THE POLITICS OF LABOR IN EUROPE

Central European University
Department of Political Science
MA Program, Winter Semester 2012/2013
4 CEU credits, 8 ECTS credits

Instructor: Dorothee Bohle
Time and Place: Tuesdays 11.00-12.40, FT 908
Office hours: Wednesdays 9:30-1.30

Course description

An important feature of continental European capitalism is its social dimension. Comprehensive welfare systems, and highly institutionalized and politicized forms of industrial relations have constituted crucial elements of the post-war European model of society. A historic compromise between strong labor movements and capital willing to accommodate workers’ demands has provided the foundation for this social model. The capital-labor accord has come under attack in recent decades. Structural changes in production, rising unemployment, shifting macroeconomic priorities, and, last but not least, globalization and Europeanization of economic relations are held responsible for this. Rather than a simple dismantling of the social model, however, we see its far reaching transformation. The course examines the emergence and transformation of the compromise between capital and labor in Europe. The first part asks about the conditions under which labor could become a major political actor in the post-war era and examines its role in the development of solidaristic wage policies and expansion of the welfare states. The second part studies the impact of recent economic and political changes associated with globalization and European integration. How have these changes affected labor’s capacity to act in the political and economic arena? Finally, the course addresses the domestic and international factors that explain labor weakness in Eastern Europe’s new capitalism, and evaluates the future of labor in an enlarged Europe.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the class, students will have acquired basic knowledge of European welfare states and systems of industrial relations and their transformations over time. They will also be familiar with different theoretical approaches to these issues. The course enhances critical thinking and writing, multidisciplinary orientation, contributes to the mastery of academic writing and oral skills. Learning outcomes are supported by the course’s requirements and assessed accordingly.
Requirements
1. Active participation in in-class discussions. This is a discussion-based seminar, where attendance and participation are crucial (25% of final grade).
2. Two position papers. This is a reading intensive seminar which will proceed entirely by discussions of the required readings supported by position papers. Position papers are small essays on the weekly readings. They should shortly summarize the readings, reflect on the major arguments, and include questions for further discussion. Position papers can compare the readings to other readings of the class, or apply the readings to an empirical case. The papers should be 4-5 pages long, and are to be distributed electronically to the whole class latest by noon the day prior to the class. Students will be asked to shortly present their papers in class (30 % of the grade).
3. Short questions. Students who do not submit a position paper in a given week, are required to submit three short questions on one of the weekly readings (eight times all in all). The questions have to be submitted electronically latest by noon the day prior to the class (10 % of the final grade).
4. One 3000-3500 words (without bibliography) long research paper. A short outline of the research paper has to be submitted by week 11, and will be discussed in class in week 12. You will be asked in week 12 to serve as a discussant of your colleagues’ research paper outline (35% of final grade).

TOPICS AND READINGS

Introduction

Week 1

Seminar 1&2


Part I: The postwar settlement

Week 2: The Institutionalization of the Postwar Compromise

Required:

Seminar 2:
Required:

**Recommended (Seminar 1&2):**

### Week 3: The Expansion of the Welfare State

**Seminar 1:**
- **Required:**

**Seminar 2:**

**Recommended (Seminar 1&2)**

### Week 4: Welfare and Production Regimes
Seminar 1:
Required:

Seminar 1:
Required:

Recommended:

Part II: Globalization and European Integration as Challenges to the Postwar Compromise

Week 5: Globalization I

Seminar 1

Seminar 2:

Recommended


Week 6: New forms of governing work and welfare

Seminar 1: Corporate Social Responsibility
Required

Seminar 2: Flexicurity, Employacurity
Required

Week 7: European Monetary Union and the Transformation of Wage Bargaining

Seminar 1

Seminar 2
Recommended:


Part III: Labor Weakness in Eastern Europe

Week 8: Class and Politics in Eastern Europe

Seminar 1&2:

Required:


Recommended:


**Week 9: Explaining Labor Weakness in Eastern Europe**

**Seminar 1:**

*Required:*


**Seminar 2**


*Recommended (Seminar 1&2):*


**Week 10: Welfare States and Reforms in Eastern Europe**
Seminar 1  
**Required:**  

Seminar 2  
**Required:**  

**Recommended**  

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Week 11: Free Movement of Labor in the EU

Seminar 1:  

Seminar 2:  
Recommended:

Week 12: Discussion of Research Papers and Conclusion