

IS-122 EUROPEAN SOCIETY PAST AND PRESENT Europe Semester 2024

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In IS 122, we will explore the societies of our host cultures on Westmont in Europe, including England, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovakia, Croatia, Italy, and France. We will seek to understand these various European societies in both historical and contemporary contexts through observation, study, and analysis of political, economic, racial and ethnic, religious, social, and cultural patterns and controversies. We will engage with scholarly analysis, keep up with current events, and investigate our host cultures as we experience daily life – from the grocery store to public transportation to civic memorials. Guest lecturers will bring us insights that help to explain key historical and contemporary social issues in each country.

Students will be required to engage with host contexts with breadth and depth, with assignments focusing on matters of pressing public interest. Given the themes of the program as a whole, we will particularly focus on the ways environmental issues—such as climate change, rising sea levels, biodiversity loss, and warfare—impact politics, the economy, and daily life. We will also reflect on the place of Christian community in our host cultures, and their role in responding to environmental challenges.

General Education

This course satisfies Understanding Society. According to Westmont’s General Education document, an Understanding Society course develops students’ ability to decipher the complex interactions of “individuals, groups, institutions, cultural norms, and public policy” using a variety of models and theories, all in the service of understanding society, culture, economics, and politics. In this course, we will particularly address the intersections of society, cultures, politics, and economics with the “sticky problem” of the environment, engaging with the specific problems, possibilities, and controversies of social, economic, and political policies aimed at protecting, directing, and changing human interactions with the natural world.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will identify basic features that characterize the societies of contemporary European nations.
 - *The skills needed for this outcome will be developed through course readings, podcasts, guest lectures, and the experiential learning of navigating daily life in our host countries.*
 - *Class discussions, quizzes, and short writing assignments will assess this learning outcome.*
2. Students will use foundational social scientific theories to analyze and explain their own social and cultural observations of daily life, public spaces, memorials, political policies, economics, and the interactions between individuals, social groups, and institutions.
 - *The skills needed for this learning outcome will be developed through course readings and guest lectures.*
 - *The site guide exercise and reflective essays will assess this learning outcome.*
3. Students will apply their developing knowledge of society and appropriate social scientific theories to respond to contemporary events and controversies in our host countries.
 - *The skills needed for this learning outcome will be developed through course readings, guest lectures, and class discussions.*

Commented [1]: This learning outcome reflects the first Understanding Society certification criteria: Identify foundational theories that offer explanations of social, political, economic, and/or cultural phenomena.

Commented [2]: This learning outcome reflects the second Understanding Society certification criteria: Apply foundational theories to analyze contemporary problems or controversies. It also incorporates the SLO for Understanding Society: Students will apply appropriate foundational theories to analyze social, political, economic, and/or cultural phenomena.

Commented [3]: This learning outcome reflects the third Understanding Society certification criteria: make personal and social application of various theories— informed by a biblical perspective.

- *The site guide exercise and reflective essays will assess this learning outcome.*

COURSE MATERIALS

Required course materials are as follows:

The Economist, “Europe” section especially—required reading during the summer prior to our travel and during the trip itself.

A major, daily, global newspaper of your choice—*The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, etc. (Ask if you are unsure what qualifies.)

Quality guidebooks to our host cities and countries (see the guide on Canvas for possibilities).

Additional readings, lectures, and podcasts will be available through Canvas.

COURSE PLAN

Our travel plans will determine the specific details of each week. In general, however, you can anticipate one weekly class discussion; one weekly guest lecture; and one weekly group activity (a site visit, a site guide, a church service, or similar experiences).

COURSE POLICIES

Hospitality and mutual respect

According to Westmont’s Community Life statement, “our social and intellectual growth needs freedom for exploration complemented by a commitment to good will and graciousness.” We will practice both freedom and commitment in this class by listening to each other carefully; by asking questions as we seek to understand each other; by being open to the exploration of different responses to issues of public concern; with intellectual honesty as we evaluate varying perspectives; and by engaging in discussion with respect and civility.

Disagreement is a good and useful element in social and intellectual growth. As we all know, though, disagreements often become acrimonious, and can actually prevent growth. In this class, we’ll try to disagree constructively, with respect for the viewpoints of others. All participants in the class are expected to avoid the ridicule, abuse, or harassment of other students, your professors, or guest lecturers. We hope you will engage fully in class—but do so in the recognition that words matter. Practice kindness and generosity as you participate in the classroom and beyond.

Academic accommodations

Students should be aware of Westmont College’s Office of Disability Services. The following statement is provided by the director: “Students who have been diagnosed with a condition that meets the criteria of a disability are strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as early as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by ODS. These accommodations may be necessary to ensure your full participation and the successful completion of this course.” Please contact ods@westmont.edu or visit the website for more information.

Emergency accommodations are also possible for students who do not have documentation from disability services. In particular, illness, injuries, and stress related to academics, work, family life, and personal relationships can happen to anyone. If you feel you need a short-term

emergency accommodation to manage coursework, please speak to your professors to work out an appropriate plan.

Academic integrity and technology

Westmont College is committed to the highest standards of academic honesty. Take the time to read the college's policies on academic integrity thoroughly (it's linked through the Canvas page for the class). Please reflect this commitment in your work: avoid cheating, falsification, and plagiarism.

Even though you have the resources of the internet at your fingertips, we ask that you take these policies seriously in this class. Follow instructions for what resources you are allowed to use for assignments and quizzes. Cite your sources carefully. If you plagiarize, cheat on, or falsify any work in this class, you will receive a 0 for the assignment, and a severe offense may result in failure of the course. Academic dishonesty is a serious matter; please don't do it.

To avoid plagiarism, be sure to cite anything you take from someone else – quotes, phrases, words, facts, theories, ideas – even if we know what source you're using. If you didn't think it, don't take credit for it. When in doubt, cite! Please use an acceptable style (MLA, APA, etc.); at a minimum, you must provide the author's name and page number for each quote, phrase, word, or idea you use.

You will be using technology in this class to access course material, presentations, quizzes and assignments, exams, and more. You are welcome to use laptops or other devices in class, for class purposes. But please use your devices wisely—Westmont's academic integrity policies still matter.

Here's something else to consider: some studies suggest that taking notes by hand helps us remember, integrate, and engage with the material better than typing notes. Consider trying it yourself – but in any case, when using a laptop or other device for class, conquer the temptation to multitask. You'll get through the material more quickly and effectively if you pay attention to what you're doing.

Attendance and participation

These are the activities, experiences and ideas we believe you came on Europe semester for, and so you'll be highly motivated to wring every drop of learning from the experiences in this course. Practically, the requirements for this course give you rich freedom to determine your own path of deeper learning from site visits, visiting lectures, group events, independent visits, reading, web research, conversation with your fellow travelers, and some quiet reflection.

Attending class (whether we're in a classroom or a market or a historic site) means being present physically and mentally: during class, you should be seated on time, with all assigned readings completed, prepared to contribute to class discussions. Habitual tardiness, absence of body or mind, and failure to bring course materials may result in loss of points.

In terms of participation, we'll look for signs of genuine curiosity, initiative, responsibility, and willingness to be transformed in your involvement in these daily activities and in your writing about them. You are asked to actively participate in class discussions by being present, asking good questions, freely contributing when appropriate, and being fully prepared (via readings or

reflective exercises). Beyond class time, you are expected to be good citizens by caring for each other, taking initiative to get baggage loaded, being on-time, and generally being the best group member you can be. You are also required to be hospitable at all times to all of our speakers, guides, and hosts by paying attention, dressing appropriately, and being mindful.

Submitting assignments and making up missed work

All readings and assignments are due on the date listed on Canvas. To be prepared to complete your readings and submit your assignments on time, read the syllabus and any assignment requirements carefully so you can plan your approach ahead of schedule.

Most assignments can be submitted on Canvas. You can type your responses directly in assignment text boxes, or copy and paste from your own word processor (be sure to proofread for any copying errors). Please check that your assignment is fully submitted, as sometimes Canvas is slow to upload assignments.

If you miss a deadline for submitting your work, you can always turn it in late (but note that there are penalties for excessive amounts of late work: a 2 point deduction per week). We want to recognize the particular stressors and problems of education on the road, but we also want to keep you on track so you don't fall behind - so if you find yourself struggling to keep up, please let us know. We can always work out a plan for completing the class!

Grade definitions

Westmont has an extensive description of what it means to get an A, B, C, D, or F (available through a link on Canvas). Here is a brief summary of the policy:

- A: Exceptional. Engages with course material critically, grasps its wider implications, and applies it creatively. Submitted work is superior in content and presentation.
- B: Very good. Demonstrates interest in and comprehension of the material and the associated scholarship. Submitted work is neat and mostly free of errors.
- C: Satisfactory. Meets the course requirements and shows adequate knowledge and understanding of the material. Submitted work is presented according to expectations.
- D: Poor. Completes course requirements, but submitted work does not show understanding of the material.
- F: Failing. Course requirements are not met and submitted work indicates a lack of understanding.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Daily preparation (30%)

During this semester, you will engage with a variety of readings, lectures, podcasts, and other material. Read, listen, and watch carefully so that you will be prepared to discuss the readings, engage in the complexities of the issues we're discussing, and understand our host cultures.

To be prepared to discuss an assigned reading, lecture, or podcast, be able to summarize and evaluate the material. Connect this particular source with other course materials, class discussions, and other courses you've taken. (See the 'Reading Strategies' guide under Learning Resources on Canvas for more ideas on approaching and comprehending assigned readings, among other sources.) Take good notes as you prepare – you can use your personal notes for class discussions, quizzes, and assignments.

Commented [4]: The Daily Preparation activities will help develop students' knowledge and skills for each learning outcome. The assessment activities test students' accomplishment of the first learning outcome.

Your preparation for the class will be assessed in several ways. More detailed explanations of these activities are available in 'Course components' on Canvas, and in individual assignment descriptions.

(1) Contributions to class discussions: Your participation in small group and full class discussions will help you develop your own understanding through conversations with your classmates and professors.

(2) Writing responses: These short assignments ask you to reflect on and explore particular issues or concerns more deeply. They will give you the opportunity to develop your own skills as an interpreter of our host cultures, as well as dig into a variety of social, political, economic, religious, and cultural questions and concerns.

(3) Review quizzes: Regular quizzes over readings and lectures give you the opportunity to check your completion, knowledge, and understanding of assigned readings, lectures, and other class material. These quizzes will also include major current events, so keep up with your reading of newspapers and *The Economist*.

2. Site Visits (30%)

Site visits and the site guide assignment give you the opportunity to realize the theories, concepts, histories, and analyses on the ground. You'll experience the places you're studying yourself, observe how people interact with these locations, and add your own analysis to your developing understanding of societies, politics, economics, and cultures.

Site visits. Many of our experiences will be required events that we do as a group. We are also eager for you to explore on your own—you're required to do at least one independent site visit per week, from the menu on Canvas (you can propose additional sites, too!). To receive credit for your independent site visits,

- Prepare by exploring the required readings, podcasts, or other resources.
- Take notes on the experience either during or immediately afterwards, and also take a selfie at the site!
- Submit your selfie along with a one-page analysis of your experience at the site, using your developing understandings of the social, political, economic, and historical concerns of the relevant culture.

Site guides. The site guide exercise asks you to research a particular site—a government building, a monument or memorial, a neighborhood—with a partner. You'll use your research to prepare a 15-20 minute conversation which will bring your site to life for the group, illuminating contemporary controversies and debates with historical perspective.

- Research your site thoroughly, using the IS 122 resources we've provided as well as your own investigations in scholarly literature and reliable internet sources. Visit your site to make your own observations, as well as to find good locations for our group visit.
- Select three to four key figures associated with your site. These could be specific figures (e.g., Lord Elgin, Christiane Tytgat, and Rishi Sunak in the Parthenon gallery at British Museum in London), or they could be nameless (a Greek citizen, a British citizen, and a random museum visitor wondering why these broken statues matter so much).
- Consider the site from the perspective of each of your figures, taking into account conflict and violence, culture, theology, and politics, as well as space. What does this person see and hear at your site? What does this person do at your site? What is the significance of the site for this person?

Commented [5]: Site Visits give students the opportunity to apply the foundational theories and socio-historical analysis through their own observations of key sites -- from important buildings to memorials to grocery stores and public parks. The site guide exercise assesses students' accomplishment of the second and third learning outcomes.

- Finally, bring your historical figures into conversation with each other: what questions would they want to ask each other? What arguments might they have? What would they not understand about the changing site, or the developing significance of the site? Do you see options for “solving” the controversies or debates represented by the site?

3. Reflective Essays (40%)

One of the best ways to understand and cement an experience in your memory is to reflect on it through writing. Our group visits, your self-directed site visits, and worship in local churches will form the basis of three reflective essays.

For each essay, you will choose a different focal issue from the following list: religion; nationalism; migration; wealth and poverty; ethnicity; conflict; colonialism; environment; or politics. Select three different sites that illuminate your chosen issue, and use these sites to explain, analyze, and interpret your issue. For instance, you might write your first essay on the issue of colonialism, illuminating your analysis with your observations from the exhibits at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the immigrant communities of Brick Lane, and the curry restaurant down the street from our London accommodations.

Your essays must rely on background reading and class sessions relevant to the sites discussed—draw on the theoretical frameworks we are exploring to support your analysis. Your essays must also reflect your careful observations of the sites. Each essay should be 750-1000 words. Additional details are on the Reflective Essays assignment handout.

Locations, topics, and readings:

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Please follow the reading schedule posted on Canvas.

Cambridge

- Universities
 - Harley Richardson, “The Bad-Tempered Backstory of Town Vs. Gown” ([Learning through the Ages: A History of Education](#) blog)
- European identity and the EU
 - J. G. A. Pocock, “What Do We Mean by Europe?” (*The Wilson Quarterly* 21 [1997]: 12-29)
 - John McCormick, “What Is the European Union?” (chap. 1 of *Understanding the European Union*, 8th ed., Bloomsbury, 2021)

London

- Brexit
 - David Jeffery, “United Kingdom: The United Kingdom and Its Disunited People” (just pp. 14-21 in Erik Jones and Masha Hedberg, eds., *Europe Today*, 6th ed., Rowman and Littlefield, 2023)
 - Will Jennings and Gerry Stoker, “The Divergent Dynamics of Cities and Towns: Geographical Polarisation and Brexit” (*The Political Quarterly* 90.S2 [2019]: 155-166)
- The British Empire and its discontents
 - Gurinder K. Bhambra, “Postcolonial Europe” (ch. 3 in Chris Rumford, ed., *Sage Handbook of European Studies*, Sage, 2009)
 - Stuart Frost, “‘A Bastion of Colonialism’: Public Perceptions of the British Museum and Its Relation to Empire” (*Third Text* 33 [2019]: 487-499)

Commented [6]: The reflective essays give students the opportunity to use foundational theories to analyze key themes of the program, incorporating their experiential learning from site visits to explain and illustrate their discussions. The essays test students' accomplishment of the second and third learning outcomes.

- Gabriel Moshenska, “Creating a Museum of British Colonialism” (*New African*, Sept./Aug. 2020: 50)
- Immigrant communities in London
 - “How Migration is Changing London” ([After the Fact podcast episode](#))
 - *Windrush Betrayal* documentary

Reflective Essay 1 due

Utrecht

- Islam and integration in the Netherlands
 - Ayhan Kaya, “The Netherlands: From Multiculturalism to Assimilation” (chap. 4 of *Islam, Migration and Integration*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
 - Fernande W. Pool, “Respect, Freedom, Citizenship: Muslim Women’s Secularities and Perspectives on Wellbeing” (*Religion, State and Society* 50 [2022]: 40-59)
- Climate change and adaptation: lessons from the past
 - Dagomar Degroot, “Climate Change, Water, and the Dutch Golden Age” ([Europe Now 23 \[2018\]](#))

Freiburg

- The Holocaust
 - Thomas G. Vanderbeek, “Marginalization and Commemoration of Third Reich Victims in Germany” (*The Journal of Holocaust Research* 36 [2022]: 128-145)
- The legacy of the Iron Curtain: East and West Germany
 - Sonja K. Pieck, “What Stories Should a ‘National Nature Monument’ Tell? Lessons from the German Green Belt” (*Cultural Geographies* 26 [2018]: 195-210)
- Climate change and adaptation: the role of cities
 - Brenda B. Lin et al., “Integrating Solutions to Adapt Cities for Climate Change” (*The Lancet Planetary Health* 5 [2021]: e479-e486)
 - Kat Barber, “Freiburg: Germany’s Futuristic City Set in a Forest” ([BBC, 16 July 2020](#))

Reflective Essay 2 due

Slovakia

- The Roma
 - Adrian Marsh, “An Introduction to Romani History,” parts [1](#) and [2](#) (video, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture)
 - David Z. Scheffel, “Belonging and Domesticated Ethnicity in Veľký Šariš, Slovakia” (*Romani Studies* 5, 25 [2015]: 115-149)
 - Krista Harper, Tamara Steger, and Richard Filčák, “Environmental Justice and Roma Communities in Central and Eastern Europe” (*Environmental Policy and Governance* 19 [2009]: 251-268)
- The legacy of the Iron Curtain: Central and Eastern Europe
 - Stefan Lehne, “Europe’s East-West Divide: Myth or Reality?” ([Carnegie Europe, 11 April 2019](#))

Croatia

- Post-war justice, peace and reconciliation

- Sara Parker, “The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia: The Promise and Reality of Reconciliation in Croatia” (*Peace and Conflict Studies* 15 [2009]: 80-100)
- Ankica Cosic and Charles David Tauber, “The Perspectives of Reconciliation and Healing among Young People in Vukovar (Croatia)” (*International Journal of Peace Studies* 15 [2010]: 45-70)
- The EU and the war in Ukraine
 - Micheal Leigh, “The EU’s Response to the War in Ukraine” ([GIS Reports Online, 29 April 2022](#))
 - Cristian Nitoiu, “Towards Conflict or Cooperation? The Ukraine Crisis and EU-Russia Relations” (*Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16 [2016]: 375-390)

Italy (Venice, Tuscany)

- Recent challenges to the EU: the debt crisis and the coronavirus pandemic
 - Jonathan Hopkin, “A Slow Fuse: Italy and the EU Debt Crisis” (*The International Spectator* 47 [2012]: 35-48)
 - Jean Claude Cachia, “The Europeanization of the Covid-19 Pandemic Response and the EU’s Solidarity with Italy” (*Contemporary Italian Politics* 13 [2021]: 81-104)
- Climate change and adaptation: agriculture and tourism
 - Maurizio Boselli et al., “Resistance and Resilience to Changing Climate of Tuscany and Valpolicella Wine Grape Growing Regions in Italy” ([BIO Web of Conferences 7, 01012 \[2016\]](#))
 - Mattia Cai et al., *Climate Change and Tourism in Tuscany, Italy: What If Heat Becomes Unbearable?* (working paper, Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, 2011)

Nice

- Review and Wrap-Up

Reflective Essay 3 due