

COURSE OUTLINE

BRITISH AND EUROPEAN POLITICS, 1945 – PRESENT DAY

This course focuses on British politics in all its complexity as well as on Europe's history, past and contemporary, how this affects the policies of its nation states and the organisation of its decision-making institutions. Understanding Europe's politics means its elections, its international and domestic outlooks and the place of European countries in a wider world context. The countries that receive the most attention may well vary from topic to topic, although there will be room for comparison across states. This course also explores the European Union by examining its history, institutions, politics, wider global context and future. Students will be expected to keep up with latest developments in British and European Politics by regular reading of newspapers, magazines and current affairs journals.

1 Britain 1945-1951

Building the new welfare state; Britain's role in international affairs

2 Europe In 1945

The aftermath of WW2: post-war reconstruction and hopes for recovery. The Cold War context

3 The Road To Rome

The ideas behind the steps towards European 'unity'; the Treaty of Rome (1958) and the Common Market; formation of the European Economic Community.

4 Britain 1951-64

The Conservative revival, Butskellism and apparent consensus; the 'wind of change'; Britain's search for a world role (Suez) and position in relation to the E.E.C.

5 France Since 1945

Post war instability, the return of De Gaulle, France's attitude to the EEC and NATO. The Presidencies of Mitterrand and Chirac.

6 West Germany 1945-90

Post-war recovery and democratisation. The Cold War and Germany. The Adenauer years. Franco-German relations. Ostpolitik and Willy Brandt. The legacy of Helmut Kohl and reunification.

7 Britain 1964-79

Wilson and Heath. Britain's entry into the EU. The oil crisis of 1973 and how it affected domestic politics; the 'winter of discontent' and concept of turning points.

8 Britain 1979-97

The elections of Margaret Thatcher and her political impact. Britain and the EEC/EU. The end of the Cold War. The 1990-97 Major governments and their policies towards the E.U.

9 Britain 1997-Present Day

Tony Blair and the 'New' Labour project. Is Blairism 'Thatcher-lite' or a genuine 'Third Way'?

10 U.S. – EUROPEAN RELATIONS 1945 To The Present Day.

The impact of Russia/USSR.

11 Whither Europe ?

The EU of today. The consequences of enlargement to twenty-five members in 2004. The new European constitution and its controversy. The Euro and its significance. What is the EU for?

12 Europe, The Balkans And The Wider World

Central Europe, the Balkan wars; Turkey. Where sits Europe in the wider world? Is it a 'fortress'? Is it in decline?

Objectives

- To gain knowledge and understanding of contemporary political issues through the study of important events from the last sixty years.
- To enable the student to develop a critical and constructive approach to understanding political issues, and to engage in debates in a rigorous and rational way.
- To foster increased skills in comprehension, interpretation, analysis and evaluation with which to formulate independent opinions supported by viable justification.

Outcomes

- To demonstrate, orally and in written form, knowledge of a range of issues arising in the themes selected for study.
- To show knowledge and understanding of some important positions developed within debates on these themes, and the arguments employed.
- To have acquired knowledge of the major developments in British and European politics in the period.

Assessment Process

Students typically complete 2 essays per term in addition to regular class work and independent reading preparation. The essay marks, combined with an assessment of student performance in class, make up the final grade for the course.

Assessment breakdown:

- 60% essays
- 30% class work
- 10% class participation and attendance

Example Homework Essays

1. 'The mainstream left-wing parties in Europe have sacrificed their principles for power'. How far do you agree with this assessment, please give examples.
2. Was Tony Blair 'son of Thatcher'?
3. The introduction of the Euro has so far only weakened Europe – not strengthened it. Do you agree?
4. Why have EU – US relations deteriorated in recent years?
5. How did the fall of the Berlin Wall affect European politics?
6. Which of the European countries we have studied do you think has been the most successful since WW2 and why?
7. "The moves towards increased European integration make the eventual formation of a United States of Europe inevitable." Do you agree?
8. Why has Britain been such a reluctant European?

Assessment Criteria

DISTINCTION Grade A	Student clearly demonstrates an ability to analyse, interpret and critically evaluate the issues, and presents relevant evidence supporting his/her own judgements with reasoned and considered argument. The student shows imagination and insight in his/her responses to issues raised in debate.
CREDIT Grade B	Student demonstrates an ability to both analyse and evaluate relevant material and to form judgements with supporting justification.
MERIT Grade C	Student demonstrates a somewhat limited appreciation of the key issues, with supporting material not always well selected, but some relevant material is present. Evaluation is shown but tends to be lacking in depth.
PASS Grade D	Student displays an ability to analyse and interpret a limited range of relevant material. Reasoned criticism will tend to be replaced by the assertion of positions. Problems may be treated as one-dimensional.
FAIL	None of the criteria listed above was evident

Recommended Reading

BOOKS:

- Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order – Robert Kagan,
Publisher: Atlantic Books *ISBN: 9781843541783*
- The New Cold War – Edward Lucas, Publisher: Bloomsbury *ISBN: 9780747596363*
- The Balkans in World History – Andrew Wachtel, Publisher: Oxford University Press
ISBN: 9780195158496
- Europe since 1945 – Wegs, Ladrech, Publisher: Macmillan. *ISBN: 9781403917904*
- Europe and German Re-unification – Fritsch, Bournazel, Publisher: Berg.
ISBN: 9780854966844
- Politics in Europe: An Introduction to the Politics of the United Kingdom, France, Germany,
Russia, Italy, Sweden and the European Union – Hancock et al, Publisher: CQ Press.
ISBN: 9781933116457
- France since the Second World War - Tyler Stovall. Publisher: Pearson
ISBN: 9780582368828
- French Politics Today – David Bell, Publisher: Manchester University Press
ISBN: 9780719058769
- A History of Germany 1815-1990 – William Carr, Publisher: Edward Arnold
ISBN: 9780340559307
- Britain and Europe since 1945 - Alex May, Publisher: Pearson.
ISBN: 9780582307780
- Britain in the European Union Today, Pilkington and Watts, Publisher: Manchester University
Press *ISBN: 9780719071799*
- British Politics – Dennis Kavanagh et al, Publisher: Oxford University Press.
ISBN: 9780199269792
- The Government and Politics of the European Union – Neill Nugent, Publisher: Palgrave
Macmillan. *ISBN: 9780230000025*

NEWSPAPERS:

The Guardian (left-centre), The Independent (centre, pro-EU), The Daily Telegraph (right,
Euro-sceptic), The Times (right-centre), The First Post (internet newspaper)

MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS:

New Statesman (left), The Spectator (right), Prospect, (centre), The Economist (more or less
centre).

TELEVISION AND RADIO:

Channel 4 News (every weekday 7 pm); BBC1 News (every weekday 10 pm); ITV News
(every weekday 10 pm).

BBC World Service (radio) has regular programmes on European politics; often also BBC
Radio 4.

If you are unable to obtain books locally, they can be ordered from

<http://www.bookshop.blackwell.co.uk> or www.Amazon.co.uk