

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

NUMBER: INTL 4335
TITLE: The Far Right in Western Democracies

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Cas Mudde (mudde@uga.edu)
OFFICE: Candler 324
OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 9:30-11.30, or by appointment

TERM: Spring 2018
DATE & TIME: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45
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Introduction:

Since the end of World War II, and the defeat of the Nazi Third Reich, few political phenomena have commanded so much attention in western democracies as far right politics. This has been particularly the case since the 1980s, when the so-called 'third wave' of radical right parties hit the shores of (Western) Europe. Though far right politics differ in many ways between countries, in and outside of Europe, there are few western countries where the far right is not regularly debated.

This highly topical course aims to introduce students to far right groups and politics in contemporary western democracies. We will discuss the (i) ideology and issues; (ii) parties, organizations and subcultures; (iii) leaders, members and voters; (iv) causes; and (v) consequences and responses. The last part of the course we will focus in more detail on far right politics in the United States, which until recently was considered as mainly historical and marginal.

While most of the readings for the first two-thirds of the course focus exclusively on the situation in (Western) Europe, students are encouraged to apply the insights to the current situation in Eastern Europe and North America too, by staying up-to-date on current affairs in general, and national elections in particular.

Readings:

The readings come almost exclusively from three recent books. You are strongly advised to purchase the Hawley and the Mudde Reader.

**Cas Mudde, The Populist Radical Right: A Reader.
London: Routledge, 2017. (Reader)**

**Jens Rydgren (ed.), The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. (Handbook)**

**George Hawley, Making Sense of the Alt-Right. New York: Columbia
University Press, 2017. (Hawley)**

The Rydgren Handbook is not out yet, but I have made an electronic version available on the New Elc course page (under “0. Course Info”).

Course objectives:

- To provide students with a conceptual and theoretical foundation to understanding far right politics in western democracies.
- To introduce the students to case studies of far right politics in various western countries.
- To discover and explain the differences and similarities that exist among far right politics in individual western countries.
- To offer students a deeper understanding of the relevance of far right politics in western democracies.

Teaching Methodology:

- Lectures
- Class discussions
- Group presentations
- Film presentations

Classroom Attendance and Activity

This class meets twice a week and attendance is **mandatory**. You can miss a maximum of **three** classes (no excuses or notes are necessary, although a heads-up will be appreciated). All further documented absences will lead to a lower class participation grade (**5 points** per missed class).

You are expected to have **read and reflected upon** *at least* the compulsory readings before the relevant class, *to follow key events in far right politics* in the media, and to **participate actively** in the discussions in class *and* on the ELC-discussion board.

Course Evaluation:

- ☑ Participation (15%)
- ☑ Group presentation (15%)
- ☑ Midterm exam (25%)
- ☑ Final paper (45%)

Participation (15%): you are expected to prepare, i.e. read and reflect upon, *at least* the required readings for each class, and participate in class in an active, civilized, and well-informed manner. You can also participate in the discussions on the New-Elc course page.

Group presentation (15%): you will give one group presentation on an assigned topic (schedule and topics to be announced in the third or fourth week of the course). The presentation should not be longer than **15 minutes**, be well-structured and well-researched – that means going well beyond the compulsory reading that all students have to do. A short **collective paper** on the topic (max. 1.500 words) must accompany the in-class presentation, which should include references to the consulted academic and other sources.

Midterm Exam (25%): you will have an in-class midterm exam that will assess your knowledge of all the material discussed up to that point. The exam will consist of 10 multiple choice, 3 short-answer questions, and 1 essay question. Date: **February, 15.**

Final Paper (45%): you have to write a final paper (of max. 5,000 words in length) in which you answer a relevant question on the basis of original research. The paper should draw upon your analysis of the compulsory academic readings and **at least 10 additional** academic sources. You are strongly advised to discuss the topic of the paper with me and to regularly come to office hours to discuss your progress during the semester. The final paper is due on **Thursday, May 3, 2018** at 10:45 p.m.

Academic Integrity:

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Grading:

Letter Grade	Points
A	93 – 100 points
A-	90 – 92 points
B+	87 – 89 points
B	83 – 86 points
B-	80 – 82 points
C+	77 – 79 points
C	73 – 76 points
C-	70 – 72 points
D+	67 – 69 points
D	63 – 66 points
D-	60 – 62 points
F	59 and below

Some Ground Rules:

1. **It is not my practice to give incompletes.** However, if there is suitable reason – subject to my approval and supported with appropriate written documentation – an exception to the “no incompletes” rule may be possible. With respect to these first ground rules, *if you have problems in completing assigned work, please let me know about it.*
2. **Laptops, tablets, phones, etc. are not allowed!** Be ready with pen and paper to make notes during the class. If you use any of these banned devices in class, you will be punished with a deduction of **10 points** of your *final grade!*
3. **You will be expected to attend class regularly, on time, and for the entirety of each class period.** Do not sign up for this class if you have social or other engagements (sports classes, meets, etc) that interfere with the time length of this course.
4. I do not expect that your views and perceptions of these controversial themes are identical with those of your classmates or me, either now or at the completion of the course. This course is a place for the free (and perhaps even heated) exchange of ideas. Thus I expect you to **challenge viewpoints** that differ from your own, but I also expect you to

- substantiate your arguments** on the basis of the readings, lectures and discussions.
5. If you need to use outside **reference works**, please consult Joel Krieger, et. al., *Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) as a place to start for political terms or concepts – do **not** use Webster or other dictionaries for political science definitions. For outside research sources, please use Galileo. Please do **not** use the notoriously unreliable Wikipedia until or unless this source emphasizes accuracy as much as it does volume and speed.
 6. If you believe that you should have received a better grade, please provide **an explanation** to me *in writing* and *within a week* of receiving the grade. I will then grade your *whole* exam/paper again and I will issue a “new” grade, which will be either the same, a higher, or a lower grade.

Important Dates:

February, 15	Midterm Exam
May, 3	Final Paper

Finally:

THE COURSE SYLLABUS IS A GENERAL PLAN FOR THE COURSE; DEVIATIONS ANNOUNCED TO THE CLASS BY THE INSTRUCTOR MAY (AND MOST PROBABLY WILL) BE NECESSARY!

THEMATIC OUTLINE

01/04 Introduction

In this introductory class we will discuss the intentions and outline of the course as well as the mutual expectations. We will also assess the students' backgrounds in the politics of western democracies in general, and in far right politics in particular.

Compulsory Reading:

Mudde, "Introduction to the Populist Radical Right" (Reader)

01/09 The Far Right in the 'Post-Fascist' Era

The First War was supposed to be the "War to End All Wars" but instead gave rise to fascism and the Second World War, the most destructive war in human history. After WW2, Europe was divided by the Cold War into a communist and dictatorial East and a capitalist and democratic West. In Western Europe individual states started a still ongoing process of integration, which was grounded in the idea of "never again." So how did the far right, which has always been linked to fascism, adapt to this 'post-fascist' era?

Movie: [The Big Picture: The Making and Breaking of Europe \(Part 2\)](#)

Compulsory Reading and Viewing:

[The Big Picture: The Making and Breaking of Europe \(Part 1\)](#)

Von Beyme (Reader, 7)

Optional Reading:

Levy, Carl. "Fascism, National Socialism and Conservatives in Europe, 1914-1945: Issues for Comparativists", *Contemporary European History*, 8:1 (1999), 97-126.

01/11 France

The Front national (National Front, FN) in France is broadly considered to be the prototype of the modern populist radical right party. It was founded more than 45 years ago and its leaders, Jean-Marie and Marine Le Pen, have become household names around the world, including in the US.

Compulsory Reading:

Mayer (Handbook, 22)

THEME I – IDEOLOGY & ISSUES

01/16 – The Radical Right Ideology

The ‘post-fascist’ era creates problems for the successful mobilization of far right groups, but it doesn’t exclude it. While openly anti-democratic and racist ideas are no longer acceptable, other far right tenets are. This class discusses the specific “nostalgic ideology” of the radical right and identifies its increasingly successful program.

Compulsory Readings:

Griffin and Betz & Johnson (Reader, 1 and 3)

Optional Reading:

De Lange (Reader, 14)

01/18 – From the Margins to the Mainstream

Although far right groups and parties have existed throughout the postwar era, they remained largely marginal during the 20th century. Even in the last two decades far right parties had modest electoral success and political power. But things have changed in the 21st century.

Compulsory Reading:

Akkerman, Tjitske, Sarah L. de Lange and Matthijs Rooduijn, “Into the Mainstream? A Comparative Analysis of the Programmatic Profiles of Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe Over Time”, in Tjitske Akkerman, Sarah L. de Lange and Matthijs Rooduijn (eds.), *Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe: Into the Mainstream?* London: Routledge, 2016, 31-52.

Optional Reading:

Van Spanje (Reader, 25)

01/23 – Germany, Austria and Switzerland

For obvious historical reasons, Germany and the German-speaking world are particularly linked to far right politics. The three main German-speaking countries have very different trajectories of postwar far right politics, however, with Germany itself being a late bloomer.

Compulsory Reading:

Backes (Handbook, 23)

01/25 – Belgium and the Netherlands

Two other similar countries, Belgium and the Netherlands, also have very different far right trajectories. While the Netherlands has become well-known for its far right politics in the 21st century, Belgium was one of the few countries with a strong far right party in the late 20th century.

Compulsory Reading:

Van Holsteyn (Handbook, 24)

01/30 – Islamophobia

At least since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 “Islam” has become a major target of the far right and so-called “Islamophobia” has become a key part of their program. But what is Islamophobia and how does it play out in far right propaganda? And how does Islamophobia connect the far right to the mainstream?

Movie: [Submission Pt.1](#) (2004), The Netherlands, 11 min.

Compulsory Reading:

Zúquete (Reader, 5)

Optional Reading:

Kallis (Handbook, 3)

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chapter 3.

02/01 – Euroscepticism (UK)

The European far right mobilizes within a specific political context, dominated by the most ambitious supranational project in human history: the European Union (EU). Far right parties are among the most important Eurosceptic parties in Europe, although their level of skepticism differs. And that opposition to the EU can lead to a powerful alliance between the far and mainstream right has most recently been shown in the United Kingdom.

Compulsory Readings:

Goodwin & Denison (Handbook, 26).

Vasilopoulou (Reader, 6)

Optional Reading:

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chapter 7.

PART II – LEADERS, MEMBERS AND VOTERS

02/06 – Leaders

Far right politics has always been closely linked to strong leaders, going back to the so-called Führerprinzip (leadership principle) of fascism. Far right groups are said to be led by “charismatic leaders”, but what is “charisma” and what makes a leader “charismatic”? And can “charisma” be inherited?

Compulsory Reading:

Eatwell (Reader, 12)

Optional Reading:

Eatwell (Handbook, 13)

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chapter 4.

02/08 – Members

European political parties have members, who pay annual membership dues, and are active, to different levels, within the parties. But who are the members of far right parties? Why do they join a party that is, in most cases, highly controversial? And what is the role of women within far right organizations?

Compulsory Readings:

Klandermans and Blee (Reader, 13 and 14)

Optional Reading:

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chapter 4.

02/13 – Voters

Far right parties get their political relevance from their voters. Without (many) voters a political party is just a small sect of irrelevant elites. Who votes for far right parties and why? And what explains the significant gender gap in the electorates of most far right parties in Europe?

Compulsory Readings:

Arzheimer (Reader, 15) and Givens (Reader, 16)

Optional Readings:

Arzheimer (Handbook, 8)

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chapter 4.

02/15 – Midterm

You will have an in-class midterm exam of 10 multiple choice, 3 short-answer questions, and one (1-page) essay question. You are not allowed to use books or notes!

PART III – CAUSES

02/20 – The Silent Counter-Revolution

In the late 1970s the American political scientist Ronald Inglehart argued that the rise of new social movements in the 1970s, as well as Green parties in the 1980s, could be explained by the

so-called “silent revolution.” The Italian political scientist Piero Ignazi argued more than a decade later that a “silent counter-revolution” could similarly explain the rise of far right parties in the 1980s. Does the “silent counter-revolution theory” (still) make sense?

Compulsory Reading:

Ignazi (Reader, 17)

Optional Reading:

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chapter 9-11.

Taggart (Reader, 8)

02/22 – The Nordic Countries

The Nordic Countries, often referred to as Scandinavia, are mostly associated with strong center-left parties and welfare states. But over the past decades they also have become a hotbed for far right politics, albeit with many national differences.

Compulsory Reading:

Widfeldt (Handbook, 27)

02/27 – Ten Theories of the Extreme Right

There are many other theories that claim to explain the success of far right parties, some focusing on the demand-side, others on the supply-side, some at the macro level, others on the micro level. In this class we will critically assess ten of the most popular theories and see whether they still hold today.

Compulsory Reading:

Eatwell (Reader, 21)

Optional Readings:

Kitschelt and *De Lange* (Reader, 19 and 14)

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chapter 9-11.

03/01 – The Far Right and Gender

There are many other theories that claim to explain the success of far right parties, some focusing on the demand-side, others on the supply-side, some at the macro level, others on the micro level. In this class we will critically assess ten of the most popular theories and see whether they still hold today.

Compulsory Reading:

Coffee (Handbook, 10)

Optional Reading:

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chapter 4.

03/06 – How to Use the Library

*You will meet librarian Elizabeth White, who is responsible for International Affairs within the UGA Library Services, in the **Instruction Lab in the Main Library!** Ms. White will teach you how to make best use of the rich library facilities at UGA. This meeting is **essential** to writing a good research paper, so you are not only expected to attend but also to pay attention and makes notes.*

03/08 Far Right Women in the Media

The media have a strongly masculine frame for discussing the far right. Stories are always illustrated with pictures of (young) males, most often aggressive, heavily tattooed skinheads. Women are almost invisible from far right stories. So, how do the media cover far right women? Is it different from far right men? Is it different from non-far right women?

Movie: [*The Female Face of Populism*](#) (2013), France, 54 min.

Compulsory Readings:

Beaumont, Peter. “Marine Le Pen: Her Heart Still Belongs to Daddy”, *The Observer*, 8 January 2011, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2011/jan/09/observer-profile-marine-le-pen>.

Ellinas (Handbook, 14)

Wasburn, Philo C. and Mara H. Wasburn. “Media Coverage of Women in Politics: The Curious Case of Sarah Palin”, *Media, Culture & Society*, 33:7 (2011), 1027-1041.

12–16 MARCH – SPRING BREAK

PART IV – CONSEQUENCES & RESPONSES

03/20 – The Radical Right in Office

Until the beginning of the 21st century far right parties had barely been represented in parliament, let alone in government. Only one far right party had been a member of a coalition government before 2000: the Lega Nord in Italy. How do far right parties in government operate and what is their impact? Do Minkenberg’s insights still hold today?

Compulsory Reading:

Minkenberg (Reader, 23)

03/22 – Liberal Democracy

The key question that underlies all interest in, and research on, the far right is: what is its effect on liberal democracy? Surprisingly, we know quite little about this, in part because far right parties have rarely dominated governments in liberal democracies.

Compulsory Readings:

Albertazzi & Mueller (Reader, 27)

Mudde, Cas. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, chapter 6.

03/29 Liberal Democratic Responses to the Far Right

Given the tensions between the far right and liberal democracy, how have liberal democracies responded to the far right challenge? Which responses have been more effective? And how should liberal democracies respond?

Compulsory Readings:

Van Donselaar and Art (Reader, 29 and 31)

Optional Reading:

De Lange (Reader, 32)

03/31 – Political Violence and the Far Right

The far right is not only related to political parties and electoral success, but also to political violence. What is the violent potential of the far right? And what is the role of far right parties in the political violence?

Compulsory Reading:

Weinberg & Assoudeh (Handbook, 21)

PART V – THE UNITED STATES

04/03 – The Far Right in the US

Tom Wolfe once wrote: “The dark night of fascism is always descending in the United States and yet lands only in Europe.” He was reflecting a consensus, shared by public and scholars alike, that far right politics is a European phenomenon, at odds with “American values”. But far right politics has a long history in the US, even though it comes in somewhat different forms than in Europe.

Compulsory Readings:

Parker (Handbook, 31)

Mudde, Cas, *The Far Right in America*. London: Routledge, 2018, chapter 2.

Optional Reading:

Blee & Creasap (Reader, 11)

04/05 – The Militias Movement

Americans have always had a much more skeptical, if not outright hostile, position towards the state than Europeans. A certain “Frontier mentality” towards both guns and politics has survived within large parts of the US population. In the 1990s these merged with far right politics in the so-called militia movement.

Compulsory Reading:

Pitcavage, Mark, “Camouflage and Conspiracy: The Militia Movement From Ruby Ridge to Y2K”, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 44:6 (2001): 957-981.

04/11 – The Tea Party

Between 2009 and 2012, at least, the Tea Party was the hottest topic in US politics. A loose collection of grassroots groups, new and old, backed by well-funded conservative organizations and amplified by Fox News, the Tea Party took the US, and the Republican Party, by storm. What is (was) the Tea Party? Was it AstroTurf or grassroots?

Compulsory Reading:

Williamson, Vanessa, Theda Skocpol and John Coggin, “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism”, *Perspectives on Politics*, 9:1 (2011): 25-43.

04/13 – Normal Pathology or Pathological Normalcy

Traditionally the far right has been perceived as a normal pathology of western democracies, an unwanted remnant of a pre-modern time. The underlying idea is that far right ideas are unrelated to mainstream views of western democracies. But what if it actually is a pathological normalcy, a radicalization of mainstream values?

Compulsory Reading:

Mudde (Reader, 22)

04/18 – The Alt-Right

The buzzword of the past year has been the “alt-right”. Coined by far right activist Richard Spencer, as a catchy phrase for “alternative right,” the dubious and vague term “alt-right has become use for almost everything to the right of the Republican Party, if not for the GOP itself. But what, if anything, is the alt-right?

Compulsory Readings:

Hawley, chapters 1-4.

04/20 – The Rise of Trump

Until 2016 the term “far right” was mainly linked in the US to some marginal Klansmen and neo-Nazis. Far right politics was something European, fundamentally un-American. But with the rise of Donald Trump the term became central to US politics. IS Trump a far right politician. Is “Trumpism” something global or typically American?

Compulsory Readings:

Hawley, chapters 5-6.

Mudde, Cas, *The Far Right in America*. London: Routledge, 2018, chapters 19, 24, 32.

04/25 Assessing the Far Right Today

How strong is the far right today? Is it in power in the United States? Is it dominating the European Union? In what ways has it affected western democracies? And how have western democracies affected the far right?

Compulsory Reading:

Mudde (Reader, 28)