CIEE Amsterdam, Netherlands

Course title: Political and Economic Development of the Netherlands and the EU
Course code: POLI 3002 AMNT
Programs offering course: Business and Culture, Social Sciences and Humanities
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring 2021

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with a solid foundation of both the Dutch political system and the economic integration of the European Union, as well as the pivotal role the Netherlands has played (and continues to play) in this project. In the political section of the course, students will become familiar with the fundamental outlines of Dutch politics and government, including the major institutions and organizations that effect political change both within and outside the political system. Students will also gain an in-depth understanding of the historical development of the Dutch party system and coalition government, the rise of anti-immigration and ethno-nationalist political ideologies, as well as the ebb and flow of Euroscepticism in the Netherlands vis-à-vis other European countries (e.g. the case of UK's Brexit and the broader phenomenon of EU-"exits"). The economic section of the course will focus on the economic dimension and organization of the Netherlands and the European Union and will tease out ways in which the economic integration of the latter has restructured the national economy of the former (and which institutions were/are principally involved in these processes). Specifically, students will study in some detail the various phases of economic integration implemented by the European Union. These discussions will range from the adoption of a common currency and the role and reception of the Euro in (tying together the economies of) the Netherlands and other selected member states, to the crafting of national and supranational trade policies, and the status and position of the Netherlands as an (a)typical European economy.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the functioning and the historical development of the political and economic systems of the Netherlands and the European Union;
- Debate the pros and cons of European integration in general and from the perspective of the Netherlands;
- Engage critically with theories of comparative politics and European integration;
- Situate the Netherlands in the broader political-economic context of the European Union;
- Apply theoretical concepts to analyze and to delineate the causes and implications of recent events;
- Evaluate primary sources in order to develop informed arguments about the main political and economic challenges that the Netherlands and the European Union face today.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

Political and Economic Development of the Netherlands and the EU will run for 22 classes of two hours. The last class will meet on April 26, i.e. a few weeks before the official end of the semester. The course is taught as a seminar, which requires students to be well prepared and actively engaged. Students are expected to have done the readings before class. They should be prepared to answer questions, to contribute in a meaningful manner to class discussions and to comment on their peers’ presentations.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Presentation 20%
2. Op-ed and response paper 25%
3. Debate 15%
Course Requirements

Presentation

This course is ambitious in its design: we will study the political and economic development of both the Netherlands and the European Union. At the same time, the reading requirements are relatively light. Student presentations therefore provide a way to explore some topics in more depth than the readings and lectures allow for. They are also a great opportunity for students to showcase their ability to do research, to summarize information, to relate it to previous course material, and to present it in an informative and engaging manner.

Starting from class 5 (February 19), each student is expected to give one presentation of 15 minutes on a set topic that relates to the theme of that class. The topics are listed under the weekly schedule. Note that some classes will see multiple students present, while others will not feature any presentations.

Students will be expected to:

- Introduce the topic to the audience and linking it to this course (demonstrating its relevance);
- Give a well-structured presentation on the topic with the use of presentation materials (e.g. Powerpoint or handouts);
- Outline the main theoretical and/or practical debates on the topic, and indicate who are associated with the different positions;
- Incorporate at least three academic publications, which are not already on the syllabus, into the presentation and to cite them appropriately;
- Illustrate the topic with practical examples;
- Engage the audience;
- Put forward at least two questions for class discussion;
- Stay within the time limit; A maximum of one video may be part of the presentation; the length of the video may not exceed two minutes.

Op-ed and response paper

This assignment is linked to the debate (see below). Students will write an op-ed and a response paper on the topic of ‘Nexit,’ i.e. a Dutch exit from the European Union. In particular, they will respond to the following motion: The Netherlands should prepare to leave the European Union in due course. The op-ed is intended for a general, non-academic audience. Students will be randomly assigned a position, with half of the students arguing in favor of the motion and half arguing against. Students will then be paired with someone who has the opposite view.

The op-ed should be between 1,200 and 1,600 words. The op-ed should:

- Stake out a clear position;
- Support this position with the use of at least three different arguments;
- Use examples that bring the argument to life and which the reader can relate to;
- Preempt potential counterarguments;
- Use an appropriate writing style (e.g. avoid jargon, lengthy sentences and paragraphs, passive voice).

In a second step, students will write a response paper of between 675 and 850 words in which they criticize the op-ed of the student whom they are paired with. This paper should rebut the arguments that the opponent makes in his or her op-ed.

It is important to note that the motion is not a black-and-white statement. For example, it is possible to leave some institutions of the European Union (e.g. the Eurozone) while remaining a part of others (e.g. the Single Market). Proponents of a Nexit might also disagree about what “due course” stands for. Students are therefore encouraged to add some nuance to their argument.

The word limit is a hard limit. Failure to comply with the world limit as well as ‘creative’ attempts to circumvent the word limit (e.g. writing out dates, unnecessary hyphenation) will be penalized.

Debate

This assignment is linked to the op-ed (see above). We will hold an in-class debate on the motion that the Netherlands should leave the European Union in due course. Students will be expected to hold the opposite view from the one that they defended in the op-ed.
The debate will consist of two parts:

- In the first part, students will have two minutes each to state and defend their position. The opening statement can be prepared in advance. This stage is important, because the arguments made will form the basis for the remainder of the debate.
- In the second part, the floor is open for a general debate.

Students will be assessed on:

- The quality and clarity of their arguments (e.g. use of facts and rhetorical flourishes);
- Their rebuttal of opposing arguments;
- The ability to respond to criticisms of their own arguments;
- Their presentation style (e.g. tone of voice, respectfulness, ability to engage).

Research Paper

Each student will submit a research paper of between 2,500 and 3,000 words, excluding the bibliography.

Each research paper should include:

- A title
- An abstract
- A clear argument or thesis statement
- A discussion of counterarguments
- A clear structure, including an introduction, a conclusion and the use of subheadings
- A bibliography

Students should submit an argumentative and academic piece of writing. The former should manifest itself in a clear research question and thesis statement; the latter should shine through in the application of theories and/or academic concepts to practical developments. You are expected to conduct an original literature review and to incorporate academic readings from outside of the syllabus.

Students can select their own topic, but it must relate clearly to one of the class themes. Students may write their research paper on the same topic as their presentation, but not on the op-ed and debate topic (i.e. Nexit). I advise all students to send me an email with a proposed abstract for their research paper at least two weeks in advance of the deadline to see whether their chosen topic is acceptable.

The word limit is a hard limit. Failure to comply with the word limit as well as ‘creative’ attempts to circumvent the word limit (e.g. writing out dates, unnecessary hyphenation) will be penalized.

The research paper must be formatted according to APA guidelines, and must include a bibliography. For more information on APA formatting, see https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

Class Participation

Because this course is taught as a seminar-style class, your participation is essential to its success.

You will be expected to show up prepared and on time. This means that you are expected to have done all of a seminar’s readings before class begins. You should take part in class activities in an informed and thoughtful manner.

In case you are unable to attend a seminar, you are expected to catch up by looking through the Powerpoint slides (which I will make available online) and borrowing your classmates’ notes.

Students who make active connections to the concepts from the reading materials in class discussions, students who actively ask questions, and students who actively reflect on out-of-class experiences in class will receive extra points for participation. Participation points will be deducted when students do not participate in class or have not read the assigned reading materials before coming to class.

Since we will be discussing culturally sensitive issues in class, the classroom must be a safe space in which students are able to express their opinions openly. Discriminatory comments or language of any kind will not be tolerated.

Attendance

Each student is expected to attend all sessions of the course and to participate actively in class discussions. Attendance will be taken every class session by the course instructor. Absences will be penalized according to the
CIEE Amsterdam attendance policy outlined below:

1 or 2 absences = complete 1,500 word make-up assignment

3 absences = 10 points deducted from the student’s final grade

4 absences = the student fails the course (F is listed on the transcript)

- If you arrive to class 15+ minutes late, this counts as a ½ absence.
- At all times, you need to inform the instructor – before the start of class – of any absences. Failure to notify the teacher in advance will result in an extra assignment.
- If you are sick (i.e. physically incapable of attending class), you may miss class, but you will have to complete a makeup assignment.
- Going on/returning from a trip are not valid excuses for missing or showing up late to a CIEE class.
- Note about all assignments: Late assignments will be marked down by 1 point (out of 10) for every day the assignment is late. Assignments that are more than 3 days (72 hours) late will not be accepted.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1 Introduction
Reading: None

Class: 1.2 The Dutch Political System
Readings:


Week 2

Class: 2.1 Party Politics in the Netherlands
Readings:


Class: 2.2 The Political System of the European Union
Readings:


Week 3

Class: 3.1 A Brief History of European Integration
Readings:


Student presentation topics: (1) Empty chair crisis, (2) Historical institutionalism and European
Class: 3.2 Theories of European Integration

Readings:


Student presentation topics: (1) Multilevel governance, (2) Differentiated integration

Week 4

Class: 4.1 EU Enlargement

Readings:


Student presentation topics: (1) Copenhagen criteria, (2) The Polish Plumber, (3) The Dutch Ukraine Referendum (6 April 2016), (4) Enlargement fatigue (5) The EU Eastern partnership

Class: 4.2 The EU: A Community of Values?

Readings:


Week 5

Class: 5.1 Migration crisis in the European Union and the Netherlands

Readings:


Class: 5.2 The Netherlands: A European Tax Haven?

Readings:

Week 6

Class: 6.1 Populist and Anti-Immigration Politics in the Netherlands

Readings:


In-class viewings:


Student presentation topics: (1) The party cartel (“Partijkartel”), (2) Left-wing populism: The Socialist Party, (3) Wilders and hate speech

Class: 6.2 Euroscepticism

Readings:


Student presentation topics: (1) Democratic deficit, (2) Permissive consensus, (3) Eurorealism

Week 7

Class: 7.1 Brexit and Beyond: Bursting Brussels’ Bubble?

Readings:


Student presentation topics: (1) Italexit, (2) Grexit

Class: 7.2 Nexit: A Classroom Debate

Readings:

Week 8
Class: 8.1 The Dutch Economy and the Welfare State

Readings:


Student presentation topics: (1) Dutch disease (2) Polder model

Class: 8.2 The Globalization of EU Policies towards Developing Countries

Readings:


Student presentation topics: (1) The Sustainable Development goals and EU policies (2) The EU and the UN

Week 9
Class: 9.1 The European Monetary System

Readings:


Student presentation topics: (1) The Snake, (2) Black Wednesday

Class: 9.2 Economic and Monetary Union

Readings:


Student presentation topics: (1) Convergence criteria, (2) Stability and Growth Pact, (3) Impossible trinity, (4) Optimum currency area

Week 10
Class: 10.1 The Dutch Central Bank

Readings:


Class: 10.2 The Symbolism of the Euro

Readings:


Week 11

Class: 11.1 LGBTI Rights in the Netherlands and the European Union

Readings:


Student presentations topics: (1) mum and dad kids initiative

Class: 11.2 Extra class to summarize topics, ask for clarifications and discussion

No readings and no presentations.

Week 12

Class: 12.1 Research Paper Workshop

Today students will work on their research papers in class.

No readings and student presentations.

Course Materials

Readings


Online Resources


Media Resources