**Political Science 432: The Evolution of European Government and Society**

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**Course Description:** This is a study abroad course that features an in-depth focus on European Governmental and Non-Governmental decision-making and organizations, both from a contemporary and historical perspective. A major focus will be on understanding the workings of NATO and the European Union. The course also looks at Europe in the context of trends of globalization, localization and human rights. The course meets in Europe and has a substantial online component. This course is paired with HIST 360 which covers the historical context of European political systems from the Roman Empire through the modern era.

**Course Structure**

This is a study abroad course that features an in-depth focus on Global and European governmental and non-governmental decision-making and organizations, both from a contemporary and historical perspective. The course meets in Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Greece and Spain.

The program will employ hands-on learning in order to give students an experiential understanding of the history of European political thought and political systems. This is not your typical study abroad course where students go to a foreign country and take classes at a host university. It uses a holistic approach that maximizes the international experience.

The holistic experience means students should get an appreciation of not only European economic and political systems, but also gain an understanding of European society and culture, both past and present. To achieve this end, we will not only focus on historical trends of various states, but also compare these with contemporary issues. In addition we will consider changes in culture and society as depicted in the art and architectural treasures of Europe.

**Core Curriculum Requirements**

This course will meet the competencies required under the Core Curriculum including, critical thinking, oral and written communication, collaboration and team work, problem solving, lifelong learning, civic knowledge and engagement, global understanding and respect, multicultural and diversity, and experiential learning.

The course will meet the requirements for the Second Tier of the Core Curriculum under the Social Sciences.

**Learning Objectives**:

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

* Understand how global and regional IGOs and NGOs are shaping policy outcomes.
* Understand U.S./European Relations as they relate to security matters and political economy.
* Apply the knowledge of European economic and security structures to contemporary events.
* Examine how economic trends shape political and social trends.
* Understanding and appreciation of the value of history and culture in understanding contemporary economic and political decisions.
* Enhance and sharpen analytical abilities and communication skills.
* Re-think and re-examine their own goals, aspirations and values.

**Course Components:**

The three credit hour experience will be divided into five components. Each component has online lectures and reading assignments. Some have video and web casts.

 **I. European Union:**

The focus of this area will be examining the workings of the evolving European Union. We will discuss both the move towards economic integration including monetary union and political integration. The European Union has evolved as the largest economy in the world evolving from a free trade area, to a common market to a monetary union. Recently the economic decline has put pressures on its members and on the monetary union. In addition, the EU has added common decision making in numerous policy areas and is currently struggling to have more coordination and collaboration in the foreign policy and security realms. The political structure of the EU in places looks like a country, in other places looks like an IGO.

In Europe we have meeting with the European Parliament, at the Kellen Group lobbying firm and if possible the US Mission to the EU.

Readings: Pinder and Usherwood. The European Union: AVery Short Introduction. Oxford: 2007. Students will also read a series of current event articles and be directed to the EU website.

**II. NATO**

NATO is a product of the cold war designed to act a deterrent toward Soviet expansion in Europe. It has evolved in the post cold war era to play a much more active role in promoting global security --- at least global security as defined by this North Atlantic Alliance. This formerly defensive alliance now has activities in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Bosnia and has or is wrapping up activities in Libya and Iraq. Because there is no NATO army a great deal of planning is need to launch NATO operations comprised of units from so many different countries. Because unanimity is needed in decision-making a great deal of diplomacy and dialogue is also needed.

**Meetings:** (2 out of 3 depending on availability) NATO Headquarters, SHAPE (NATO Military Headquarters), Jamie Shea, NATO International Staff and former spokesperson.

**Readings**: You will be required to watch a variety of web-blogs from the NATO website and read current event articles.

**III. GLOBALIZATION**

Europe is at the forefront of economic integration. The world is lagging behind but moving in that direction. The major differences is that Europe has the mechanism to deal with some of the side effects (Environment, Workers rights) while this lacks globally. We will examine where Europe is vis-à-vis the world and the advantages and disadvantages of globalization.

**Meetings:** If we go to Geneva we will meet with the WTO and the Global Trade Information system (the world’s biggest provider of trade data). If we do not go to Geneva we will meet with a Multi-national corporation and perhaps the International Confederation of Free trade Unions.

**Readings:** We will read chapters from Jihan v McWorld, Are We Rome and the Lexus and the Olive Tree (ok you other profs might make fun of the lack of academic credential of the Lexus but I think it presents some important points in an understandable fashion)

**LOCALIZATION**

Brussels is emerging as one of the most important places in the world as host of the EU super-state but at the same time is experiencing the collapse of the Belgian as a nation state. We will look at the contemporary struggle Belgium is experiencing. The friction between the Flemish speaking people of Flanders in the north and French speaking people of Wallonia in the south is leading to a serious split. The only factor keeping the country together is the third region - bi-lingual Brussels. This is a prime example of the changing notion of European identity which is often region first, Europe second and nation third.

This will be a key point of discussion with Flemish host families and we will include speakers and readings to help better understand the conflict. Like many it is not just language, but economics and culture.

**Readings**: We will read Dr. Sachleben’s chapter on a book he is developing on Belgium and Belgium politics. We will also have readings on the current evolving Belgium political situation.

**Meetings**: Local Brew Master in Brussels who will explain the conflict of his local tradition with the big breweries. (Beer is like religion in Belgium). There will be numerous other meetings and cultural observations in other countries.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Europe has been at the center of the human rights debate in a variety of contexts. This includes WW II atrocities (victims and protagonists), atrocities associated with colonization, and later through there former colonies, recent events in the Balkans and with trying to set a up mechanism for prosecuting offenders. In this component we will examine the role three different types of organizations have on security and human rights.

**Meetings:** Visit and here lectures at Brendonk --- former Political Prisoners camp. Belgium Museum on Africa and a look at the countries struggle to deal with their role in the Belgian Congo. Briefings at International Criminal Court and sit in on actual case (if we go to Netherlands) or (Red Cross and United National High Commission on Refugees) if we go to Geneva.

**Readings**: Chapters from: Delat, The Global Struggle for Human Rights. Thompson: 2006. Current event articles.

**Grading**

Online Quizzes 20%

Online Short Papers 10%

Journal 20%

Post-trip papers 30%

Participation 20%

Total 100%

**Evaluation**

Online Quizzes: Each online component will be accompanied by at least one quiz (almost always more) to evaluate retention of lecture and reading materials.

Online Short Papers: Almost every online component also has a short writing assignment to summarize and synthesize the material.

Journal: This is a thinking journal requiring you to react to what they are hearing and experiencing. It is not a diary. Normally it is open ended but periodically a specific question will be posed.

Post Trip Papers: These are structured to tie the course together on return. You will have a choice of 5 topics and be required to write on three. The papers will be 5 pages in length.

Participation: We have not had anyone miss anything in the past five years so this is not about attendance. It is about being an active learner. This includes asking quality questions and being engaged with speakers and the program