The Global Rise of Populism: Europe and Beyond
D285

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Course Description and Objectives

Populist parties are on the rise in Europe. From SYRIZA in Greece, Podemos in Spain, and the Five Star movement in Italy, to Brexit and the entry of AFD to the German Parliament, Orban in Hungary and Lepen in France, the increasing electoral support of populist parties is undoing the European political landscape.

The objective of this course is to explore the phenomenon of populism. To provide definitions of populism, and examine current populist forces in Europe and their characteristics. It will also examine the ambivalent relationship between populism and democracy and assess national and international responses to the rise of populism.

Assessment

The final grade will be based on a take-home final exam, an individual research project, and two short oral presentations. The take-home final exam will account for 30% of the grade. The individual research project will account for 50% of the grade. Class attendance, participation, and the oral presentations will account for the rest 20% of the grade. The first presentation will be a presentation of work in progress on your research paper. This oral presentation should be considered a “working session”. You will have five minutes to discuss where you are in your research and what problems you are having. Your classmates may “brainstorm” to help you out. The second oral presentation will be at the end of the semester. You will present to the class the results of your research. You will have ten minutes for your presentation plus time for questions from the class.
Course Structure and Readings

1. Defining Populism


2. The Ideological Characteristics of Contemporary European Populist Parties


3. Populism in the UK: Brexit


4. The Causes of Radicalism and Populism in Europe
   a. Economic and political explanations


   b. Cultural issues


5. Immigration-Race-Ethnicity


6. Electoral Systems


7. Party Competition and Polarization


8. Consequences and Policy Reforms


9. The Erosion of Liberal Democratic Institutions, Press Freedom and the Rule of Law


