The European Union has often been described as a unique political project - the successful peaceful unification of sovereign democratic states. One can question whether the European Union is really unique (remember the American founding?), peaceful (what of the background threat of a Soviet invasion?), or successful (too soon to tell?). But it is an important political phenomenon, and by weakening traditional notions of sovereignty it has challenged the traditional Political Science division between International Relations theory and Comparative Politics.

This course will explore alternative theoretical perspectives on the European Union - as an international organization, or as an emerging polity, and then survey the literature in comparative politics on the EU as an emerging political system. For each topic, a few readings are assigned in order to introduce students to the variety of ways in which European integration has been studied. Students are expected to read and discuss the assigned works each week.

There are a number of written requirements.

1. Students will hand in a brief (1-2 paragraph) summary of each of the readings assigned for each week. (Since these will cover all of the readings, it is this important to keep these brief.)
2. Students also are required to complete one literature reviews (4-5 pages each) which present the recent literature on 2 EU related topics. Such topics may include: “Europeanization,” EU Social Policy, EU citizenship, the “democratic deficit,” National identity and European identity.
3. Students will write either a second literature review on another EU topic, or a research paper which builds upon the first literature review. This paper could be a quantitative analysis using any of the numerous available EU related data sources, a historical or qualitative case study, or a theoretical exploration of the normative implications of European integration.
4. There is also an in class final exam Dec 11.

Most readings will be available in electronic form. An exception is the following textbook which can be purchased from Amazon.com.

*The Institutions of the European Union second edition* John Peterson and Michael Shackleton eds.

Reading Schedule

For Sept 10 Intro: Regional Integration Theory

Prehistory of the European Union:


Kover, J.F. 1954 “The Integration of Western Europe” Political Science Quarterly Vol 69 No3 354-373

Functionalist Integration theory:


Transactionalist integration theory:

Deutsch, Karl 1957 Political Community and the North Atlantic Area (excerpt)


Europe as a model:


For Sept 17 Neo Functionalism


Lindberg “Political Integration: Definitions and Hypotheses” (from Nelsen and Stubb)

Ernst B. Haas 1968 preface of “The Uniting of Europe”


For Sept 24. Intergovernmentalism, Theories of the State, other approaches

Hoffman The Nation State: Obstinate or Obsolete" (from Nelsen and Stubb)


For Oct 1 Explaining the stagnation and evolution of the EU


in View of Ratification: Governmental Preferences and Domestic Constraints at the Amsterdam Intergovernmental Conference Simon Hug, Thomas König International Organization, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring, 2002), pp. 447-476
Oct 8 Federalism, Democracy and the EU: Transparency, information, and accountability

International Integration and Democracy: No Love at First Sight International Integration and Democracy: No Love at First Sight Eric Stein The American Journal of International Law, Vol. 95, No. 3 (Jul., 2001), pp. 489-534


Oct 15 Intrainstitutional issues

Institutions of the EU:


(skip chapters 6, 15, on the European Parliament and ch. 7 on the European Court of Justice)

Oct 22. The European Parliament:

(read chapters 6, 15 on the European Parliament from The Institutions of the European Union second edition)


EP party groups?
Oct 29 The European Court of Justice

(read chapter 7. on the European Court of Justice from The Institutions of the European Union second edition)


Nov 5 Parties and elections

Mair, Peter. 2000 “The limited impact of Europe on national party systems.” West European Politics 23:4 pp. 27-51


Nov 12 Referendums


Nov 19 Public support for the EU, early works, values and social groups


Gary Marks and Liesbet Hooghe 2005 European Union Politics article.
Nov 26 Politics, ideology, economics and public opinion


Ray, Leonard 2004 “Don’t Rock the Boat” In European Integration and Political Conflict Gary Marks and Marco Steenbergen eds.

Ray, Leonard 2003 “When Parties Matter” JOP

Dec 3 Review and catch up

Papers due Dec 8

In class exam Dec 11 (9 AM to 12:00, Stubbs 210)

- I know no one likes in class exams. This will be a simple 3 hour exam with a general examination style question. It is good practice for your comps.