Europe and the World: Past Challenges – Futures Issues

POL 137 International Relations in Western Europe

Course teacher:

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A. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this short, and intense ten week, course is to look at the role and position of Europe in the international system. Because the course is being taught in the UK following a decision by the British people to leave the European Union it will have a decidedly, but not exclusively, UK ‘flavour’. And because it is aimed at students from the United States it will have a lot to say about both the relationship of the US with both the UK and Europe. The course will begin with a long look at the rise and fall of Europe as an international actor into the twentieth century. It will then, at a later stage, discuss how the end of the Cold War changed Europe making it a far more significant international actor as a result. It will then go on to examine the ‘transatlantic’ relationship between Europe and the United States – as well as between the UK and the United States - and ask why these relationships became ‘special’. It will in turn look at the “special relationship” between Tony Blair and two US presidents – Clinton and G.W.Bush – and explain how this relationship impacted on the peace process in Northern Ireland and the decision to go to war in Iraq. This will be followed by an exploration of one of the great transatlantic debates of the past fifteen years occasioned by the writer Robert Kagan concerning the differences and similarities between Europe and the United States. The course will then look at the wider security and economic relationship between Europe and the United States as expressed through NATO on the one hand and the EU-US economic partnership on the other. Finally, it will conclude by asking two questions: how will the Brexit vote impact on the UK relationship with the EU and the United States? And whether the Brexit vote will accelerate what many already see as Europe’s long term decline well into the twenty first century? As we will try and show, what to many in the United States must look like a very European debate, apparently having little to do with the US, has in fact huge implications for America’s position in the world - a world in which Chinese power is on the rise, where Russia is becoming increasingly more assertive, where the Middle East is becoming daily more unstable, and where power seems to be shifting away from the Atlantic to Asia.
B. Module Overview

Each week you will receive three and a half hours of tuition in the following format:

- 1 x 1.5 hour lecture
- 1 x 2 hour seminar

The lecture aims to provide an introduction to each of the weekly topics, providing an outline of the main points and developments. The seminar will provide an arena for developing your understanding of each topic and well as a place for discussion. You must complete the readings and prepare the seminar questions in advance.

C. Background Reading

There is no one book that adequately deals with the course as a whole. I have thus recommended four books all easily available in paperback.

- James Sheehan, The Monopoly of Violence. Why Europeans Hate Going to War. Faber and Faber. 2007 This is a ‘big picture’ book which takes the long view of European history in the 20th century in order to explain why Europe became a zone of ‘peace’ after World War II

- John Dumbrell, A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations From the Cold War to Iraq. 2nd edition. 2006. This is a student friendly and well written study which asks why the UK-US relationship became – and possibly still - remains ‘special’.


## D. Lecture & Seminar Timetable

The timetable below outlines the scheduled lectures for this module. Please note that any changes will be emailed to your LSE email account and updated on Moodle.

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Assessment

The assessment of this module will consist of:

- 2 x Mid-Term Essay

Further information such as assessment dates and requirements will be announced shortly.
Module Outline

Week One – The Long View: The Rise and Fall of Europe in the International System

Lecture: This lecture will provide an overview of how Europe became the dominant player in world politics before the First World War, why it gradually lost that position of pre-eminence, and with what results for Europe and the international system.

Seminar Question: To what degree was Europe’s rise and decline inevitable?

Readings:

  [http://sex.ncu.edu.tw/members/Ho/study/2012spring_WesternCivilization/Why_Europe_The_Rise_of_the_West_in_World_History_1500_1850.pdf](http://sex.ncu.edu.tw/members/Ho/study/2012spring_WesternCivilization/Why_Europe_The_Rise_of_the_West_in_World_History_1500_1850.pdf)
- Philip T. Hoffman. ‘Why Was It Europeans Who Conquered the World?’
  [http://economics.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Workshops-Seminars/Economic-History/hoffman-120409.pdf](http://economics.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Workshops-Seminars/Economic-History/hoffman-120409.pdf)
  [http://economics.mit.edu/files/4466](http://economics.mit.edu/files/4466)
  [https://www.google.co.uk/?gws_rd=ssl&q=barry+buzan+and+George+Lawson](https://www.google.co.uk/?gws_rd=ssl&q=barry+buzan+and+George+Lawson)
- Ian Morris: Why the West Rules for Now. You Tube
  [https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=rto7TV5wur8](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=rto7TV5wur8)
- Niall Ferguson: TED Talk.
- James Sheehan, *The Monopoly of Violence; Why Europeans Hate Going To War. Part I and Part II*
Week Two – Europe and the United States from Independence to Cold War and Beyond

Lecture: The United States was the by-product of a dynamic process of early European expansion followed in turn by a long 18th century war European war between France and Great Britain. This was then succeeded by a century of European peace which saw mass European migration to the United States, followed in turn by two global wars and a Cold War which witnessed the development of a quite new – but still very close - relationship between Europe and the United States which then took a different form (or did it?) when the Cold War ended

Seminar Question: In what sense has Europe’s relationship with the United States always been ‘special’?

Readings:

- See the articles in Journal of Transatlantic Studies, Volume 8, No3, 2010, pp. 193-300. These deal with various aspects of the Transatlantic relationship seen through the eyes of different US Presidents from Theodore Roosevelt to G.W. Bush.
- See also the Special Issue, ‘Conflict and Community: Transatlantic Relations During the Cold War’, Journal of Transatlantic Studies, Issue 1, 2010, pp. 1-82. These focus more specifically on transatlantic relations during the Cold War.
Week Three – From Community to Union: Europe and the EU after the Cold War

**Lecture:** The unexpected end of the Cold War followed by the collapse of the USSR radically altered the European landscape. This posed new challenges and new opportunities for European and US policy-makers. How did they deal with these, how did Europe redefine itself, and what sort of power did the new Europe become as a result?

**Seminar Question:** What kind of “power” did Europe become after the end of the Cold War?

**Readings:**

- Ian Manners, ‘Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms’?


Week Four – Anglo-America: Myth and Reality

Lecture: One of the most cherished notions in Great Britain that there is a deep affinity between the United Kingdom and the United States – a special relationship by any other name. Sceptics though point to the simple fact that the United States has no special relationship with any country and only judges the value of any relationship it has abroad in terms of how it advances the US national interest. Nonetheless, the term still gets used regularly, reflecting what many continue to regard as a very close – very different kind of relationship between the two countries that is more than just about power and interests.

Seminar Question: Is the Anglo-American relationship different?

Readings:

- Special Issue; ‘Anglo-American Relations in War, Cold War and the Post-Cold War Era’, Special Issue 2. 2012, pp. 117-199, Journal of Transatlantic Studies
Week Five – Anglo-American Relations in Practice: Northern Ireland and the Iraq War

Lecture: One of the most famous British Prime Ministers of recent times was Margaret Thatcher who had what many have seen as a very 'special relationship' with Ronald Regan. But the Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair also developed a very special relationship, but not with one, but two US Presidents: Bill Clinton and G.W.Bush; and it was a result of these two relationships - it has been argued - that the UK was initially able to bring peace to Northern Ireland but was then drawn into war in Iraq.

Seminar Question: Why did the special relationship produce peace in Northern Ireland but war in Iraq?

Readings:

NORTHERN IRELAND


THE IRAQ WAR

Christoph Bluth ‘The British Road to War: Blair, Bush and the decision to invade Iraq’, International Affairs, October 2004. Volume 80, Issue 5, 871-892


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Week Six – ‘Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus’

Robert Kagan

Lecture: In a much discussed article published in 2002 the famous neo-conservative writer, Robert Kagan, wrote that the United States and Europe were drifting apart and were doing so, quite simply, because they did different things in the world with very different instruments of power. But what lay behind the Kagan argument? Was there very much to it? Why did so many policy-makers and analysts respond so strongly to his thesis that ‘Americans were from Mars and Europeans were from Venus’? And why did the American sociologist, Peter Baldwin, later suggest the opposite?

Seminar Question: ‘Europe and the US are part of a common big-tent grouping’ Peter Baldwin.

Readings:

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- Debate. ‘Just how different are the U.S. and Europe, really?’ [YOUTUBE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLpH5QIRBAU)
Lecture: NATO has been at the heart of the Transatlantic relationship since it was first formed in 1949; and in spite of many ‘crises’ over the next forty years it always managed to hold together – partly because of values, partly because of shared interests, and partly because of the Soviet Union. However, with the end of the Cold War and the rise of new threats outside of Europe many believed that NATO had had its day. Yet the organization continues to command support on both sides of the Atlantic; and with Putin in charge of Russia it would seem that it will continue to do so. Still NATO is not without its sceptics. Donald Trump for example has expressed the view that the US may not always come to the defence of certain NATO allies in Europe. NATO is not without its critics either. Indeed, there are many even in the West today who hold NATO expansion responsible for the current ‘new’ Cold War between the West and Russia.

Seminar Question: “Nato is costing us a fortune; we’re protecting Europe with Nato but we’re spending a lot of money” Donald Trump.

Readings:

- ‘NATO-Russia’ John Mearsheimer & Timothy Snyder on ABC AU 05/02/2015. 
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyT-krDx9Q0
Week Eight – Transatlantic Economic Relations in an Asian Century

Lecture: Since the beginning of the new century there has been a decisive move away from thinking of the Atlantic as being the axis around which the world economy rotates towards thinking of it as rotating increasingly around an emerging Pacific region. Many have even begun to talk of a new Asian Century in the making – and when in 2011 President Obama declared a ‘tilt to Asia’ many concluded that Europe had been downgraded to second best by the US. But how far does this reflect economic realities? How important does the Atlantic economic region remain? And why has its importance been underrated by many pundits of late?

Seminar Question: ‘Europe remains a more important economic partner for the USA than Asia’. Is this true?

Readings:

Michael Cox, ‘Power shifts, economic change and the decline of the west?’

Luis Simón, ‘Europe, the rise of Asia and the future of the transatlantic relationship’, International Affairs 91:5, Sept. 2015, pp. 969–89;


Lecture: In June 2016 the British electorate voted by 52-48% to leave the European Union, even after having been warned by President Obama that the UK would now have to move to the 'back of the queue'. The British referendum sent shock waves around the world; and nowhere were these more acutely felt than in the United States. But what impact will the British vote to leave have on the United States? What impact has it had already? Could it help Trump politically? Could it even weaken the US relationship with the UK and with Europe more generally? And will it make other countries in Europe – Germany especially – more special for the United States?

Seminar Question: ‘The UK leaving the EU is as much a challenge for the United States as it is for the EU’ Discuss

Readings:

Week Ten – Europe in the World in the 21st Century

Lecture: In the fifteen year period following the end of the Cold War there was a great deal of optimism in Europe about the new Europe's future. Some even talked of the 21st century becoming a European century. A combination of events since, from the euro crisis through the Greek crisis to Brexit has undermined this mood of optimism; and much of the talk now is of a Europe facing a deeply uncertain future, possibly long-term international decline in a world likely to be shaped more and more by at least two Asian Economies: China and India.

Seminar Question: Is the EU in decline in the world?

Readings:

- Jérôme E. Roos 'Five reasons why Europe is cracking up'. June 9, 2011 http://roarmag.org/2011/06/five-reasons-why-europe-is-cracking-up/
- George Soros, Essays on Europe http://www.georgesoros.com/essays/
- See the various articles produced by *The European Council of Foreign Relations* http://www.ecfr.eu/
- See the work done on Europe and the European Union at Chatham House, London in its Europe programme https://www.chathamhouse.org/about/structure/europe-programme