Purpose and Scope of the Course
The course is designed to help students gain a better understanding of contemporary political issues and developments in Western Europe, without falling into the trap of either “instant analysis” or broad generalizations, dear to journalists and media commentators. The people of Western Europe have offered much (both good and bad) to the language and grammar of politics -- ranging from state, sovereignty, army, war, citizenship, territory, diplomacy, totalitarianism, the Holocaust, and terrorism to the rule of law, liberal democracy, socialism, and the long-term, if tumultuous, movement of replacing ethnic nationality and protectionism with more inclusive and complex visions of state, nation and markets. The post-1945 period ushered in the cold war but also a new era of peace, politics and political economy, including the so-called German and Italian miracles. The Faustian bargains that created the postwar ways of doing politics are now being challenged internally (through various efforts of regional and local movements aimed at decentering the state and challenging party monopoly) and externally and transnationally (through waves of migration, the nascent European Union and monetary crises). The course will unpack what these Faustian bargains and internal and external challenges are. Though not many of these areas can be fully treated here, students should gain an encapsulated understanding of critical developments taking place in contemporary Europe that undermine the conventional wisdom and call for a re-examination of the way we understand public affairs. A core question we want to understand: how can a society reap the benefits of collective action while avoiding its often deleterious unintended consequences?
For all these reasons, a major prerequisite for the course is curiosity.

Readings
One textbook has been ordered at the McGill U. Bookstore for the class:
Note: the 8th edition.
The other readings will be in the Course Pack, available at the McGill Bookstore. (These readings are individually available on line.) Students are urged to do the readings before coming to class. This will make it easier to follow the lecture and to participate in conference discussion. The course is organized thematically, though there will be country-specific material covered throughout. You will learn to read analytically in this course and I will help you to distinguish the detail in the readings that counts from the detail that does not. You may have access to My
Course; though I prefer to communicate with you in class and during office hours. I will always inform you where you should be in the readings via announcements in class or via email.

**Integrity:** McGill University 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 [http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information).

**Course Evaluation**
- Midterm 20%
- Short Term Paper 25%
- Final Exam 40%
- Conference attendance and participation 15%

- The date of the midterm exam is February 17, 2015. No make-up.
- The date of the final exam is set by the University.
- More detailed information regarding weekly conferences and conferences grades will be provided in the first week of classes. Conferences will most likely start in the third week of January. Until they start, we have lectures for the full time on T&Thu. After conferences begin, we move to two 50 minute lectures per week, though I retain the right to extend the lectures, should that be necessary to cover topics.

**Term Paper**
The term paper can take one of two forms. One form is a 10-12 pages (typed double-spaced) on a particular topic of the course. The idea behind it is to make sure that you maximize your grasp of the issues covered in the course. You can also suggest a related topic, subject to the approval by your teaching assistant or myself. A second form is an “editorial” of no more than 750 words on a particular set of readings and course topic. This exercise is aimed at improving your skills of observation, reflection and synthesis. You choose one or the other. You would need to inform me which paper option you prefer no later than the last day of class before the Reading Week. The paper is due the last day of class. More details of the term paper will be provided in one of our first meetings.

**Course Topics and Readings**

N.B.: Crepaz and Steiner= C-S; Course Pack = CP

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**Part I. Introduction**

**Topic I. Challenges of Cognition**

C-SP: chapters 1, 11.

CS:


**Part II. Faustian Bargains in Post-War Settlements**

**Topic II. Forms of Democracy and Administration**

*C-S*: chapter 4, 5, 6, 7.

*CP:*


Two diagrams: administrative organization and evolution of ideological political families in France.


**Topic III. Ruling Classes and Individual Citizens (Political Parties, Electoral Laws and National Government Coalitions)**

*C-S* chapters 2, 3.

*CP:*


**Topic IV. In Care of the State**


*CP:*


**Topic V. Rent Seeking**

Part III. The Search for Alternatives to Post-War Settlements

Topic VI. The European Union and Democracy in Europe: Fixing the German Problem and Confronting the ‘Joint-Decision Trap’?

C-S: 304-329.

CP:

Topic VII. The Revolt of the Electorate to Party Rule and State Monopoly: German Exceptionalism?

C-S. chapter 8.
CP:

Topic VIII. Beyond the Meltdown of 2008, and the Debt Greek Crisis of 2011: Rethinking Human Scale Economic Institutions for Development
Tine de Moor. 2013. Homo Cooperans. Institutions for collective action and the compassionate society. Inaugural Lecture, Utrecht University, Holland, 2013. (pp.36) I will make this available to class via email.
C-S chapter 9.
CP:

**Topic IX. Civic Competence and Democratic Public Administration**

C-S chapter 13.

**CP:**


**Topic X. Conclusions: Lessons Learned?**