The creation and development of the European Union is one of the most fascinating political events of the post World War II period. It represents a unique opportunity to study the evolution of a political system without having to rely solely on historical documents. In the past half-century the EU has grown from a set of weak/poorly defined institutions with a limited policy domain and an emphasis on national sovereignty into an extensive political system with increasingly strong supranational actors influencing all aspects of political and economic life. What began in 1951 as an experiment in cooperation in the coal and steel sectors among six nations has grown to be a formal political and economic union between 27 nations. The goal of this course will be to examine this transformation both theoretically and historically. This course seeks to explicate and understand the European Union in its dual aspects: as a process of international or regional integration, tying existing nation-states such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom into an “ever-closer Union of peoples”; and as a polity or political system with its own institutions, policies, and policy processes. As we shall see, the study of the European Union increasingly blurs the boundaries between international relations (concerned with the relations among states) and comparative politics (concerned with the workings of domestic political systems), and we will draw from both fields in our effort to make sense of the EU and its workings.

This is an upper level course in political science. The course is designed to introduce students to the various theoretical approaches to the study of the European Union. I assume some familiarity with the political institutions and history of both Western and Eastern Europe, though pertinent information will be reviewed and background data provided throughout the semester. The course will familiarize students with the EU, its political history, core institutions, and public policies. The course is arranged in four parts. In the first part, we explore both the political history of European integration in the post-war era, and the various theories put forward by political scientists to explain and understand the process of European integration. Next, in part two, we turn from European integration as a process to the workings of the EU as a political system, including its core institutions and its legislative, executive and judicial politics. In part three, we turn for several weeks to look at the substance of EU policies, including the core project of completing a European internal market, the single currency, the incomplete development of a “social Europe,” and the Union’s ambition to play a more important role alongside the member states in Justice and Home Affairs. Finally, we conclude in part four with an analysis of the key challenges facing the EU in the coming years, including the challenges of enlargement, the “Europeanization” of domestic politics, the negotiation and later rejection of a new “Constitution” for Europe, and EU relations with the United States and the rest of the world. It is oriented toward upper division students who have already taken POLS 3321 (Comparative Politics) and/or POLS 3331 (International Relations) or their equivalents. This course will also be one of the two new “capstone” courses for students wishing to take an (proposed) EU Studies Minor.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

The objectives of the course are, content-wise, three-fold. Firstly, students will gain a basic understanding of the operation of the institutions of the European Union. They will be able to answer questions similar to the following: “How and why does the Commission operate as both the initiator and implementer of legislation?” They will also understand the basic political relationships between individuals, member states, and the institutions of the EU. As such, they will be able to answer questions about why the “Empty Chair” crisis was so important for member states in the 1960s and how institutional changes like qualified majority voting have made member state less powerful. Students will also learn about the EU’s policymaking process as well as the policies that result. Consequently, they will be able to understand why EU environmental policies, as a whole, are much higher in some countries than others, and why the EU and the US have different approaches to solving environmental problems.

The above content-objectives will be assessed through in class activities, either student writing and or oral presentations. Larger goals will combine in-class and out-of-class work. The goals of the course, as far as student practices and learning are concerned, are as follows. Students will gain an understanding of the major theoretical contributions to the study of the EU. They will be able to generate ideas and insights and rephrase major issues related to these theoretical approaches, enhancing their analyzing skills. They will apply these concepts and ideas through their writing and research. Here they will connect theoretical ideas to empirical evidence in an effort to create a working thesis. Their paper will support this thesis through careful data collection, which will allow them to weigh different perspectives and create a reasoned argument. Students will develop their
writing, researching, argumentation and critical thinking skills.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Recall factual/conceptual knowledge related to EU politics
- Compare and contrast various theoretical approaches related to EU politics
- Analyze primary and secondary sources for key concepts related to EU politics

COURSE FORMAT

Class lectures and discussions are based on a presumed familiarity with the texts; therefore, it is required that reading be done beforehand. The class will split between lectures and discussion. At certain points in the semester we will form teams of discussion leaders who will be responsible for preparing discussion on a week’s readings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be two exams over the course of the semester. Each exam will be worth 100 points, for a total of 200 points. These exams are designed to give you feedback on your performance. The exams will have both objective and essay sections. A formal solo or group presentation over one a member state will count for 75 points. Additionally, your six slide powerpoint presentation will account for another 75 points. This presentation will present an overview of your member state’s political background and policy stances toward the EU. There will also be 50 points for a map quiz. The written presentation of your powerpoint will be worth 100 points. Finally, there will be discussion topics where you are engaging with your classmates and professor regarding issues and obstacles related to the Institutions of the EU and the member states that will be worth 100 points.

As you can see, how a student prepares him/herself for class will be important, as well as the performance in class. Good class participation means coming to class having read the texts, presenting ideas, raising questions, and participating in class discussion in an informed way.

To recap:

50 points for map quiz
200 points for exams (2 exams at 100 points each)
100 points for written summary of presentation
    (powerpoint to be posted on web)
75 points for EP party presentation
    (uploaded on Blackboard)
75 points for EP Institution Paper
100 points for Online Discussions

600 total points

Grading will be done on a conventional 90%-80%-70%-60% scale

ATTENDANCE AND MAKE UP EXAMS

Make up exams will be given concurrently with the final. If you miss an exam you will make it up on the day of the final exam (which you must also take). Late assignments will not be accepted. I strongly recommend that you notify me in advance if you know you must miss a particular class. Please keep in mind that missed classes also detrimentally impact on your class participation. Studies show that classroom attendance and class performance are positively correlated. I
strongly urge you to work together in preparing for class, exams, and the paper. Working with others in an organized manner is a good way to discover new study strategies and a way to share information. Both of these can enhance performance. All written work, however, must be your own. Plagiarism is literally stealing someone else's work, whether that person is a fellow student or another scholar. Plagiarism is serious and will result in failure of the work in question.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.
If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Representative Government in Modern Europe, Fifth Edition
Available from both Amazon and as a Custom Edition through the TAMUCC Bookstore.
Course Schedule

Introductions, “What is the EU?”
June 1: Chapter 1, “Historical Look at the EU”
June 3: Chapter 2, “The Executive of the EU vs the Executive of the US”
June 8: Chapter 3, “Parliaments”
June 11: Chapter 4, “Constitutions, Judges and Politics”

June 15: First Exam

June 16: Chapter 5, “The EU and Representative Government vs “the US and Representative Govt”
June 22: Chapter 6, “Central, Regional and Local Governance in the EU”
June 24: Chapter 7, “Patterns in Party Politics and Party Systems”
June 29: Chapter 8, “Party Families?”

July 2: Second Exam

**Dates Subject to Change**