (2013). *Regional autonomy with regard to innovation policy: A differentiated illustration of the European status quo* (No. R3/2013). Working Papers Firms and Region. Retrieved from: <https://www.econstor.eu/obitstream/10419/69499/1/73607046X.pdf>

Costa-i-Font, J. (2014). Furthering sub-central autonomy in Europe? The roles of identity and redistribution. *Intereconomics*, 49(1), 36-43. Retrieved from: <https://archive.intereconomics.eu/year/2014/1/furthering-sub-central-autonomy-in-europe-the-roles-of-identity-and-redistribution/>

## **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

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

## Description of Assignments:

### Comparative Paper

Students submit a comparative paper on an aspect of regional autonomy addressing at least two regional autonomies in which they engage with the specificities of each regional autonomy from a policy and legal perspective. Students can choose from the cases of the Basque, Catalanian, and Scottish regional autonomies or other regions of their choice. The paper should use a conceptual framework from public policy, law or political science and data from class lectures or field visits. The paper should be 8-10 pages long.

### Oral Presentation

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 specificities of a particular regional autonomy and elaborate on how course lectures, readings, and field visits have helped (or not) map viable approaches to the issue at hand.

### Final Essay

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.

### Class Attendance and Participation

Attendance during the thematic seminar is mandatory and your grade will reflect your involvement in class and during other activities and excursions.

### Assessment:

Comparative Paper	40%
Oral Presentation	20%
Final Essay	30%
Class Attendance and Participation	10%

### 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

### **Expectations and Policies**

- Show up prepared. Be on time. Have your Reading 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 according 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 (those of classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits, etc.). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.