This course will trace European foreign policy over the course of the last several hundred years, with a particular focus on the twentieth century. Foreign policy is the study of the goals and strategies of nation-states. We will focus primarily on three – Britain, France, and Germany – and their interaction. Foreign policy is the reflection of configurations of powerful domestic interests and ideas as well as significant external forces. As such, significant attention will be paid to systemic influences on domestic politics and domestic political influences over foreign policy choices. The latter interact with the choices of others and lead to major international events. After an introduction to the major theoretical approaches (realism, liberalism, and constructivism) and concepts (the levels of analysis, the role of choice and constraint in international relations, ideas and material variables as causal factors), we will progress more or less chronologically. Our interest will be the international and domestic orders, both political and economic, in place in different European eras and how they influence one another. Aspects of domestic and foreign policies in these countries in these periods lead to significant junctures (the two world wars, the Cold War) that reorder countries internally and the European system as a whole. This cyclical and interactive process is the theme of this course. This is not just a history class. We will learn about significant outcomes and events but want to systematically understand their causes and their effects on subsequent developments. Comparison is our tool.

Your grade will be made up of the following components:

- 10% Participation in course conferences.
- 25% 1st Mid-term.
- 25% 2nd Mid-term.
- 40% Final (comprehensive)

Policies on grading will be discussed in your conference section. A MyCourse page is in operation for this course. This will be for educational purposes only!

McGill values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

Course readings are available in a course pack at the bookstore. Many readings are available in on-line databases such as J-Stor. Readings are not textbook in nature, that is they are difficult, but ultimately more rewarding. We will address most in class as well.
COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

I. Theoretical Concepts and Approaches (January 7, 8, 10)

Students will be introduced to two paradigms, liberalism and realism, systematic ways of thinking about how international relations operates and what is important. Liberals stress the importance of ideas and domestic politics, and thereby the contingent nature of foreign policy driven by choices. Realists offer a more deterministic and systemic view that focuses on power and constraints.


II. Modern State Formation: Prussia, France, England (January 14, 15, 17)

This section will explore the processes behind the formation of the Prussian, French and English states, and the critical paths taken early on that would affect the development of democracy. There are two primary schools of thought, an economic one that stresses differences in the timing of industrialization, a geopolitical one that stresses the importance of geography and threat. The key contrast is between authoritarian Prussia and more democratic England.


III. Critical Juncture #1: The French Revolution and Its Consequences

(February 21, 22, 24)

This section will examine the geopolitical and economic origins of the French revolution. The tremendous turmoil that engulfed French internally had a profound effect abroad, whether by spawning wars, threatening the legitimacy of the aristocratic order across Europe, or demanding
military innovation. The period following the revolution witnessed the first multilateral effort at managing European foreign relations, the Concert of Europe, which was also directed at stabilizing France’s internally. It was a tremendously peaceful period marked by the growing influence of the British empire, although the unification of Germany increasingly upset this order.


IV. Critical Juncture #2: The First World War (January 28, 29)

This section traces the rise of Germany and its role in bringing about the First World War. Some argue that the economic and political path it had taken long before led inevitably to aggression. Others point to the difficult geopolitical position of Germany or the unstable distribution of power in Europe. Beliefs about the balance of power and state of military technology also might have contributed.


V. The Interwar Years: International and Domestic Order (February 4, 5, 11)

This part of the course traces the political and economic turmoil of the interwar years. It is marked by the most ambitious effort yet at creating an international order, one based on collective security. Although both France and Britain were both concerned with solving the “German” problem, they approached it differently. Economically the interwar years were marked by a deterioration of the order provided by the gold standard and British economic hegemony due to a lack of international leadership, different ideas about the international economy worked and a shifting balance of class power.


**February 12: 1st MID-TERM!!!**

**VI. Critical Juncture #3: The Second World War** (February 18, 19)

This portion of the class investigates the rise of fascism in Germany and the failure of Britain and France to stop it. We explore the ideology of fascism, both its historical antecedents and its unique features. Then we question why Britain and France appeased, rather than confronted, Germany. Possible answers are economic, geographic, technological and ideological. We explore whether the failure of the League of Nations and the beginning of WWII was inevitable.


**VII. Postwar International Order: the EU and NATO** (February 25, 26)

This section is devoted to the two pillars of the successful European order after the Second World War. NATO provided security from both within (Germany) and without (Russia) through an American security guarantee. The European Community fostered trade that both promoted material prosperity but also bound former enemies increasingly together in a supranational organization. Both were innovative new strategies that differed significantly from prior national and international strategies and were contested domestically.


**MARCH 4-8 STUDY BREAK**
VIII. Postwar Domestic Consensus: National Political Cultures and Models of Capitalism (March 11, 12, 18)

While the previous section was devoted to international order, this one investigates the stable domestic consensus that developed in all three countries and contrasted significantly with the interwar period. Britain formed a special relationship with the US. Germany embedded itself in a system of multilateral restraints that reflected its antimilitarist political culture and marked a lasting departure from its authoritarian past. And France increasingly accepted a Gaullist approach that stressed French grandeur and independence and existed uneasily with early commitments to NATO and the EC. Each country also developed a unique model of social democratic capitalism that reflected its institutional and position in the international economy and commanded consensus across the political spectrum.


MARCH 19: 2nd MID-TERM!!!

IX. Threats to the Postwar Consensus: Globalization and Value Change (March 25, 26)

Changes both from within and without threatened the stability of the domestic foreign and economic policy consensus in each of these countries. Globalization challenged unique models of capitalism, pushing toward convergence around market-driven outcomes. Europe responded by embracing these trends, institutionalized in the Single Market of the EC. Postwar prosperity led to the rise of new issues articulated by a “new left” that was active in the peace movement and affected choices about security strategy, sowing the seeds for the end of the Cold War.


X. Critical Juncture #4: End of the Cold War (April 3, 8)
The end of the Cold War and the unification of Germany ushered in dire prognoses about the return of instability to Western Europe, yet the Europeans responded by intensifying their postwar path. Rather than disappearing, NATO found a new mission, and the European Community took its boldest step yet, creating a common currency. Debates about monetary union demonstrate a striking similarity to the original creation of the EC.


**XI. Post-Cold War Era: Continuity and Change** (April 9, 15)

Just a few years after the Cold War ended, however, there are significant questions about the limits of the postwar consensus. The wars in the Balkans expose both differences within and between European countries. The Iraq war creates and reflects what many regard as permanent rifts between Europeans and Americans due to their different geopolitical positions and ways of approaching international relations. And the EU, previously believed to command consensus at home, is dealt a striking blow in the defeat of the French referendum on the European constitution.


**Additional Considerations**

a. “In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded."

b. In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.