Policy, Law, and the Future of the Nation State in Europe

EURO-POLI 3500 (3 credits)

Spain: Policy, Law, and Regional Autonomy in 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.

Description
During this course, students develop an understanding of the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of ethnic and national cleavages in Spain and other European nations. Students learn about the European Union’s institutional and political framework and its influence on the internal political and judicial systems of EU members. The course uses a multidimensional approach to explore and analyze from legal, policy, and human rights perspectives some of the main issues facing the contemporary European Union in the context of regional autonomies and independence movements. Using empirical examples from the Basque country, Catalonia, and Scotland, students assess, from a comparative perspective, the legal, institutional, and policy architecture developed by the European Union and EU’s regulation and policy approach to sovereignty, citizenship, and the claim to statehood. The course also addresses the current state of human and cultural rights in the EU, and most concretely, in the Basque country and Catalonia, and assesses the future of the nation-state in the context of regional independence movements. The course includes lectures by academics, meetings with policy makers, and field visits to cultural and memory sites in the Basque Country and Catalonia.

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

- Explain the current European Union legal, institutional, and political organization;
- Compare and explain the historical roots of ethnic and national conflict in Spain and other European nations;
- Identify in country-specific knowledge regarding local efforts to uphold the values of social justice and cultural rights;
- Critically approach the multidimensional process of integration in Europe in the context of regional autonomies and independence movements;
- Contrast the policy and legal debate about independence movements and the future of the nation state in Europe in the form of a critical paper.

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.

**Course Schedule**

Students will be provided a detailed course schedule during orientation on the program. 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: National Identities, Conflict, and Memory**

This module analyzes the basis and current manifestations of ethnic and national conflicts in contemporary Europe. 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 legal and human rights framework which regulates national identity movements and the role memory and oblivion play in conflict transformation.

Sessions may include:
- Historical Context of Ethnic Conflict and “Dirty War” in Spain
- 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
- Law, Justice, and Human Rights in Europe
- Law and Social Policy in Spain
- The Nation State and Transnational Identity in The Basque Country and Catalonia

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**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 legal and institutional framework of European integration and examine EU constitutional framework and international law in the context of regional independence and self-determination movements.

Sessions may include:
- European Regional Integration and the Future of the EU
• Brexit and its Implications on the EU
• 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
• Refugees, Immigrants, and EU Policy and Legal Framework
• Constitutional Law and Self-Determination Referendums in the EU
• Regional Autonomies in Spain and Former Yugoslavia

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Module 3: Contemporary Human Rights in Spain in the EU Context
This module examines current human rights issues in Spain and Europe. The focus is on the legal and policy framework regarding human rights protection and emerging claims from minority groups including women, immigrants, LGBTQ, and national minorities. The module also examines constitutional framework for the cultural rights protection of indigenous populations if autonomous regions.

Sessions may include:
• Law and Human Rights in Spain
• Language Activism and Human Rights
• Women Refugees in Spain
• Immigration and Human Rights in the Southern Border of Europe
• Refugee Narrative in Spain
• LGTBQ Rights in Spain and Europe
Alternatives for European Integration from Below

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Module 4: Policy, Regional Autonomies, and Pro-Independence Movements

During this module students analyze the intersection between policy and regional autonomies in the context of rising pro-independence movements. The module explores possible correlation between the 2008 economic crisis and the resulting EU austerity measures which have led to the emergence of strong social and political mobilization in Spain and across Europe. Students also draw a comparative assessment of the future of regional autonomies and analyze legal and policy challenges facing states and the EU in the context of independence and self-determination movements.

Sessions may include:
- Alternatives to The Status Quo: From the Streets to the Ballot Box
- The Rise and Consolidation of New Political Alternatives
- Tides of Color and Discontent
- Cultural Rights in a Context of Crisis
- Historical Origins of Independence Discontent in Spain
- Independence Movements in Spain in the XXI Century
- Economic Crisis, Liberal Democracy, and the European Project

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:

Module 5: Art, Sports, Media, and Cultural Expressions of Conflicts
This module focuses on different cultural manifestations of the tension between nation states, the EU, and national minorities. Conflict and discontent are also embedded in cultural and aesthetic expressions and media constructions, and i.e. arts, cinema, literature or sports of agency for national discourse.

Sessions may include:
- Cultural Policy and the Preservation of Basque Cultural Identity
- Markers of Identity and Basque Collective Memory: Food, Dance, and Dress
- The Bilbao Effect: Cultural Institutions and Rebranding of Basque Identity
- The Spanish Football League: Regional Identity and Political Aspirations
- Sport and Nationalism in Scotland
- Constructing Basque Identity in Basque Cinema
- Cultural minorities in Basque and Catalanian Regions

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:
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, and argumentation, presentation of evidence and use of comparative perspective.

Description of Assignments

Text Analysis
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.

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 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.

Comprehensive Essay Exam
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:
Text analysis 40%
Oral presentation 20%
Comprehensive essay exam 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 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 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 Student 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 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.