

The Future of Europe

EURO-3053 (3 credits)

Switzerland: Choose Your Track—Wildlife, Food Systems, Cities OR French Culture

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 focuses on the key questions that shape Europe's future, including the continued existence of the European Union, the division and balance of power sharing between the EU and its member nations, the threat of member nation “exits,” the pitched battle over migration policy and politics, and Europe’s approach to climate governance. In order for students to engage meaningfully with these questions, the course will begin with an in-depth overview of the institutions, laws, and policies that govern the European Union, while tracing the tension between these and the national sovereignty of EU member states. Students will then home in on how each of the questions above is inflected by neoliberal thought and the rise of the ethno-nationalist ideologies across the continent, the ebb and flow of Euroscepticism, the shifting demographics of the European population, and the growing role of digital technologies. The course will culminate by having students consider how the global standing of Europe might evolve both in the near and long-term future, and what this signifies about the underlying values that Europe – and the European Union – seek to uphold.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Analyze the major economic, political, and cultural trends impacting the future of Europe, and project these into the future using evidence-based forecasting methods.
2. Compare how individual European countries respond to shared challenges such as climate change, migration, digital governance, and demographic shifts.
3. Interpret the evolving relationship and tensions between the national sovereignty of European countries on the one hand, and the political, economic, and cultural powers vested in the European Union as a supranational organization on the other.
4. Evaluate Europe's geopolitical role on the global stage, particularly in relation to the United States, Russia, and China, and debate its standing as a current, potential, or emerging superpower.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English.

Instructional Methods

SIT's philosophy of education is rooted in an 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 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 outlined below under Course Schedule, and posted in Canvas in Files
- Europe 2040 Scenario Summaries

Assignments

Participation (15%)

Students are expected to be physically and mentally present for all classes. To prepare for class, students should critically read the assigned texts prior to each class and come prepared with relevant questions and insights.

Experiential Learning Journal (30%, 3 entries that are each worth 10%)

Many forms of experiential learning are embedded into this course (site visits, hands-on learning experiences, simulations, etc.) alongside more traditional methods of teaching (lectures, seminars, readings, etc.). To synthesize the learning from disparate forms of teaching and learning, students will reflect on their learning experiences through reflective journaling. Students will write entries detailing significant learning experiences, focusing on description of the experience, reflection on the experience, connection to existing knowledge or other sources of information, and application of the learning experience. Students are expected to make explicit connections between the referenced experiences and the course readings. Proper citation is required.

Because of the cognitive benefits of writing longhand (improved memory, critical thinking, and creativity to name a few), this assignment is low-tech, using manual writing tools and paper. Exceptions are only allowable when a student has an explicit academic accommodation based on a documented learning difference. Illegible entries will receive no credit; if concerned about penmanship, write in all caps (it's not a sign of aggression, it's the way architects write so everyone can read and understand plans).

Stakeholder Mapping (20%)

To underscore the importance of stakeholder engagement in policymaking, students will conduct a detailed analysis of diverse stakeholders to a selected EU policy area relevant to the challenges and opportunities facing the future of Europe. Students will identify a stakeholder group (e.g., industry associations, NGOs, national governments, citizens, etc.) and map their influence, interests, and potential conflicts. The form of the map can be an infographic, chart, matrix, or salience model. Accompanying the map will be suggestions for levels of stakeholder engagement within the policymaking process.

Scenario Simulation (35%)

This assignment challenges students to synthesize what they have learned across the course themes. Working in groups, students will collaboratively build plausible, evidence-based scenarios for what Europe could look like in 2040 based on one of the course themes. Each group will explore the drivers, uncertainties, and policy options that shape that future, using historical trajectories, institutional responses, and stakeholder perspectives gathered during the program. In addition to this broad picture, students are expected to integrate insights and examples specific to the program country.

This assignment is divided into two sections:

1. Scenario Brief & Visual (Pre-Simulation Submission):

- Narrative: ~750 words outlining
 - Key drivers and uncertainties (technological, political, demographic, etc.)
 - Comparative insights from the program country that inform the scenario
 - One or two plausible futures for your chosen theme
 - Five to eight references from course readings (and beyond) with proper citation
- Visual: 1-page visual illustrating the trajectory of events across countries and EU institutions (e.g., timeline, policy web, geostrategic map)

2. Simulation Design & Facilitation (Final Week):

- Choose a simulation format (e.g., EU Council summit, civil society forum, multi-stakeholder negotiation).
- Design 3–5 stakeholder roles
- Facilitate a **15-minute in-class simulation** with peer participation.
- Conclude with a **3-minute debrief** on key takeaways and implications for policy.

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

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

Class 1: Course Introduction

- Jacobs, Frank. "Where Is Europe?" *The New York Times* January 9, 2012. <https://archive.nytimes.com/opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/09/where-is-europe/>.
- Jambon, Jan. "Europe's Cultural Identity – That's What We're Fighting For." *Politico* May 14, 2024. <https://www.politico.eu/article/europes-cultural-identity-thats-what-were-fighting-for/>.
- Saeed, Saim. "Let's Be a Bit More Honest About What a 'European Identity' Looks Like." *Politico* June 29, 2024. <https://www.politico.eu/article/european-identity-history-european-union-judaism-christianity-islam/>.

Class 2: What Is Europe?

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. Verso, 1991. 1-9; 37-47.
- Pocock, J.G.A. "What Do We Mean by Europe?" *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1997, 12-29.
- Schmidt-Gleim, Meike, and Claudia Wiesner. "The Meanings of Europe." *The Meanings of Europe: Changes and Exchanges of a Contested Concept*. Edited by Claudia Wiesner and Meike Schmidt-Gleim. Routledge, 2014. 1-19.

Class 3: The European Union: The Idea and History of European Integration

- Berend, Ivan T. "Beginning of the European Integration and Enlargement." *The History of European Integration: A New Perspective*. Routledge, 2016. 63-82.
- De Vries, Catherine E. "Public Policy and the Future of European Integration." *Euroscepticism and the Future of European Integration*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Krotz, Ullrich, et al. "Debating the Sources and Prospects of European Integration." *International Security*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2012. 178-199.

Class 4: The European Union: Politics, Policy, and Governance

- European Parliament. *How the European Union Works*. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/chapter/209/how-the-european-union-works>.
- Van Oudenaren, John. "Institutions and the Constitutional Order." *Crisis and Renewal: An Introduction to the European Union*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2022. 83-121.

Class 5: Technology and Political Decision Making

- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology & Government Digital Service. (2025, January 21). *A blueprint for modern digital government: A long-term vision for digital public services, a six-point plan for reform and the role of the new digital centre of government* (CP 1252). GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-blueprint-for-modern-digital-government/a-blueprint-for-modern-digital-government-html>.
- Department for Science, Innovation and Technology & Government Digital Service. (2025, January 21). *State of digital government review: A review of technology and data in the public sector: Successes, challenges and root causes* (CP 1251). UK Parliament. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-digital-government-review/state-of-digital-government-review>.

- Liu, T.-C. (2021). Digital policy in European countries from the perspective of the Digital Economy and Society Index. *Policy & Internet*, 13(4), 556–573.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.274>.

Class 6: Demographic Changes – or the Graying of Europe and the Future of the Welfare State

- OECD (2024), *Is Care Affordable for Older People?*, OECD Health Policy Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/450ea778-en>.
- Khan, H. T. (2019). Population ageing in a globalized world: Risks and dilemmas? *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 25(5), 754–760.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jep.13071>
- Repetti, M., Phillipson, C., & Calasanti, T. (2018). Retirement migration in Europe: A choice for a better life? *Sociological Research Online*, 23(4), 780–794.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780418782243>

Class 7: Economic Shifts

- Azqueta-Gavaldón, A., Hirschbühl, D., Onorante, L., & Saiz, L. (2023). Sources of economic policy uncertainty in the euro area. *European Economic Review*, 152, 104373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2023.104373>
- Marino, A., & Pariso, P. (2020). Comparing European countries' performances in the transition towards the Circular Economy. *Science of The Total Environment*, 729, 138142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138142>

Class 8: Brexit, Nexit, and the Specter of European Disintegration

- Martill, Benjamin, and Uta Staiger. “Brexit and Beyond.” *Brexit and Beyond: Rethinking the Futures of Europe*. Edited by Benjamin Martill and Uta Staiger. University College London Press, 2018. 1-22; 260-266.
- Ross, Tim, et al. “Geert Wilders is the EU’s Worst Nightmare.” *Politico* November 23, 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/geert-wilders-is-the-eus-worst-nightmare/>.
- Vollaard, Hans. *European Disintegration: A Search for Explanations*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. 119-147.

Class 9: Fortress Europe: European Migration Politics and Policy

- Carr, Matthew. *Fortress Europe: Inside the War Against Immigration*. Hurst & Company, 2015. 11-27; 133-157; 245-261.
- Jünemann, Annette, Nicolas Fromm, and Nikolas Scherer. “The Kaleidoscope of Migration: Theoretical Perspectives and Conceptual Considerations.” *Fortress Europe? Challenges and Failures of Migration and Asylum Policies*. Edited by Annette, Nicolas Fromm, and Nikolas Scherer. Springer, 2017. 1-11.

- Völkel, Claudius Jan. “Fatal Ambiguities in Europe’s Securitized Migration Policy.” *Fortress Europe? Challenges and Failures of Migration and Asylum Policies*. Edited by Annette, Nicolas Fromm, and Nikolas Scherer. Springer, 2017. 83-105.

Class 10: The Netherlands and/in Europe

- Segers, Mathieu. “European Realities: Defining Europe after the Cold War.” *The Netherlands and European Integration, 1950 to Present*. Amsterdam University Press, 2020. 271-297.
- The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy. “Strengthening the Legitimacy of Dutch EU Policy: Conclusions and Recommendations.” *Rediscovering Europe in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam University Press, 2007. 151-169.

Class 11: Cross-Continental Perspectives on Europe’s Future

- European Commission. (2023). *Strategic foresight report: Sustainability and people’s wellbeing at the heart of Europe’s open strategic autonomy* (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2023%3A270%3AFIN>
- Polyakova, A., & Haddad, B. (2019). Europe alone: What comes after the Transatlantic Alliance. *Foreign Affairs*, 98, 109–120.
- Europe 2040 Scenario Summaries

Class 12: Group Simulations + end-of-course reflections