



Boston University International Programs
London

Boston University British Programmes
Britain and Europe – A New Beginning?
CAS PO/IR 335 (*Elective A*)
Spring 2011

Instructor Information

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| A. Name | Dr Paul Cousins |
| B. Day and Time | Monday and Tuesday (plus Friday 11 February), 9am-1pm |
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| F. Webpage | www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/poir335 |
| G. Office hours | By appointment |

Course Overview

The aim of this course is to plot the on-going relationship between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union on the other. Parliament voted to join what was then the European Common Market in 1972, but over the last three decades Britain has had a difficult time ‘in Europe’.

The twenty-seven member states of the EU are committed to working towards ‘an ever closer union’. The Convention that drafted a new constitution for the EU talked openly of establishing a ‘United States of Europe’. Twenty-six member states are not unduly concerned at this idea, but one is - the UK.

In the decades since 1945 British society has undergone great change. Established institutions, including marriage, and the Church, have been questioned and scrutinised as never before, as Britain has moved towards becoming a multi-racial and multi-cultural society. As the EU states get closer together, Britain is being pulled apart by the forces of nationalism in both Scotland and Wales (and also the issue of the relationship of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland).

For almost the whole of the last century social class was the bedrock of British society, but today the traditional class structure is under strain as both academics and politicians suggest alternative interpretations of the British way of life. It has been argued that one reason for the tension between the UK and her neighbours is the fact that the latter have adjusted more quickly to the global economic and social pressures of the last half-century than has been the case in Britain. The election of a radical, modernising New Labour administration heightened these tensions.

Tony Blair claimed to be positive on the EU where Major and Thatcher had been opposed, but in reality many on the continent saw little different to the position taken by the Conservatives. However, on taking office as Prime Minister in May 2010, David Cameron stressed that his coalition government wanted both a strong and vibrant EU and that the UK would have a positive role to play in Europe.

Following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty by all 27 states, there is now a new set of constitutional arrangements in place in the EU. In Britain, the institutions of the EU are seen as gaining power at the expense of traditional parliamentary sovereignty in Britain. It should be noted that the EU is attempting to adopt the new ‘constitution’ as a result of the ‘enlargement’ of the Union following the admittance of ten new states joining the fifteen previous members on 1 May 2004, bringing the number of member states up to 27 when Bulgaria and Romania joined in 2007. These new states all want to adopt the euro as soon as possible, and in the UK it is feared that Britain may come under renewed pressure to do the same, which would eventually spell the end of the pound sterling. Many in Britain, especially the older people and those who support the main opposition party, the Conservatives, fear that this country will soon be reduced to the status of an American state such as Massachusetts, bringing to an end over a thousand years of independence. Or, rather, are we on the brink of a ‘brave new world’ in which Europe, with Britain at its heart, will be economically and politically a new ‘super-power’?

When he became prime minister, Gordon Brown seemed to be more cautious on the EU than Blair had been, but he approved the Lisbon Treaty which puts in place, in effect, a constitution for the Union without submitting the decision to a referendum. Cameron promised that he would put the Treaty to a vote by the UK electorate, but in October 2009 revised his policy because the Treaty was now in force.

The course will examine the social, cultural, political and economic changes affecting both the UK and the continental states of the EU as the ‘new’ Europe celebrates its half-century. It will introduce the class to the debates as to the future of Britain, both in respect of membership of the EU (including the adoption of the Euro in place of the pound and the new constitutional arrangements) and of the ‘new’ Britain of the new century. The course aims to put all these changes in an historical context.

The future of the relationships between both the EU and the UK with regard to the USA will also be addressed, especially in the light of recent events, not least the Iraq war, and the war in Georgia and the discussions on a new constitution for the EU.

Methodology

The main teaching method will be by lecture, but classes will be interactive and you will be expected to participate fully in them.

Assessment

You will be required to write an essay on an agreed topic of not more than 2500 words. The paper is to be written in essay format and will require research as it must be analytical, reflecting a knowledge of theory. **The essay is to be submitted at the end of the course, at the start of the exam on Tuesday 15 February.** The topic should, therefore, be agreed with me by the fourth or fifth class meeting. Time will be made available for you to discuss issues and problems in connection with the paper in the seminar sessions. There will also be a **class test** early in the course. In addition there will be **an examination** of two hours at the end of the course, and you will be required to answer TWO questions. The class test will count 10%, the paper 30% and the examination 50% towards the final grade. The other 10% will be a combination of attendance and participation.

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| Class test | 10% |
| 3000 word paper | 30% |
| Final exam | 50% |
| Attendance and participation | 10% |
| Total | 100% |

Grading

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria, attendance requirements and policies on plagiarism:

<http://www.bu-london.co.uk/files/images/ACADEMICHANDBOOKSP11.pdf>

Course Chronology

- Mon 17 Jan:** Introduction to the course; overview of UK and EU relations.
- Tues 18 Jan:** The institutions of the European Union and comparisons with those of the UK and US.
- Mon 24 Jan:** The origins of the EU and outline of its growth; the euro and associated economic factors.
- Tues 25 Jan:** Introduction to the Brussels visit; political, economic and cultural features; the new 'constitution' of the EU.
- Sun 30 Jan to Tues 1 Feb:** **Visit to Brussels.** A detailed itinerary will be given to all students. *Departure on Sunday early afternoon 30 Jan; return Tuesday evening 1 Feb.*
- Mon 7 Feb:** Follow-up to visit; discussion focusing on issues arising from visit; what sort of entity is the EU?
- Tues 8 Feb:** The EU and the rest of the world especially the USA; defense, security and EU foreign policy issues.
- Fri 11 Feb:** Britain and the EU – the future; Revision

**** Contingency Class Date: Friday 4 February.** Students are obligated to keep this date free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled.

Tues 15 Feb: Final Examination. Exam times and locations will be posted on the BU London website and in the Student Newsletter two weeks before exam dates.

Time will be made available to finalize essay topics, and for discussion of essay issues. Readings are indicated for each topic in the attached note, and there will be hand-outs also distributed.

Required Reading

Additional readings may be posted on the course webpage:

<http://www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/poir335> (you must be logged in to view materials).

The following texts are available in the Library:

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| N. Abercrombie | Contemporary British Society |
| J. Ash | In Europe's Name |
| N. Ashworth & P. Larkham | Building a New Heritage |
| A. Blair | Companion to the European Union |
| J. Bailey (Ed) | Social Europe |
| S. Bromley (Ed) | Governing the European Union |
| J. Budge | The New British Politics |
| S. Bulmer | The UK and EC Membership Evaluated |
| M. Cini | European Union Politics |
| P. Coffey | The Euro: An Essential Guide |
| B. Coxall & L. Robbins | Contemporary British Politics |

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| B.Coxall & L. Robbins | Britain since the War |
| N. Davies | Europe - A History |
| F. Dell'Olio | The Europeanisation of Citizenship |
| D. Dinan | Origins and Evolution of the European Union |
| R. Eatwell | European Political Culture |
| A. Forster | Euroscepticism in Contemporary Britain |
| A. Halsey | Change in British Society |
| J. Harrop | The Political Economy of Political Integration in the EU |
| K.Holden | The UK Economy Today |
| B.Jones | Politics UK |
| J.Lane & S Erson | Politics and Society in Western Europe |
| P Magnette | What is the European Union? |
| M Moran | Politics and Governance in the UK |
| D. Phinnemore & C. Church | Understanding the European Constitution |
| J.Richardson (Ed) | European Union |
| J. Rifkin | The European Dream |
| G.Thompson (Ed) | Governing the European Economy |
| L. Tsoukalis | What Kind of Union? |
| M. Vink | Limits of European Citizenship |
| M.Wintle | Culture and Identity in Europe |
| J. Pinder | The European Union: A Very Short Introduction |
| T. Bainbridge | The Penguin Companion to the European Union |
| H. & W. Wallace (Eds) | Policy-making in the European Union |
| J. Peterson & M. Shackleton | The Institutions of the European Union |
| M.Burgess | Federalism and European Union: Building Europe 1950-2000 |

Other reading will be advised.

Please note that ALL students should read a broadsheet newspaper every day in addition to the readings indicated. The issues being discussed are liable to develop and 'change direction' at short notice!

Terms and Conditions

Attendance at all classes is mandatory. **Students must check their email and the weekly Student Newsletter for field trip updates and reminders.** Students missing lectures without a doctor's letter or authorisation from the Director or from the Placements Team will automatically be docked a - or a + from their final grade.

Persistent lateness will also be penalised in the final grade. . A register of attendance will be taken at the beginning of each session, and marks will be awarded for attendance. Absence can be conveyed by advising a senior member of staff in the Academic Affairs Office with a request that the information be passed on to me. Leaving it to another class member to convey messages will not be acceptable. Appointments for interviews for internships should not conflict with attendance at classes.

Any student who is unable to attend a class, or take part in an Assignment because of religious reasons, must give notice of the fact in advance. He/she will be required to make up for time lost. In this situation arrangements must be made with another student for class notes to be shared.

Course work must be delivered before agreed deadline. Failure to hand on time will result in deducted marks.

I will make some time available in each session for students to raise questions etc. Should students wish to discuss matters with me in person I will also be available during the break mid-lecture.

I hope that you find the course interesting and enjoyable.

Paul Cousins, January 2011