**JTM084 Current Challenges in Europe**

**Martin Mejstřík**

Winter semester 2025/2026

Fri 12:30 -14:00

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The master course Current challenges in Europe was especially designed for the European Politics and Society – Václav Havel Joint Master Programme and is a part of obligatory EPS courses. It consists mainly of guest lectures delivered by guest lecturers from Partner universities, Charles University academics, associated partners representatives and experts giving the students a multidimensional perspective (academic and non-academic) on current challenges Europe and European Union have been recently facing.

The course will be held in Jinonice in the room B103

**Requirements:**

Final paper – 8-10 pages, students may choose from different lecture topics, deadline for topic upload: 30/11/2025, deadline for submission January 15, 2026.

The Final Paper (100 points) will be evaluated based on the following rubric:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Literature review + research question
 | max. 20 points |
| Number and quality of discussed literature (4);Identification of gap in the literature (4);Research question (RQ) (4). |  |
| 1. Theoretical background
 | max. 16 points |
| Relevance of theoretical approach for the paper (5);Discussion of main arguments, weak and strong points of the approach (5). |  |
| 1. Analysis /methodology
 | max. 16 points |
| Relevance of methodology for the RQ (4);Explanation of application and relevance of methodology approach (3);Relevance of chosen resources (3). |  |
| 1. Results
 | max.16 points |
| Coherence of the results with RQ (5);Innovation of the empirical results (5). |  |
| 1. Discussion + conclusion
 | max. 16 points |
| Contextualization of empirical results/RQ answer in the context of the academic literature (5);Clear answer to RQ and summary of main results (5). |  |
| 1. Language
 | max. 16 points |
| Structure (3);Flow of thoughts and arguments (3);Adequate and formal language (2). |  |

All documents will be uploaded to moodle: https://dl1.cuni.cz/course/view.php?id=15786

**Course evaluation:**

A - "výborně - A" - "excellent - A"
B - "výborně - B" - "excellent - B"
C - "velmi dobře - C" - "very good - C"
D - "velmi dobře - D" - "very good - D"
E - "dobře - E" - "good - E"
F - "neprospěl/a - F" - "fail - F"

**Use of AI:**

• A mandatory part of the paper is a detailed statement of whether and how you used generative artificial intelligence tools (chatbots) in its preparation. If it is missing or incomplete, the paper may be considered plagiarism. Whenever you use text generated by ChatGPT or another generative artificial intelligence tool, you **must indicate** this in your paper and cite the tool.

• AI may only be used as a tool for obtaining and processing information, not as a means of generating entire papers or substantial parts thereof:

o   You are free to use AI tools for language corrections.

o   You are free to use generative AI for preparatory tasks (brainstorming and generation of ideas, search for relevant literature)

o   You may not use, however, any generative AI tool for the generation of the text you are submitting as its author. That is, no part of your submitted text itself may be AI-generated.

• The student is responsible for any errors in the text, not the AI tool used. It is the student's responsibility to verify the accuracy of all generated information and sources.

• Further recommendations regarding the use of generative artificial intelligence at Charles University available at<https://ai.cuni.cz/AIEN-13.html>

**Reading:**

Articles and book chapters (20-40 pages/week). Links on moodle.

**Programme:**

3/10 **Introduction** + **Cleavages in Europe: religious, ethnic, economic, social**

Discussion about main cleavages in European society and their changes in recent years

Kriesi, H., Restructuration of Partisan Politics and the Emergence of a New Cleavage Based on Values, *West European Politics*, 33:3, 2010, pp. 673-685.

Minkenberg, M., Religion and Euroscepticism: Cleavages, Religious Parties and Churches in EU Member States, *West European Politics*, 32:6, 2009, pp. 1190-1211.

10/10 NO CLASS

17/10 **Democratic Consolidation and Backsliding**

This session aims to theoretically and empirically explore and understand the dynamics and changes in European democracy.

Bogaards, M. (2018). De-democratization in Hungary: Diffusely Defective Democracy, *Democratization. 25*(8), 1481-1499.

Lührmann. A & Lindberg, S. I. (2019) A third wave of autocratization is here: what is new about it?, *Democratization*, *26*(7), 1095-1113.

24/10 **Current Populism in Europe**

Discussion about main populist topics and actors in contemporary Europe

Kriesi, Hanspeter. 2014. "The Populist Challenge". *West European Politics* 37, 2, 361-378.

Mudde, Cas. 2004. „The Populist Zeitgeist“. *Government and Opposition* 39, 4: 542-563.

31/10 **Digital Challenges in Media**

 Guest lecture from Zuzana Lizcová

 TBA

7/11 **Post-communist countries: a successful transformation?**

Discussion about how the post-communist countries performed during the process of transformation towards democracy and how they are doing now.

Kitschelt, H., Mansfeldová, Z., *Post-Communist Party Systems*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 19-42.

Ágh, A., Increasing europopulism as a megatrend in East Central Europe: from facade democracies to velvet dictatorship, *Baltic Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 5, 2016, pp. 21-39.

14/11 **Guest lecture from Carlo Masala (University of Munich)** -TBC

TBA

21/11 **EU-Russia Relations Since 2014**

 Guest lecture from Maxine David (Leiden University)

Siddi, M., The partnership that failed: EU-Russia relations and the war in Ukraine, *Journal of European Integration*, 2022, 44:6, pp. 893-898.

28/11- I **Let´s be the first one: Climate neutrality in Europe** (12:30 – 13:50)

Guest lecture from Eliška Ullrichová

Jordan, A., Gravey, V. and Adelle, C. (2021). EU Environmental Policy at 50: Retrospect and Prospect. In Jordan, A. and Gravey, V. (eds) Environmental Policy in the EU: Actors, Institutions and Processes. (Routledge), pp. 357-374.

28/11 – II **European green transition and related securities** (14:00 – 15:20)

Guest lecture from Eliška Ullrichová

Jerzyniak, T. (2024). The EU De-Risking of Energy Dependencies: Towards a New Clean Energy Geopolitical Order? Politics and Governance 12.

5/12 **Migration to Europe: challenges and opportunities**

###  Discussion about main national and EU approaches towards different types of migration to Europe

###  Mathias Czaika, Marta Bivand Erdal & Cathrine Talleraas (2023) Exploring Europe’s external migration policy mix: on the interactions of visa, readmission, and resettlement policies, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49:12, 3140-3161

Erik Snel, Özge Bilgili & Richard Staring (2021) Migration trajectories and transnational support within and beyond Europe, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47:14.

12/12 **European Left: what happened after the end of the welfare state?**

Discussion about the development of left-wing ideologies in the 21st century.

Císař, O., The Left in the beginning of the 21st century, in Kopeček, L., *Trajectories of the Left. Social Democratic and Ex-Communist Parties in Contemporary Europe: Between Past and Future*, Brno: CDK, 2005, pp. 11-28.

March, L., Radical Left Success before and after Great Recession, in March, L. and D. Keith, *Europe´s Radical Right: From Marginality to Mainstream?*, London: Rowman, 2016, pp. 27-50

### 19/12 Final session + discussion