ICIR 228 Europe and the West in the Contemporary World

Course Description & Aims
The course explores the following topics--current situation in Europe; economic developments and trend; the growth and strength of the EU; relations between Eastern and Western Europe; ethnicity, separatism and conflict in Western Europe and the Balkans; Cyprus and the relationship between Greece and Turkey; immigration; and Brexit. Students will understand; analyze; assess the contemporary situation and issues in Europe. Students will understand the current situation in Europe. They will have knowledge of economic developments and the growth and strength of the European Union (EU). They will also understand the relationship between Eastern and Western Europe; ethnicity and separatism in Western Europe and the Balkans; Cyprus and the relationship between Greece and Turkey; immigration; the Syrian refugee crisis; and the challenge of Brexit.

The current situation in Europe; economic developments and trend; the growth and strength of the EU; relations between Eastern and Western Europe; ethnicity, separatism and conflict in Western Europe and the Balkans; Cyprus and the relationship between Greece and Turkey; immigration; Brexit. Students will understand; analyze; assess the contemporary situation and issues in Europe.

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Assessment

| Participation | 10% |
| Midterm Exam  | 30% |
| Group Presentation | 20% |
| Final Exam    | 40% |

Course Learning Outcomes
At the completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Understand the historical developments of the ‘West’ since World War II
2. Analyse contemporary issues in the dynamic relationship between countries and cultures described as "the West" and the "non-West."
3. Analyse the relationships between individual states and the European continent with the outside world
4. Evaluate the failures and challenges in the process of European integration
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**Assessment Methods & Criteria**

1. **Participation 10%**
Students are expected to actively and regularly participate during lectures, peer presentation, class discussion exercises, and group work which are distributed throughout the trimester. Punctuality, attendance, attentiveness, contribution and behavior will be taken into consideration. It is important to keep up with the course materials in order to be able do so. Relevant readings will be made available to students electronically or in print.

2. **Group Presentation 20%**
Students will be provided a variety of contemporary topics to select in week 2. They will research, read, synthesize and present in class. Presentations will be in powerpoint format and address issues to be assigned. Critical thinking ability, content, and delivery are important assessment criteria. The presentation shall last no more than 15 minutes, following by Q&A where the presenting group encourages discussion and participation from their listening audience. The presentations of reading materials must (a) briefly summarize the main arguments of the presented text, (b) point out problematic or questionable sections of the reading, (c) provide updated content as necessary, and (d) provide 2-3 questions for further in-class discussion in relation to the presented materials. Although it is a group presentation, students will be graded individually.

3. **Midterm examination: 30%**
Students will revise and discuss on contemporary IR events. The examination will comprise essay answer questions which will require students to draw on lectures, course readings and short personal research to answer questions. Students will write a structured argumentative essay with relevant reference to topics, issues and associated theoretical frameworks that have been discussed in class. Answers can be concise, but must be precise and attend to all aspects of the question (read the questions carefully!). Midterm examination will take place in week 7.

4. **Take-home Essay: 40%**
At the end of term, students are required to write a final essay paper on an assigned topic. A list of available essay topics will be distributed after the midterm exam. Essays need to be clearly structured and argumentative and make substantial reference to concepts and theories introduced in the duration of this course. In particular, the final essay paper must include the following aspects: (a) a brief introduction of the chosen topic, including a more descriptive section regarding background and context, (b) an analysis and discussion section with relevant references to concepts, theories and debates introduced in class, and (c) a conclusion demonstrating the ability to critically reflect and assess relevant aspects of the chosen essay topic. The essay shall not exceed 1,500 words and will be due in week 13.
Introduction--The Contemporary Situation in Europe

**Topic description:** The World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Europe published a short report: Europe: What to watch out for in 2016-2017. It is noted that the EU seems to be moving from one emergency to the next, and that Europeans have taken their eyes off more profound long-term challenges. How the European Union copes with its immediate problems in the next couple of years will determine how the continent will fare in the decades to come. This week the class will explore challenges concerning the European economy, digitalization, migration, geopolitical threats and the risk of Brexit.

It examines how the political and social volatility in Europe impacts the United States and the rest of the world. The dream of a United States of Europe is unraveling in the wake of several crises now afflicting the continent. The single Euro currency threatens to break apart amid bitter arguments between rich northern creditors and poor southern debtors. Russia is back as an aggressive power, annexing Crimea, supporting rebels in eastern Ukraine, and waging media and cyber warfare against the West. Marine Le Pen’s National Front won a record 34 percent of the French presidential vote despite the election of Emmanuel Macron. Europe struggles to cope with nearly two million refugees who fled conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa. Britain has voted to leave the European Union after forty-three years, the first time a member state has opted to quit the world’s leading commercial bloc. At the same time, President Trump has vowed to pursue America First policies that may curtail U.S. security guarantees and provoke trade conflicts with its allies abroad.

These developments and a growing backlash against globalization have contributed to a loss of faith in mainstream ruling parties throughout the West. Voters in the United States and Europe are abandoning traditional ways of governing in favor of authoritarian, populist, and nationalist alternatives, raising a profound threat to the future of our democracies.

**Expected Learning Outcome:** Students will understand the contemporary situation in Europe, existing problems, how the EU has handled these problems and what effects these have on the world.

**Readings and Activities:**

**Core readings:**

**Supplementary reading:**

**Activities:** Students will discuss with their peers and take turn to feed back with the lecturer their answer and opinion to the assigned questions.

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**The Establishment of the EU: Peace and Economic Developments. The Founding Treaties**

**Topic description:** The EU represents one in a series of efforts to integrate Europe since World War II. At the end of the war, several western European countries sought closer economic, social, and political ties to achieve economic growth and military security and to promote a lasting reconciliation between France and Germany. To this end, in 1951 the leaders of six countries—Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany—signed the Treaty of Paris, thereby, when it took effect in 1952, founding the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). (The United Kingdom had been invited to join the ECSC and in 1955 sent a representative to observe discussions about its ongoing development, but the Labour government of Clement Attlee declined membership, owing perhaps to a variety of factors, including the illness of key ministers, a desire to maintain economic independence, and
a failure to grasp the community’s impending significance.) The ECSC created a free-trade area for several key economic and military resources: coal, coke, steel, scrap, and iron ore. To manage the ECSC, the treaty established several supranational institutions: a High Authority to administrate, a Council of Ministers to legislate, a Common Assembly to formulate policy, and a Court of Justice to interpret the treaty and to resolve related disputes. A series of further international treaties and treaty revisions based largely on this model led eventually to the creation of the EU.

**Expected Learning Outcome:** The student will be able to understand the process of European integration and its challenges. They will also be able to evaluate its success and failures.

**Readings and Activities:**

**Core readings:**

**Supplementary readings:**

**Activities:** Students will participate in brainstorming exercise and class discussion to answer a list of review questions. These questions are designed to help students understand this week’s concepts and express their understanding in their own words. Students’ contribution will be counted toward their overall participation credits.

**EU Institutions: European Council, Council of Ministers, Commission, European Parliament, Court of Justice, European Central Bank**

**Topic description:** The class examines how the EU institutions are appointed, how they function, their respective powers, how they interact with each other and with the national political institution and civil society actors. The class will explore the main institutions and policy processes at European level under an interdisciplinary perspective. The institutional/legal approach contributes in outlining the main remits of EU institutions and their role in EU decision-making. The week aims at explaining the functioning of the EU political system.

**Expected Learning Outcome:** The student will be able to understand, analyze and assess the developments, actors, institutions and challenges of policy-making, and European integration. They will be able to acquire an understanding of the EU institutions, decision-making, and policies.

**Readings and Activities:**

**Core readings:**

**Supplementary readings**
Activities: Students will participate in class discussion to answer a list of review questions designed to help students understand this week’s concepts. Students’ contribution will be counted toward their overall participation credits.

**EU Competences—Single Market and Competition Policy**

**Topic description:** The class explores areas of competence of the EU and its criticisms such as the single market, the EU Competition Policy and the single currency.

**Expected Learning Outcome:** The student will be able to critically view and analyse various aspects of contemporary issues in Europe including political, social and economic issues. They will be able to understand and assess the success and drawbacks of European integration.

**Readings and Activities:**

**Core readings:**

**Supplementary readings:**

**Activities:** Students will participate in class discussion to answer a list of review questions designed to help students understand this week’s concepts. Students’ contribution will be counted toward their overall participation credits.

**Supranational Institutions**

**Topic description:** The European superstate, the European federation and Federal Europe are names used to refer to several similar hypothetical scenarios of the unification of Europe as a single sovereign federation of states, similar to the United States of America. At present, while the European Union (EU) is not officially a federation, various academic observers regard it as having the characteristics of a federal system. This week, the course will examine the EU institutions which have supranational power and others which do not, what competences the EU supranational institutions create as well as what challenges lie ahead. The supranational institutions which are designed to bring Europe closer together are also driving Europe apart.

**Expected Learning Outcome:** The student will be able to review the failures and challenges in the process of European integration. They will also be able to assess the relationships between individual states and the European continent with the outside world as a result of European institutional design.
Readings and Activities:
Core readings:

Supplementary readings:

Activities: Students will discuss in group the controversial topics assigned in class and take turn to feed back to other groups.

The Eurozone Crisis

**Topic description:** This week examines the causes and consequences of the Eurozone crisis, how this affects the relations between the European Union, the Eurozone and other states. It explores the EU’s responses to the crisis and evaluates the effectiveness of its actions.

**Expected Learning Outcome:** The student will be able to understand the economic and financial crises affecting European states and the European integration process. They will recognize key debates about the Eurozone crisis in Europe. The will be able to apprehend the specific causes and effects of the Eurozone crisis on national political and social systems in Europe. They will be able to comprehend the way in which the international, regional and domestic implications of the crisis impact upon each other. They will be able to draw lessons for the future from the recent economic crisis in the EU.

Readings and Activities:
Core readings:
Supplementary readings:

Activities: Students will discuss in group the controversial topics assigned in class and take turn to feed back to other groups.

The UK and the Union. The Implications of Brexit

Topic description: On 23rd June 2016, 51.9% of British and Commonwealth citizens who voted in the European Union referendum voted for Britain to leave the EU. Despite a cacophony of voices attempting to pin down the exact demographic profile of the ‘leave’ voters, there is no consensus over who voted leave or their key reasons. This week, the class will explore a number of factors leading to Brexit and what would be the implications of Brexit on the UK, the EU and the world as a whole.

Expected Learning Outcome: The student will be able to comprehend the ongoing rocky relationship between the UK and the Union, leading to Brexit. They will be able to evaluate what are the socio-politico-economic implications of Brexit, as well as the future relationship among European countries and between Europe and the world.

Readings and Activities:
Core readings:

Supplementary readings:
- Bergsten, A. (2012), ‘Why the Euro Will Survive: Completing the Continent’s Half-Built House’ (Comment) Foreign Affairs, September/October. (c. 6pp)
Activities: Students will discuss in group the controversial topics assigned in class and take turn to feed back to other groups.

The EU in International Affairs

Topic description: This week the class will analyse the EU’s international role, as mediated by its own Member States, in international institutions and in its strategic bilateral and regional partnerships. It examines evolving EU internal policies that have external implications and the ways in which these are both driven by, and feed back into, international developments.

Expected Learning Outcome: The student will be able to analyse the EU’s role in international institutions and in its strategic bilateral and regional partnerships.

Readings and Activities:
Core readings:

Supplementary readings:

Activities: Students will participate in class discussion to answer a list of review questions designed to help students understand this week’s concepts. Students’ contribution will be counted toward their overall participation credits.

Globalism and Nationalism

Topic description: For much of the 20th century, ideological discussions and debates have centered on liberal versus conservative, left versus right. It is argued that this is now over. Instead, the ideological divide of the 21st century is emerging as globalism versus nationalism. Since the end of World War II, global integration and technological progress have fueled a new world order centered on free trade, open borders and interdependent economies. Goods, capital and people should be able to move freely across borders, which is actually the meaning of globalization. Globalism is a mindset that globalization is natural and good, that global governance should expand as national sovereignty contracts. The new
nationalist surge has startled and shocked the advocates of globalism. This new nationalism is the vital center of Brexit and the election of Donald Trump.

**Expected Learning Outcome:** The student will be able to compare and contrast the ideological struggle between globalism and nationalism. They will be able to explain what causes these and evaluate the impacts that globalism and nationalism have on European countries. They will assess how well different European countries are coping with these new challenges of the changing political identity.

**Readings and Activities:**

**Core readings:**

**Supplementary readings:**

**Activities:** Students will participate in class discussion to answer a list of review questions designed to help students understand this week’s concepts. Students’ contribution will be counted toward their overall participation credits.

**Ethnicity and Separatism in Europe: The Yugoslav Crisis and the Catalan Issue**

**Topic description:** The breakup of Yugoslavia occurred as a result of a series of political upheavals and conflicts during the early 1990s. After a period of political crisis in the 1980s, constituent republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia split apart, but the unsolved issues caused bitter inter-ethnic Yugoslav wars. The 2017–18 Spanish constitutional crisis, also known as the Catalan crisis, is an ongoing political conflict between the Government of Spain and the Generalitat de Catalunya over the issue of Catalan independence. It started after the law intending to allow the 2017 Catalan independence referendum was denounced by the Spanish. Some international media outlets have described the events as "one of the worst political crises in modern Spanish history". This week we will explore these two ongoing crises in Europe.

**Expected Learning Outcome:** The student will be able to understand the historical developments of the ‘West’ since World War II. They will be able to assess the failures and challenges of how countries in Europe deal with such problems.

**Readings and Activities:**

**Core readings:**

**Supplementary readings:**
Activity: Students will discuss in group the controversial topics assigned in class and take turn to feed back to other groups.

Immigration Crisis

Topic description: The EU and its member states continue efforts to prevent arrivals and outsource responsibility for migration control to countries outside the EU. In Libya the EU is pursuing a containment strategy in cooperation with their authorities, despite overwhelming evidence of pervasive abuse against asylum seekers and other migrants arbitrarily detained in Libya. Just over 172,300 people reached Europe by sea in 2017, less than half those in 2016. The Mediterranean crossing remained deadly, with 3,139 dead or missing in 2017. Nongovernmental organizations performed roughly 40 percent of rescues in the central Mediterranean in the first half of 2017, but several groups suspended activities due to security concerns and increased interceptions, sometimes reckless and accompanied by abuse, by Libyan coast guard forces.

Expected Learning Outcome: The student will be able to comprehend the roots of immigration crisis Europe has been facing. They will assess how different European countries and the EU deal with this problem.

Readings and Activities:
Core readings:

Supplementary readings:

Activities: Students will discuss in group the controversial topics assigned in class and take turn to feed back to other groups.

Russia’s Global Ambitions

Topic description: This week explores the historical roots of Russian foreign and security policy, contemporary developments, and unique challenges Russia poses in the post-Soviet space, Asia and the Middle East.

Expected Learning Outcome: The student will be able to discuss contemporary issues in the dynamic relationship between countries and cultures described as “the West” and the “non-West”. They will be able to assess the historical and contemporary relationships between individual states, the European continent, Russia and the outside world.

Readings and Activities:
Core readings:

Supplementary readings:
Activities: Students will research, read, synthesize and present the assigned topics in class. Presentations will be in powerpoint format and address issues to be assigned. Critical thinking ability, content, and delivery are important assessment criteria. The presentation shall last no more than 15 minutes, following by Q&A where the presenting group encourages discussion and participation from their listening audience. The presentations of reading materials must (a) briefly summarize the main arguments of the presented text, (b) point out problematic or questionable sections of the reading, (c) provide updated content as necessary, and (d) provide 2-3 questions for further in-class discussion in relation to the presented materials. Although it is a group presentation, students will be graded individually.

The audience should be attentive to the presented content which will allow them to participate in the Q&A. Students’ contribution in the Q&A will be awarded participation credits according to the quality of their answer and discussion.