

McGill University

Political Science 357

Contemporary Politics of Western Europe

Prof. Filippo Sabetti

Fall 2023 T.& Th 4pm.

Office Hours:immediately after each class

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The course is designed to help students gain an understanding of contemporary political issues and developments in West(ern) Europe, without falling into the trap of either “instant analysis” or broad generalizations, dear to journalists and media commentators. The people of Western Europe have offered much (good and bad) to the world and to the language, practice and study of politics --ie state, sovereignty, citizenship, territory, diplomacy, totalitarianism, human tragedies like the Holocaust, terrorism, the rule of law, anarchy, liberal democracy, socialism, capitalism, enlightenment, empire, colonialism, and the long-term, if tumultuous, movement of replacing class, ethnic nationality and protectionism with more inclusive and complex visions of a common humanity and what is becoming known as “a good Anthropocene.” But in spite of all these transformations, “the State” understood as a unitary conception of government remains? Why? And with what consequences for public life, the prospects of self-rule and the potential for good anthropocene? The course will try to answer these questions.

The post-1945 period ushered in the cold war but also a new era of peace and political economy, including the so-called German and Italian miracles. Of the six largest economies, four of them are in Western Europe. Still, the Faustian bargains that created the post-war ways of doing politics are now being challenged internally (through various efforts of regional and local movements aimed at decentering the state and challenging party and central monopoly) and externally and transnationally (through waves of often forced migration, the nascent European Union and monetary crises). The course will unpack some of these Faustian bargains and challenges.

A core question underlying the entire course is: how can fallible individuals achieve and sustain self-governing entities and self-governing ways of life and a more sustainable future (good Anthropocene)? For this reason, the course will seek to focus on three sets of questions: why European societies are so state-permeated societies? What kind of democracy can take place in such conditions? And, given such institutional contexts, what can people do to jointly affect the rules that structure their lives for a more sustainable future? These are particularly challenging questions that go beyond the European case and to the world of global politics where global concerns about democracy and human welfare have moved onto the political agenda of most international and national governing bodies.

I am excited about the study of European politics. And I hope you are excited too. I would encourage to discuss with me any questions or interests you may have in the region, in class,

during office hours and beyond. May I remind you that Western Europe is well covered in *The New York Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Le Monde*, *the London Review of Books*, *The Financial Times*, and *The Economist*. There are also specific associations known as conference groups on German, French, British and Italian Politics, and the European Community. Check them out. From time to time, *The Economist* publishes useful profiles of these countries and the European Union. There are three states on the Italian peninsula (San Marino, the Holy See or the Vatican with its world-wide representation, and the Republic of Italy) but the focus here is on the latter one in relation to the other major West European countries and the European Union.

Required Reading Materials:

The following texts will be available, for your convenience to purchase, from the McGill University Bookstore:

- David B. Audretsch, and Erik E. Lehmann. 2016. *The Seven Secrets of Germany. Economic Resilience in an Era of Global Turbulence*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
 - Sheri Berman. 2019. *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe. From the Ancien Regime to the Present Day*. New York: Oxford UP. 9780199373192.
 - E. F. Schumacher. 1973 *Small is Beautiful. A study of economics as if people mattered*. Vintage Classics 978 0 099 22561 4.
 - Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State. How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 0 300 07815 3.
 - Scott, Joan Wallach. 2007. *The Politics of the Veil*. Princeton: Princeton UP 9780 691 14798 7
- Steinberg, Jonathan. 2023. *Why Switzerland? 3rd edition*. Oxford UP.

The other readings will be available in the E-pack provided by the Library. Individual readings will also be available separately in electronic form from the McLennan Library.

Course Obligations & Assignments

Conference grade	10%
Midterm in class exam	20%
Term paper	30%
Final Exam	40% Take home, during exam period

*Conference Participation. Please register for a conference time on Minerva as soon as possible. Conferences will begin during Week 3 and attendance is mandatory. Please complete the readings for the week before coming to conference. Your conference grade is based on the regularity and quality of your participation in group discussions. You should be prepared to discuss the authors' main arguments, make comparisons, raise critiques, and ask questions. You may miss one conference without penalty, explanation, or make up. The weekly questions to be discussed in the conference will be from the readings.

*The midterm exam is set for October 24 and is scheduled to cover topic 1 to 4 inclusive. The midterm one-hour-and-20-minutes exam will consist of two parts: one part you will be asked to identify, describe and explain 5 items out of 8; the other part you are asked to choose one essay topic out of 3 three.

*The short paper can take : 1) the form of a review of one of the required texts; OR 2) answer the question of what can we learn from one the following phenomena: the Yellow

Vest Movement in France; the Saucepan uprising (also in France); or the Emilian political economy OR a paper topic of your own choice. The short paper should not exceed 800 words to be posted under assignment in *Mycourses*. Paper is due November 14. More on this in class.

*the final exam will be released on *Mycourses* during exam week and you will have 72 hours to complete it. It will consist of three parts, with choices for each part, with strict word limits for each (for a total of 1500 words). More on the format of the exams will be communicated during the term.

Language submission: In accordance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or French written work that is to be graded. In other words, work, including exams, can be submitted in either English or French.

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for more information in English and French).

Please note: The instructor reserves the right to change some reading requirements due to particular circumstances.

TOPICAL OUTLINE WITH ASSIGNED READINGS

Where to begin? Two starting points:

Topic 1. The value of frameworks, theories, and models (1 weeks)

- Malcom Gladwell. 2013. "The Roseto Mystery." In his *Outliers. The story of success*. New York: Back Bay Books, 3-11.
- Elinor Ostrom 2005. *Understanding Institutional Diversity*. Princeton: Princeton UP, chap. 1, 3-31.

Topic 2. When pluralism, diversity and the potential of an open world were realistic possibilities (1 week)

Jonathan Steinberg. 2023. *Why Switzerland?* 3rd ed. New York: Cambridge UP. May I suggest you start the reading with the chapter "why Switzerland matters".

Filippo Sabetti 2023. "Landscape of Cognitive Options and Possibilities: Seeing like a State or Seeing like a Polycentric Republic." Will post the (short) paper.

Optional:

Edward Wilson-Lee 2023. *A History of Water*. London: William Collins. The title of this book is a bit confusing but the book content is not! For our purpose, focus on the experience of Damiao de Gois, the Portuguese royal architect and explorer esp. pp. 1-8 and 254-257.

Ayesha Ramachandran 2015. "Introduction: Worldmaking and the project of modernity." In her *The Worldmakers. Global Imagining in Early Modern Europe*. Chicago: Uof Chicago Press, 1-21.

Why the Turn to Centralized Government and not topic 2?

Topic 3. Seeing like a State: Centralization, Uniformity and the Progress of Equality (1 week)

Alexis de Tocqueville [1856] 1983). *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*. New York: Anchor book. Read esp. Forward, vi-xv, chaps. 1, 1-4, part 3, chaps 1, 5, 138-147; 180-188. And the appendix on Languedoc, 212-221.

James C. Scott (1998). *Seeing like a State. How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, chaps 1 and 2: 11-85.

Topic 4. Europe Between Democracy and Dictatorship (2 weeks)

Daniel Ziblatt. 2006. "How did Europe Democratize?" *World Politics* 58 (January): 311-38.

Sheri Berman. 2019. *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Thomas Ferenczi 2004. "The Republic: A French Myth." In *The Shifting Foundations of Modern Nation-States. Realignments of Belonging*. Ed. By F. Unger. Toronto: U. of Toronto Press 100-108. Short but powerful, please read it with care.

For general background:

- Valerie Bunce. 2000. The Historical Origins of the East-West Divide. Civil Society, and Democracy in Europe." Pp. 209-236. In Nancy Bermeo and P. Nord, eds, *Civil Society Before Democracy. Lessons from 19th Century Europe*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

- Tony Just 2006. *Postwar. A history of Europe since 1945*. New York: Penguin, selected chaps.

- Bagehot, Walter. *The English Constitution*. Oxford UP. Any edition since 1868. Esp on monarch and prime minister. The role of the monarchy is all the more interesting now.

- Constitution of the Republic of Italy:

https://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/istituzione/costituzione_inglese.pdf

- Constitution of the 5th Republic of France: <https://www.elysee.fr/en/french-presidency/constitution-of-4-october-1958>

- Constitution of the German Federal Republic: https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/

MIDTERM in Class EXAM: Oct 24.

Societal Transformations: The End of Class Conflict and the Emergence of New Diversity

Topic 5. Old and New Societal Cleavages: transformations in Representation, the moving center and the populist surge and decline: 1week)

Robert Ford and Will Jennings 2020. "The Changing Cleavage Politics of Western Europe." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23: 295-314.

G. Wheatcroft. 2023. "Bloody Panico." *The New York Review of Books* March 23): 43-45.

Suggested:

Wolfram Kaiser. 2007. "Hegemony by Default. Christian Democracy in postwar Europe." In his *Christian Democracy and the Origins of the European Union*. N.Y.: Cambridge UP, 163-190.

The Economist. 2017. "Regeneration." What is happening to Macron. (September 30). Special Report.

Vincenzo Emanuele 2021. "Lost in Translation? Class Cleavage Roots and Left Electoral Mobilization in Western Europe." *Perspectives on Politics* 1-19.

John Bartle, Sebastian Delle Piane-Avellaneda and James Stimson 2010. "The Moving Centre: Preferences for Government Activity in Britain, 1950-2005." *British Journal of Political Science* 41: 259-285.

Cas Mudde and C. R. Kaltwasser. 2017. *Populism. A Very Short Introduction*. N.Y. Oxford UP.

Tim Bale, et al. 2010. "If you can't beat them, join them? Explaining Social Democratic Responses to the Challenge from the Populist Radical Right in Western Europe." *Political Studies* 58: 410-426.

Nadia Urbinati 2019. "Political Theory of Populism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 111-12.

Topic 6. Changing Meaning of Citizenship, Mass Beliefs, Identity and Forced Migration (2 weeks)

Joan Scott (2007). *The Politics of the Veil*. Princeton: Princeton UP. esp. chap 1 and conclusion, 21-41 and 175-184.

Christian Joppke 2007. "Transformation of Immigrant Integration: Civic Integration and Antidiscrimination in the Netherlands, France and Germany." *World Politics* 59 (1): 243-73.

R. Bank. 2014. "Forced Migration in Europe." In the *Oxford Handbook on Forced Migration Studies* : chap. 53, 690-703.

Suggested:

Shamit Saggat 2016. "British Citizens like any other? Ethnic Minorities and Elections in the United Kingdom." Pp. 63-82. In A. Bilodeau, ed., *Just Ordinary Citizens? Toward a Comparative Portrait of Political Immigrants*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Matthew Gibney. 2004. *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum: Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees*. New York: Cambridge UP, esp. introduction and chap. 8; 1-22 and 228-260

Are States Omnipotent and All Seeing?

Topic 7. State Capacity and Public Administration (politics change but the administration remains): (1 week)

J-C. Thoenig 1978. "State Bureaucracies and Local Government in France." In Fritz W. Scharpf, ed, *Inter-organization Policy Making*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 167-197. Will make available to class, diagrams French administrative organization and evolution of ideological political families in French politics. 1-44.

J. Steinberg 1990. *All or Nothing. The Axis and the Holocaust 1941-43*. New York: Routledge, 168-180, 220-240.

M. Ferrera. 2008. "The European Welfare State. Golden Achievements, Silver Prospects." *European Politics* 31 (1): 82-107.

Julia Lynch. 2023. "The Political Economy of Health. Bringing Political Science In." *Annual Review of Political Science* 26: 18-2-18-22.

Suggested:

Abram de Swaan. 1988. *In care of the state. Health care, education and welfare in Europe and the USA in the modern era*. Oxford: Oxford UP, esp. pp.1-12, 218-257.

Suggested:

- Gosta Esping-Anderson. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- Ido de Haan. 2013. "The Western European Welfare State beyond Christian and Social Democratic Ideology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Post-War European History post 1945*. Ed. By Ann Stone. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1-23.
- Robert Putnam 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton UP, chaps 1 and 4, 3-16, 83-120.
- F. Sabetti 1996. "Path Dependency and Civic Culture." *Politics and Society* 24 (1 March):
- Wai-Hang Yen, S-Y Tang and Carlos Wing-Hung Lo 2016. "Regulatory Compliance when the rule of law is weak: evidence from China's Environmental reform." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* , 95-112.
- Lant Pritchett, M. Woolcock and M. Andrews 2013. "Looking Like a State: Technique of Persistent Failure in State Capability for Implementation." *Journal of Development Studies* 49 (1):1-18.

Topic # 8. Protests and Struggles for Self Rule ((1 week)

- Tocqueville [1856] 1995. *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, Appendix on Languedoc. 212-221.
- Jose A. Serrano Alvarez 2014. "When the enemy is the state: common lands management in northwest Spain (1850-1936)." *International Journal of the Commons* 8 (no. 1, Feb.) 107-133.
- Stefan Kipfer 2019. "What colour is your vest? Reflections on the Yellow Vest Movement in France." *Studies in Political Economy* 100: 209-31.

Suggested:

- John Loughlin et al. 2010. "Introduction: Subnational Democracy in Europe: Changing Backgrounds and Theoretical Models." In their ed. vol. *The Oxford Handbook of Local and Regional Democracy in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1-26.

Passion for Equality

Topic # 9: The Great Transformation and beyond (2 weeks)

- Karl Polanyi.1944. *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of our time*. Boston: Beacon Press, all is worth considering, but esp. chaps 19,20,21.
- David F. Audresch and Erik E. Lehmann. 2017. *The Seven Secrets of Germany: Economic Resilience in an Era of Global Turbulence*. Oxford UP.
- P. Bianchi, et al. 2021. "The political economy of places from a sustainable human development perspective: the case of Emilia Romagna." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 14: 93-116.

Suggested:

- Joshua B. Freeman 2018. *Behemoth. A History of the Factory and the Making of the Modern World*. New York: Norton, esp. chaps 1,4 and 6.
- Elinor Ostrom. 2014. "Beyond Markets and States. Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems." In F.Sabetti and P.Aligica, eds, *Choice, rules and Collective Action*, ECPR Press 167- 209. Originally in *American Economic Review* 100 (June): 641-672. Nobel Prize speech.
- John C. Medaille. 2010. *Toward a Truly Free Market*. Wilmington: ISI books, 191-228.

Elinor Ostrom (1990). *Governing the Commons. The evolution of institutions for collective action*. New York: Cambridge UP, chap. 3, 58-101. Case studies of Spain and Switzerland.

W. Foote Whyte and Katheen King White 2014. *Making Mondragon. The growth and dynamic of the workers cooperative complex*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, intro and conclusion.

Andrew Hindmoor, 1999. "Free Riding Off Capitalism. Entrepreneurship and the Mondragon Experiment." *British Journal of Political Science* 29 (January); 217-224. You should know about Mondragon and somewhat similar cooperatives in Maritime Canada.

Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks. 2003. "Unravelling the Central State, but how? Types of Multilevel Governance." *American Political Science Review* 97: 233-243.

Matthias Schmelzer 2016. *The Hegemony of Growth*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1-33, 313-335.

E.F. Schumacher 1973. *Small is Beautiful*. New York: Vintage Classics.

Suggested:

David Miller. 2020. *Solved. How the world's great cities are fixing the climate crisis*. Toronto: U of Toronto Press.

B. Barber 2013. *If Mayors Ruled the World*. Yale UP, 1-174.

Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks 2019. "Grand Theories of European Integration in the 21st Century." *Journal of European Integration* 26: 113-133.

Topic #10. Tensions : Universalism vs Hierarchy vs Meritocracy? Anarchism the solution? (1 week)

M.Young, 2008 ed. *The Rise of Meritocracy*. Classic all the more coming from a Labour intellectual.

James C. Scott. 2012. *Two Cheers for Anarchism*. Princeton: Princeton UP.

Suggested:

Raymond Aron 1968. Introduction." *Progress and Disillusion. The dialectic of modern society*. New York: Praeger, esp. vii-3.

