Europe is a major political, economic and intellectual power in today’s world. Its different member states offer significant variation in issues of comparative politics and historically have set trends in political organisation as well as political theory. Every student of political science and economics would need to know about the different types of European political systems, how the mechanics of such systems differ according to institutions, history, culture and socio-economic conditions. This would help any practitioner to explain events, phenomenon and differences based on the information acquired and knowledge gained.

I. Course Objectives:
1. Understanding the dynamics of European political systems, including their different institutional designs and historical settings.
2. Developing an ability to compare across European countries as well as researching within-country specifics.
3. Developing the ability to think critically in explaining facts and events, both within and across countries.
4. Developing skills of academic reading.
5. Enhancing your skills of academic writing.

II. What is required from you:
1. **Attend all lectures.** The knowledge that you will gain will not be covered just in the readings. This is not a text-book based course. Your attendance will help your analytical skills – which is a skill the course aim at developing and achieving high grades at the course requires.

2. **Do the required readings.** The readings aim at helping you not only to follow what is being discussed in lectures but also will definitely help you answer the exam questions (and eventually write papers with arguments). This course does not have one textbook but rather a number of journal articles and book chapters that are specified in detail (see below). Please do the required readings and also pick one additional reading to cover.
3. **Challenge and speak up in lectures.** Discussions are what make lectures a real learning experience.

### III. Course Structure:
- Eleven weeks/lectures.
- This course will be divided into three parts:
  a. First, we will try to cover some core topics of comparative politics across Europe (till lecture 5). These include the democratisation processes of Europe (West and East), the patterns of executive-legislative relationship, electoral systems, political parties and party systems.
  b. Second, we will try to go deep inside four major political systems (The United Kingdom, France, Germany and Spain). These systems embody significant institutional variations that will increase your knowledge of the big players in European politics.
  c. In the last two lectures, you will be asked to make presentations and respond to questions and comments on your term paper.

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### IV. Office hours:
Mondays: 1:30 to 2:30.
Thursdays: 12:00-1:00.
Sundays: 5:00-6:00.

Room 82, floor 3. It is strongly recommended to email (m.hassan@feps.edu.eg) if you are planning to come to the office hours.

### V. Evaluation:
Midterm exam: 5 grades.
Term paper: 5 grades.
This will be a group term paper. Every 3 students will share a paper to be submitted by end of term. You will be asked to make 20 min. presentations of the paper in the last two lectures of the term (get prepared).
Final exam: 20 grades.

VI. Detailed Course Topics:

Course material (i.e. presentations, further readings, etc.) will be uploaded on Moddle. It is essential that you can log-in to Moodle. Some sudden communications (for example, lecture cancellations) would be announced on Moddle. Please check it regularly.

Lecture 1: Introductory Lecture (presorting course outline + discussing why we need to compare between countries)

Points to be covered include:
- What will be discussed is this course and how it will be discussed? Why are we covering these political systems and not others?
- What are the primary aims of comparative political analysis?
- What are the different research designs in comparative politics?

Required Readings:

Additional Readings:

Lecture 2: Democratization in Europe over the years
Points to be covered include:
- How did democracy come about in Western Europe and Eastern Europe?
- Does the differentiated pattern of democratisation have post-transition consequences?

Required Readings:

Additional Readings:

Lecture 3: Dynamics of Executive-Legislative Relations in European Countries
Points to be covered include:
- What are the various dividing lines between the different types of political systems?
- Are there any consequences of certain institutional designs?

Required Readings:

Additional Readings:

Lecture 4: Political Parties and Party Systems in Europe.
Points to be covered include:
- What are the different party orientations and party families in Europe?
- How can we classify party systems in Europe?

Required Readings:

Additional Readings:

**Lecture 5: Electoral Systems in Europe**
Points to be covered include:
- What are the different electoral systems in Europe and what are their consequences if ever?

*Required Readings:*

*Additional Readings:*

**Lecture 6: The United Kingdom.**
Points to be covered include:
- What is the historical setting and current institutional design of the British political system?
- What are the major issues in British politics today?

*Required Readings:*
Kesselman, Mark et al. (2013), *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, Boston: Wadsworth (Chapter 2)

*Additional Readings:*
Heffernan, R., (2005), ‘Why the PM Cannot be a President’, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 58: 1, pp. 53-70.

**Lecture 7: France**
Points to be covered include:
- What is the historical setting and current institutional design of the French political system?
- What are the major issues in French politics today?

**Required Readings:**
Kesselman, Mark et al. (2013), *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, Boston: Wadsworth (Chapter 3)

**Additional Readings:**

**Lecture 8: Germany**
Points to be covered include:
- What is the historical setting and current institutional design of the German political system?
- What are the major issues in German politics today?

**Required Readings:**
Kesselman, Mark et al. (2013), *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, Boston: Wadsworth (Chapter 4)

**Additional Readings:**

**Lecture 9: Spain**
Points to be covered include:
- What is the historical setting and current institutional design of the Spanish political system?
- What are the major issues in Spanish politics today?
Required Readings:

Additional Readings:

Lectures 10 and 11: Students’ presentations.