Foundations of Diplomacy

The Challenges of European Politics in the 21st Century

Course Content

This course aims to explain recent developments across a range of issues which affect European countries.

It deals with the rise and fall of ‘New Left’ governments and then the return to power of parties of the right, examining the extent of consensus politics in the ‘post-ideological’ era.

Particular attention is paid to the role and economic power of Germany, the UK’s political divergence from the European mainstream, the challenge facing the Hollande presidency in France, and political change in Scandinavia, Italy, Greece and Iberia.

As well as country-specific studies, the course also evaluates common themes in European politics such as secularisation, post-Christianity, the domestic challenge of Islam, and the impact of Russia and Eastern Europe on West European policy.

Weekly Outline

1 European Politics and Regional Identity
2 European Politics and sociology of secularisation
3 European Politics and domestic terrorism: combining liberty with security
4 British Politics after the 2015 General Election
5 Ireland: Beyond the Politics of Nationalism
6 Beyond Gaullism: Contemporary French Politics
7 Politics of Austerity: Europe’s Economy Falters 2008 – 2018
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Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you should have:

- an appreciation of European politics in late 20th century and early 21st century Europe
- identified the principal governmental and political features in modern European nations and appreciate both similarities and differences
- a growing ability to critically interpret and analyse issues in contemporary European politics