POLI 120B: THE GERMAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

Course Objectives: This course is designed to introduce students to the modern German political process. We will take the creation (and subsequent failure) of the Weimar Republic as our point of departure, examining how its weaknesses, the rise of Nazism, and division (and subsequent unification) shape the modern German state. We will pay particular attention to how history and geopolitical realities shape and are shaped by, the political institutions, economic system and political culture of the modern Germany.

Learning Objectives: At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the factors which led to the fall of the Weimar Republic and to the rise of the Nazi German regime.
2. Evaluate the extent to which history shapes the modern German political system.
3. Understand how German political institutions are structured.
4. Investigate pressing domestic and international political issues in German politics.
5. Examine the impact that the current political leadership has on German politics.
6. Become more discerning consumers of European political media.
7. Improve their oral and written communication skills.

Course Assignments/Grading: The grade for this course will be determined as follows:

   Attendance and Participation: 10%
   Midterm Examination: 45%
   Final Examination: 45%

Attendance and Participation: Due to the way in which themes will be presented in this course, regular attendance and participation is required. Students are expected to attend lecture having completed the assigned reading and able to participate in course discussions, which will integrate theoretical materials and lecture topics with current events. Current events analysis will occur at the beginning of each lecture, so students are strongly encouraged to be on time and ready to participate in course discussions. You may wish to
sign up for e-mail alerts from your favorite websites. The following is a list of news websites that may be of use. Please be advised that the list is not exhaustive:

- Deutsche Welle (http://www.dw-world.de)
- Economist Online (http://www.economist.com)
- Spiegel Online (http://www.spiegel.de/international)
- BBC News (http://news.bbc.co.uk)
- Financial Times (http://www.ft.com)

**Midterm and Final Examinations:** The topic and due dates for the midterm and the final examination will be discussed in lecture. Please be advised that both course examinations build on material discussed in lecture and course readings. Both examinations will be 6-8 pages in length and require the submission of a hard copy in class AND an electronic submission to turnitin.com. We will not grade any paper for which we do not have both a hard copy and an electronic submission.

**Late Assignments/Academic Integrity:** Barring documented emergencies, no late assignments will be accepted. Additionally, a hard copy of each paper is required; e-mail attachments will not be accepted. All assignments in this course require both a hard copy and an electronic copy to be submitted into turnitin.com before the deadline. Under NO circumstances will we grade an assignment which does not include both a hard copy and an electronic submission. Subsequently, if you do not submit both you will receive a zero on the assignment and you will fail the course. Please be advised that it is your responsibility to submit both submissions and that issues of fairness preclude us from deviating from this policy. While issues of plagiarism are not expected, course assignments are to be completed on an individual basis. Incidents of plagiarism will be dealt with according to department and university procedures. Please be advised that credit will NOT be given for any work found to violate university policies on academic integrity.

**Course Conduct:** We are aware that students face a variety of pressures during their academic careers. While we are sympathetic to the frustrations which arise from time to time we will NOT tolerate threatening, disrespectful or violent behavior aimed at the teaching staff, departmental staff, and/or other students. Please be aware that ANY behavior which violates university policy will be forwarded to relevant administrator or campus police for investigation.

**Reading Schedule:** Given that this is an upper division course, the reading load is extensive (although it is nothing compared to what you will see in graduate programs). While we recognize that students have a variety of responsibilities, we expect students to attend lecture prepared to actively discuss the course readings as you cannot succeed in this course without doing the readings. Please keep this in mind while planning for the session as course assignments will require students to show understanding of course readings. Strategies for tackling academic readings can be found at: http://www.si.umich.edu/~pne/PDF/howtoread.pdf.

**Books (required):**
Evans. *The Coming of the Third Reich*
Kornelius. *Angela Merkel*.
Padgett et al. *Developments in German Politics 4*
Reserve Readings (denoted by *)

**Please note:** For each unit, please read any assigned reading from Green prior to reading any other assigned materials.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**UNIT ONE: INTRODUCTION**

**Week 0 (23 September):**
- Course Logistics
- Syllabus
- How to Read Academic Papers

**Week 1 (26-30 September):**
- Why Do We Care About German Politics?
  - Green et al. pgs. 1-16
  - Padgett et al. CH 1
  - Kornelius “Merkelmania”

**UNIT TWO: HISTORY AND THE MODERN GERMAN REPUBLIC**

- The Burden of History: Weimar and Nazi Germany
  - Green pgs. 17-25
  - Evans CH 1-3

**Week 2 (3-7 October):**
- The Burden of History: Weimar and Nazi Germany
  - Evans CH 4-5
  - Berman*

- The Burden of History: Division and Unification
  - Green et al. CH 2 and 3

**UNIT THREE: GERMAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

**Week 3 (10-14 October):**
- The Basic Law, Federalism and the Central Government
  - Green et al. CH 4
  - Padgett et al. CH 1 and 2
Week 4 (17-21 October):

German Political System: Elections and Political Parties
Padgett et al. CH 3 and 4
Green et al. CH 5
Kornelius “Necessary Evils: The Chancellor and Her Coalitions”

MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED

Week 5 (24-28 October):

German Political System: Political Leadership
Padgett et al CH 5
Kornelius “Breaking into Politics”
Kornelius “Questions of Belief: What Makes Merkel Tick?”

UNIT FOUR: ISSUES IN GERMAN POLITICS

The German Economic Model
Green et al. CH 7
Padgett CH 7 and 8

Week 6 (31 October-4 November):

The German Social Model
Green et al. CH 8
Padgett CH 12

MIDTERM DUE

Week 7 (7-9 November):

Immigration and German Politics
Green et al. CH 6
Padgett et al. CH 14
Deutsche Welle (Germany-Guide to Refugees): http://bit.ly/1Lble8k

Protest and German Politics
Padgett CH 6

UNIT FIVE: GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY

Week 8 (14-18 November):

The Goals of German Foreign Policy
Green et al. CH 10
Padgett et al. CH 11
Kornelius “On the Defensive”
Kornelius “Pacific Dreams”
Germany and the European Union
Padgett CH 9
Green et al. CH 9
Kornelius “The Great Crisis: Angela Merkel’s Battle for Europe”
Kornelius “The British Problem: Keep Them In”

Week 9 (21-23 November):

Germany and the Euro Crisis
Padgett CH 10
This American Life (audio): http://bit.ly/zCnp3E
Economist “Is “Grexit” Good for the Euro?”: http://econ.st/LN1CG2
Economist “The Merkel Memorandum”: http://econ.st/QiDkTm
BBC News “Cyprus: Q&A: http://goo.gl/2dcht

UNIT SIX: CONCLUSIONS

Week 10 (28 November-2 December):

Critical Issues in German Politics: Prospects
Green et al. CH 11
Kornelius “The Prospects for Merkel”

Final Examination due between 11:30am-2:29pm on 10 June 2015

Disclaimer: This syllabus is intended to provide an overview of the course. You cannot claim any rights from it. While the information included within the syllabus should be a reliable guide for the course, scheduling and dates may change. Official announcements are always those made in lecture.