

Modern Europe: Foundations and Transformations

EURO-3000 (4 credits)

Contemporary Politics 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.

Course Description

This course introduces students to the political, ideological, and historical foundations that have shaped modern Europe from the early 20th century through the present. Through an integrated curriculum taught across major political centers in the region, students will examine how nations have developed distinct yet interconnected responses to major political transformations, ideological confrontations, historical memory, global shifts, and integration challenges. Structured thematically, the course enables students to draw meaningful comparisons among diverse systems and societies while building a regional perspective.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Describe historical, political, and social movements and their legacies in contemporary Europe.
2. Examine the emergence, interaction, and consequences of competing ideologies on European political development in the 20th and 21st centuries.
3. Compare the development of major European political systems, including parliamentary democracies, constitutional monarchies, and hybrid regimes, and assess their impact on governance and policymaking.
4. Evaluate how collective memory, historical trauma, and public commemoration is constructed and contested in public space and discourse.
5. Interpret the tensions between national sovereignty and supranational integration, especially in relation to the European Union, through historical and contemporary lenses.
6. Assess Europe's evolving role in global affairs, with attention to decolonization, transatlantic relations, and the legacy of Cold War alignments.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English.

Instructional Methods

SIT's philosophy of education is rooted in experiential learning model, which drives the design of this class. Each module allows for experience, reflection, and application. Experiences range from critical analyses of datasets to site visits and conversations with local experts. These experiences are framed by readings, multimedia texts, and class discussion. Reflection occurs throughout the learning process in various forms, such as verbal debriefs after learning on location experiences to reflexive components in papers/projects. Through reflection, students are encouraged to become aware of their process of learning, to make sense of their experiences, and connect the learning acquired on the program with previous experiences and information. Application activities reinforce learning by practicing communication skills, experimenting with theories, and preparing to transfer learning to future contexts.

Required Texts

- Book chapters and articles on Course Reserve

Assignments and Evaluation

- **Participation & Professional Engagement (10%)**
Includes attendance, contribution to field discussions, cultural site visits, and group collaboration during workshops.
- **Policy Retrospective Roundtables (30%, 3 @ 10%)**
Student groups will select one of the course's themes and investigate a related 20th- or 21st-century European policy or strategic initiative in each program location. After researching the policy, students will participate in a facilitated roundtable discussion analyzing a specific policy or strategic initiative from the past, focusing on its intentions, implementation, and long-term impacts. The discussion emphasizes critical reflection, cross-location comparison, and diverse perspectives.
- **Memory Field Project (60%, 3 @ 20%)**
In this multi-part project, student will investigate specific theme related to Europe's historical memory—such as World War II, the Holocaust, totalitarianism, or postwar reconciliation. Using visits to memorials, museums, archives, and interviews where possible, students will collect multimedia documentation (photos, audio, video, notes) to analyze how the theme is commemorated, represented, and politicized in each program location. Evaluation will focus on depth of research, comparative analysis, creativity in presentation, reflective insight, and discussion leadership.

The assignment is broken into three stages:

Stage 1 – London: Students will research their memory theme locally—visiting memorials, museums, archives, or relevant sites. They create a multimedia presentation summarizing their findings and initial reflections on how this theme shapes political memory in the UK.

Stage 2 – Madrid: Students will repeat the process focusing on Spain's commemorations and politics around the same theme. The presentation this time must explicitly compare findings with London, noting similarities, differences, and national contexts.

Stage 3 – Vienna: Students will finalize research on their theme in Austria. The presentation incorporates a deeper comparative analysis across all three locations and includes a reflective discussion on the implications for European unity and identity. Following the presentation, students will conduct a brief, facilitated discussion exploring the implications of memory politics in Europe.

- **Note on Attendance and Participation:** Due to the nature of this experiential program, full participation in all classes and program activities is required. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the Program Director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, which may impact grades. Excessive, unexcused absences could result in program dismissal. Alternative work for absences will be expected.

Note on Late Assignments: IHP programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. 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. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis with approval from the Program Director or other designated staff person. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. Students who do not submit their work within the extension period will receive a failing grade.

Grading Scale

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

Program Expectations

In order to make the most of the opportunities presented in program, communicate respectfully, prepare for student success, and demonstrate best possible engagement, SIT has the following expectations of students:

- **Content Considerations:** The 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.
- **Learning Community:** 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 differences and consider other perspectives with respect.
- **Presence.** 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.
- **Engage.** Ask questions in class. Interact with the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- **Be Honest.** Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- **Store 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 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, especially during a guest lecture or presentation from a peer. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- **Course Communication:** Course documents and assignments will be posted on the learning management system, Canvas. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.

- **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. Documented academic accommodations may supersede this policy.

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](#), [Accessibility 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 lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

Note: This course schedule is a suggested sequence of modules, topics, texts, and experiential learning opportunities where each location offers parallel learning cycles with a comparative focus. Lead and local faculty should appropriately adapt how these topics are taught and select texts, case studies, guest speakers, and site visits that are relevant to the context and course themes.

LOCATION #1: LONDON (weeks 1-5)

Module #1: What is Europe?

Topics: The modern idea of Europe and framing course themes across program sites and the continent.

Readings:

- Smith, A. D. (1993). A Europe of nations — or the nation of Europe? *Journal of Peace Research*, 30(2), 129–135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343393030002001>

- Parsons, C. (2002). Showing ideas as causes: The origins of the European Union. *International Organization*, 56(1), 47–84. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081802753485133>
- Fligstein, N., Polyakova, A., & Sandholtz, W. (2012). European integration, nationalism and European identity. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50(S1), 106–122. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02230.x>
- Larsen, S. R. (2021). Varieties of constitutionalism in the European Union. *The Modern Law Review*, 84(2), 217–239. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2230.12614>

Learning on Location: guest lecture and discussion: “What is Europe?”

Assignment: Form groups for Policy Retrospective Roundtables based on common interests.

Module #2: Political Systems & Institutions

Topics: constitutional monarchy, unitary parliamentary democracy, Westminster, elections

Readings:

- UK Government. (n.d.). How government works. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/how-government-works>
- Horsley, T. (2022). Constitutional functions and institutional responsibility: A functional analysis of the UK constitution. *Legal Studies*, 42(1), 99–119. <https://doi.org/10.1017/lst.2021.32>
- Taylor, A. (2024). The anti-monarchist turn in British politics, society, and culture: Diana, Harry and after. *Recherches Anglaises et Nord-Américaines*, (58), 157–175. <https://doi.org/10.4000/11uzk>
- Lundberg, T. C. (2018). Electoral systems in context: United Kingdom. In E. S. Herron, R. Pekkanen, & M. S. Shugart (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of electoral systems* (pp. 627–650). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190258658.013.40>

Learning on Location: Field trip to Houses of Parliament

Assignment: Policy Retrospectives preparation

Module# 3: Ideologies in Conflict

Topics: Labour vs Thatcherism, social democracy

Readings:

- Gamble, A. (2021). Thatcherism and Conservative politics. In *After Brexit and other essays* (Chapter 6). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.51952/9781529217124.ch006>

- Sowels, N. (2019). From the “Thatcherisation of Europe” to Brexit. *French Journal of British Studies*, 24(XXIV-4). <https://doi.org/10.4000/rfcb.4819>
- Wickham-Jones, M. (1996). The nature of social democracy and the Labour Party. In *Economic strategy and the Labour Party* (pp. 9–30). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230373679_2
- Bullock, I. (2009). The rise and fall of New Labour? A social democracy for 21st century Britain? *Labour / Le Travail*, 64, 173–191. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40650152>
- O’Grady, T. (2018). Careerists versus coal-miners: Welfare reforms and the substantive representation of social groups in the British Labour Party. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(4), 544–578. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414018784065>

Learning on Location: Walking Tour: “London and the Welfare State.” Sites include: Post-war social housing estates, NHS sites, and locations tied to urban redevelopment under Thatcher.

Assignment: Policy Retrospective Roundtable #1

Module #4: Unity & Sovereignty

Topics: UK unity; UK and Europe

Readings:

- Duclos, N. (2023). The Scottish Independence Movement: National or Nationalist? *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal*, 21(56). <http://journals.openedition.org/lisa/15538> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/lisa.15538>
- Coffey, D. K. (2018). ‘The right to shoot himself’: Secession in the British Commonwealth of Nations. *The Journal of Legal History*, 39(2), 117–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01440365.2018.1484323>
- Murphy, P. (2011). Britain and the Commonwealth: Confronting the past—Imagining the future. *The Round Table*, 100(414), 267–283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2011.574901>
- Gifford, C. (2014). *The post-imperial crisis*. In *The making of Eurosceptic Britain: Identity and economy in a post-imperial state* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003074922>

Learning on Location: Field trip to London Museum Docklands, emphasis on Windrush and Caribbean influences during the colonial and post-imperial periods

Assignment: work on Memory Field Project

Module #5: Memory & the Politics of the Recent Past (and Present)

Topics: Race and riot 1958, 1981, 2011, 2024

Readings:

- Adscheid, T. (2023). The fugitive underground of British Blackness: Insights from London's 'riotous' geographies. *ACME*, 22(5), 1320–1341. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1107311ar>
- Hilliard, C. (2022). Mapping the Notting Hill Riots: Racism and the streets of post-war Britain. *History Workshop Journal*, 93(1), 47–68. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbac012>
- Solomos, J. (2022). Urban unrest, protest, and disorder. In *Race and Racism in Britain* (pp. 187–209). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-11843-2_8
- O'Brien Castro, M. (2021). Anger in the city: Negative solidarities and the pursuit of the common bad in the context of the 2011 English riots. In R. Ciocca & S. Manian (Eds.), *Living in the age of anger: Representing 'negative solidarities' in contemporary global culture* (Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 105–115). *Anglistica AION*. <https://doi.org/10.6093/2035-8504/9797>
- Godshaw, D., & Singleton, A. (2025). Neither mindless nor legitimate: The racist politics of the 2024 UK riots and the limitations of the carceral response. *Justice, Power and Resistance*, 8(2), 237–248. <https://doi.org/10.1332/26352338Y2025D000000038>

Assignment: Memory Field Project Stage I

LOCATION #2: MADRID (weeks 6–10)

Module #6: Political Systems & Institutions

Topics: Transition from dictatorship

Readings:

- La Moncloa. (n.d.). *Institutions of Spain*. <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/espana/spanishinstitutions/paginas/index.aspx>
- Hernández Burgos, C. (2021). Nationalisation, banal nationalism and everyday nationhood in a dictatorship: The Franco regime in Spain. *Nations and Nationalism*, 27(3), 673–690. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12621>
- Campos, I. S. (2004). Fascism, fascistization and developmentalism in Franco's dictatorship. *Social History*, 29(3), 342–357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0307102042000257629>
- Ferrándiz, F. (2022). Francisco Franco is back: The contested reemergence of a fascist moral exemplar. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 64(1), 208–237. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S001041752100044X>

Learning on Location: Spanish Parliament tour

Assignment: Policy Retrospectives preparation

Module #7: Ideologies in Conflict

Topics: Spanish Civil War, resistance

Readings:

- Ruiz, G. R. (2022). Mocking the dictatorship: Symbolic resistance in everyday life during Francoism in the 1960s. *European History Quarterly*, 52(2), 179–199. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02656914221085130>
- Rodríguez-Solás, D. (2021). Dissident bodies: Theatrical countermemories of Spain's transition to democracy. *History & Memory*, 33(1), 142–170. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/787261>
- Huys, D. (2023). Is Spain different? The tamed memory of the Spanish Civil War and the limits of Spain's national self-image (2008–10). *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, 69(2), 237–251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajph.12874>

Learning on Location: Civil War walk, visit Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía to see *Guernica*

Assignment: Policy Retrospective Roundtable #2

Module #8: Unity & Sovereignty

Topics: post-Franco nationalism, ethnicity, and regional autonomy movements

Readings:

- Del Arco Blanco, M. Á., & Gorostiza, S. (2021). 'Facing the Sun': Nature and nation in Franco's 'New Spain' (1936–51). *Journal of Historical Geography*, 71, 73–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2020.12.004>
- Baztán, M. R. (2021). Potatoes and nation-building: the case of the Spanish omelette. *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 27(2), 151–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14701847.2021.1939529>
- Greenwood, D. J. (2023). Castilians, Basques, and Andalusians: An historical comparison of nationalism, "true" ethnicity, and "false" ethnicity. In E. G. Smith (Ed.), *Ethnic groups and the state* (pp. 202–227). Routledge.

Learning on Location: Visit Museo de la Historia de Madrid to understand Madrid's role in nation-building or field trip to Centre Cultural - Llibreria Blanquerna.

Assignment: work on Memory Field Project

Module #9 (weeks 9-10): Memory & the Politics of the Past

Topics: Pact of Forgetting, Francoist legacy

Readings:

- López Fuentes, J. (2022). "A forgetting for everyone, by everyone"? Spain's memory laws and the rise of the European community of memory, 1977–2007. *The Journal of Modern History*, 94(1), 127–162. <https://doi.org/10.1086/717789>

- Maystorovich Chulio, N. (2025). Transitional justice and forensic exhumations: Reconciling post-conflict violence in Spain. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 14(2), 13–29. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.3901>
- Wildeboer Schut, R., & Dujisin, Z. (2022). Spain's democratic anxieties through the lens of Franco's reburial. *Memory Studies*, 16(4), 837-860. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980221108477>

Learning on Location: Guided tour of Valle de Cuelgamuros

Assignment: Memory Field Project Stage II

LOCATION #3: VIENNA (weeks 11–15)

Module #10: Political Systems & Institutions

Topic: Neutrality, coalition politics

Readings:

- Parliament Austria. (n.d.). *Political system*. <https://www.parlament.gv.at/en/explore/political-system/index.html>
- Müller, W. C. (2021). Austria: Phasing-out grand coalition government. In T. Bergman, H. Bäck, & J. Hellström (Eds.), *Coalition governance in Western Europe* (pp. 41–80). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198868484.003.0003>
- Binter, J. (1989). Neutrality, European community and world peace: The case of Austria. *Journal of Peace Research*, 26(4), 413-418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343389026004007>
- Rathkolb, O. (2018). International perceptions of Austrian neutrality. In *Neutrality in Austria* (pp. 69-91). Routledge.
- Phillips, R. H., Prinz, W. H., & Straub, G. C. (2025). Understandings of neutrality and its origins in young Austrian adults. *European Politics and Society*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2025.2482947>

Learning on Location: Visit to Parliament

Assignment: Policy Retrospectives preparation

Module #11: Ideologies in Conflict

Topic: nationalism, interwar, post-war and Cold War

Readings:

- Tschiggerl, M. (2021). Significant otherness: Nation-building and identity in postwar Austria. *Nations and Nationalism*, 27(3), 782–796. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12677>

- Botz, G. (2016). The short- and long-term effects of the authoritarian regime and of Nazism in Austria: The burden of a "second dictatorship" [2006]. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung. Supplement*, (28), 191–213. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43941253>
- Schmidl, E. A. (2016). Lukewarm neutrality in a Cold War? The case of Austria. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 18(4), 36–50. https://doi.org/10.1162/JCWS_a_00679
- Schmidl, E. A. (2015). "Push" and "pull" factors in foreign policy: A case study of Austrian participation in international peace operations, 1960–2015. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 26(4), 719–735. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2015.1110439>

Learning on Location: visit Das Haus der Geschichte Österreich (The House of Austrian History) to see how the museum presents the country's recent heritage and what it means to be Austrian.

Assignment: Policy Retrospective Roundtable #3

Module #12: Unity & Sovereignty

Topics: EU, NATO

Readings:

- Spatafora, G. (2025, April 4). OPINION - NATO's 76th anniversary: What's the future of the alliance? <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/opinion/opinion-natos-76th-anniversary-what-s-the-future-of-the-alliance/3528340#>
- Gebhard, C. (2013). Is small still beautiful? The case of Austria. *Swiss Political Science Review*, 19(3), 279–297. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12042>
- Reinprecht, C., & Latcheva, R. (2003). Neutrality and Austrian identity: Discourse on NATO and neutrality as reflected in public opinion. In G. Bischof, A. Pelinka, & C. Karlhofer (Eds.), *NATO, neutrality and national identity: The Austrian experience* (pp. 433–454). Transaction Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-68641>
- Pollak, J., & Puntischer-Riekman, S. (1999). Austria and the European Union: From nation-state to member-state. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 2(2), 136–153. https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/jird/jird_99poj01.html
- Novy, A., Swiatek, D. C., & Lengauer, L. (2013). Vienna between east and west: The construction of a new transborder Central European region. In *Urban and regional development trajectories in contemporary capitalism* (pp. 106-126). Routledge.

Learning on Location: guest speaker on Austria and the EU

Assignment: work on Memory Field Project

Module #13: Memory & the Politics of the Past

Topic: collective and selective memory, WWII, anti-semitism, Roma

Readings:

- Wodak, R. (2016). Suppression of the Nazi past, coded languages and discourses of silence: Applying the discourse-historical approach to post-war antisemitism in Austria. In *The Holocaust in the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 211-234). Routledge.
- Pohn-Lauggas, M. (2021). Memory in the shadow of a family history of resistance: A case study of the significance of collective memories for intergenerational memory in Austrian families. *Memory Studies*, 14(2), 180–196.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698019849698>
- Benedik, S. (2020). Shifting the agency of remembering: Inventing the loyal Romani victim in the context of Austrian memory debates. *Ethnicities*, 20(1), 177–201.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796818807327>

Learning on Location: visit Archives of the Austrian Resistance

Assignment: Memory Field Project Stage III

Module #14: Europe's Past as Prologue

Topics: synthesizing course themes and comparing across locations