Community Politics and Development in the European Union

CRD 153b International Community Development (4) or Graduate level*: CRD 242 Community Change Organizations (4) + CRD 198 or CRD 298 (INDEPENDENT STUDIES) with 4 units

Period: July …. August …. (arrival July …) in Treviso, departure August … from Freiburg!

Places: Treviso (Italy) & Freiburg (Germany)

Field trips: In Treviso: Conegliano, Asolo
in Freiburg: Basel (Switzerland); Colmar (France); Strasbourg (European Parliament);

Instruction: In Treviso: Fondazione Benetton
In Freiburg: Lecture at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Dept. of Political Sciences,

Goals:

In this class I envision for students to understand alternatives to the American/Californian model of community development and governance. Students are exposed to three (if not four) different forms of community development: (1) the German, (2) the French, (3) the Swiss and (4) the Italian community settings. Additionally, the European Union’s overarching influence will find special attention as well. Each of these examples are very distinct, the European Community as a supranational force impinges more and more on community autonomy; the Swiss example, not only as a non-member of the EU but also with its distinctive ‘Kanton’ autonomy sets all this in discretely different perspective.

Community Development in this course will be understood as the combination of local governance and the input of private non-profit organizations, including the role of political parties and citizen’s/neighborhood movements. Within a selected cluster of community governance, the class will get an overview over the social structure and problems of France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and the Europe Union from three different angles:

1. basic demography and social economy (especially the migrant and refugee issues),
2. public administration and modes of popular representation in planning and development, and
3. the role of popular participation, community involvement, and local politics.

The ‘base’ of this course will be in the city of Freiburg. The setting of Freiburg is unique, for in 45 minutes one reaches Switzerland, in 20 minutes France and in one hour Strasbourg, the seat of the European Parliament. Freiburg itself is the central administrative seat of the southern part of the (federal) State of Baden-Württemberg. Its city and county administration(s) are on the cutting edge of ecological and sustainable development (recently receiving the 2002 European price for exemplary public transportation), and additionally, hosts one of the superior administrative courts, important for the theme of community policies and development. Thus, visits within the vicinity will allow the students to get a rich picture of alternatives to American local and regional development efforts.

The University of Freiburg is one of the eldest and most respected academic centers in Europe. Freiburg is home of two Max-Planck-Institutes. The university also hosts the Arnold-Bergsträsser Institute of Comparative Cultural Research, a rich source of knowledge for the purposes of this class. A number of the faculty in the departments of sociology and political sciences work on international and comparative issues.
Treviso is located in the Region of Veneto, of which Venetia (Venice) is its capital. Treviso is the capital of one of its seven provinces. Some 80 – 90.00 (about 170.000 if one counts the adjacent quarters) people live in this very old city which still has some city walls, a vibrant industrial and merchant economy and is the site of a university and a satellite campus of the university of Padua (the European sister city of Freiburg) and the University of Venice. The Fondazione Benetton, located in two fabulously restored old villas in the center of the town, will be the meeting place for the group. Venice is some 15-20 minutes away and can be reached with a local train.

Format of the course:

1. When not on field trips or conducting local studies, students will have several blocks of lectures by Dr. Ulrich Eith, dott. Mirko Labbri and I. Each of the presentations are dedicated to specific issues of comparative politics, comparative local government and the political structure of the four countries, including the European Union.

2. Students will have to (!) form small study groups which pursue individual interests. When not participating in lectures, the groups will delve into their own research in the town and region – under the guidance of and/or accompanied by the instructor.

3. Students will interact with the instructor on a daily basis outside the lecture format.

4. Students will have to keep a research diary. The grading will be based on the (a) successful completion of the journal and (b) the development of a matrix in which the findings are displayed so that comparisons between the case studies can be drawn (c) some pop-up exams (one during the long train ride between Freiburg and Treviso!)

5. On the final day in Freiburg and in Treviso, we will have a ‘public presentation’ session in which students present their findings and insights. Format is open.

6. There are no textbooks assigned. Students will receive a booklet (Facts about Germany) and about Switzerland with pertinent materials and links are on the class' SmartSite. An extensive collection of lecture outlines, laws, regulations, and statistics will be in class. All students will get additional materials from the departments of press and information from the countries that will be visited.

7. **HOWEVER:** I expect that students are well prepared about the countries, cities, and institutions we visit. The resources on SmartSite give ample suggestions about possible sources. Preparation distinguishes the visitor from a tourist, a student from a sightseer. Ignorance and lack of learning in school or college are no excuses.

*Note: Graduate courses are by consent of instructor only*