

Manfred Henningsen

Polsc. 307

European Politics

Spring 2015

This course on European politics will start with the crisis that was triggered by the Ukraine's wish for a closer association with the European Union (EU). We will use this crisis in order to find out what motivated the Ukraine to launch the process and why Putin's Russia intervened in the violent way it did. We will ask the question whether the tension illustrates the strength or the weakness of the EU as a political project. Does Russia feel threatened by the emergence of the EU as a confederated political formation of 28 states and 560 million citizens?

The Ukrainian crisis sheds light on the appeal of the EU for some countries that want to join while some already existing member states like, for example, the UK may want to leave. We will discuss this apparent contradiction. Is the EU in its present configuration threatened by internal tensions it cannot control? Will the growing nationalism in some member states like, for example, France defeat the EU?

Why has the EU remained attractive to many? We will discuss the features of the social welfare state that characterize most continental societies. We will also look at nationality issues in the UK and Spain and ask the question why many Scots and Catalans want to leave their respective nation states but not the EU.

We will discuss the issue of old style racism in the EU and the new anti-immigrant xenophobia that has emerged in many EU societies. The migration within the EU and the migration from outside the EU, for example, North- and sub-Saharan Africa will be a major focus of the class.

Finally we will talk about the role Germany plays within the EU. Has its economic power become too threatening to some member states? What political role should Germany play in the center of the EU and Europe?

Required Text: Ronald Tiersky/ Erik Jones (eds.), *Europe Today*, 5th ed., 2014.