

Virginia Tech Steger Center Study Abroad Program:

European Affairs in a Global Context

The Steger Center
Riva S. Vitale, Switzerland

Fall Semester, 2018

Prepared by:

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I. Purpose of the Program

We wish to outline a study-abroad program for Virginia Tech students that will take place at The Steger Center for International Scholarship in the fall of 2018. Designed to encourage and reward student participation in a focused program with a significant undergraduate research component, this program will allow students to build toward the minor in Global Engagement. The program will involve students taking program-specific classes at Virginia Tech's Steger Center for International Scholarship, located in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, in a concentrated area of study in which the participating faculty members have special expertise and experience. The program is particularly well suited for students who wish to pursue an intensive study-abroad program with a learning and research focus on European politics in national, regional and global perspective.

II. Justification

While American students in the social sciences are no longer naturally drawn exclusively to European models of politics, society and economy, these models – most importantly, the regional accords and treaties achieved through the process of European integration – remain vitally important as various regional and global institutions continue to be conceived and constructed, and as political, social and economic integration continues apace worldwide. As undergraduate students range more broadly, and especially as they become familiar with the national and regional models presented by Asia, Latin America and elsewhere, knowledge of Europe's experiences with regionally-based political, social and economic integration and especially the post-War institutionalization process will enhance their understanding of contemporary political challenges in light of past experiences and present conditions. In particular, studying and researching late-twentieth-century European political models and processes – most especially the gradual, if fitful, processes of political, monetary and market integration – will permit students to understand time-honored problems of government and governance in very immediate and contemporary contexts. This will sharpen as well as expand students' understanding of present-day pressures now being applied to these models, pressures such as the recent surge of populism, the immigration and refugee crises, European

fiscal and recessionary challenges under the Euro, mounting debt burdens across Europe in a time of austerity, security challenges in Ukraine, the Caucasus, and North Africa that are impacting Europe, and so forth. In spite of intensifying burdens weighing on European institutions at this time (2018), the political systems Europe has developed represent a remarkable achievement in the direction of pluralism, pooled sovereignty, ethnic, racial, national, and religious toleration, open borders, and a common currency and trading system. These models are shared (or at least imitated) in other regions of the world, and in numerous instances they aspire to span the entire global-political sphere in the new century (e.g., the UN agencies and the WTO).

This program is designed to complement the scholarly orientation of the majors in Political Science, International Studies as well as related fields. However, it is open to all students at the university. We especially welcome students from the Pamplin College of Business, the College of Engineering, and from a host of hard-science academic units in which students are encouraged to develop skills to be used outside of the United States. We also welcome students from humanities disciplines and the performing arts because the issues and dynamics we will explore ultimately redound to Europe's age-old traditions of humanism, secularism and cultural pluralism.

In addition to introductory Italian language instruction (which is appropriate given the Steger Center's location in Ticino, Switzerland), three core courses, as well as an undergraduate research project, will serve as the programmatic focus for this study abroad experience. One course addresses the European political system in historical and theoretical context. In this course students will study the politics of Europe's integrating markets and its experiences with monetary coordination in the post-War period. A second course emphasizes regional security governance by examining collective security regimes and the European self-defense organization (NATO). In a third course students will explore identity politics in Europe by focusing on the challenges of immigration and the increasing demand for citizenship and participation against the historical background of racist and nationalist politics on the Continent, as well as in light of recent cosmopolitan tendencies (as well as reactions to them). Finally, an undergraduate research project will allow students to design and undertake independent research associated with the above issues, dilemmas, institutions and present-day governance challenges.

III. Availability

Although this study abroad program will be organized and led by Political Science faculty, the program was developed with a great number of demands for specializations in international education broadly in mind. Students preparing to enter careers that require knowledge of a second or third language, not to mention familiarity with cultural dispositions and differences, should also acquire knowledge of politics in theoretical, historical and comparative perspective. Global firms, NGOs, and international organizations are all creatures of history, national and regional politics, and especially the negotiations that take place across state borders and among state and non-state actors in a globalizing world.

IV. The Program's Research Focus

While this program will be based in Europe, it is also designed to facilitate research and teaching about politics and governance structures in the context of today's most challenging global dynamics. The dual focus (region-specific, but global in reach) is due to the existence of a number of global institutions (not to mention global corporations) that are headquartered in Europe, most importantly various UN special agencies (e.g., the FAO, WFP, ILO, IAEA), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), to name only a few. In addition, regional political, economic, and social integration is unmistakably taking place in a time of globalization. Scholars increasingly recognize that integrating markets and liberalizing (and now protectionist) trade policies are happening in a global context and are to a large degree the result of regional trends and dynamics that, over the long term, work to induce stable economies to move in the same general direction. Of course, European countries are now experiencing powerful reactions to openness and integration. Regional-to-global patterns are also evident in international relations, pertaining, for example, in the areas of security regimes and the development of social policies across the Continent. These trends and dynamics are unmistakably political in nature, and thus they demand focused theoretical and historical examination. Through such study students can analyze uniquely distinguishing traits, separating out contingency from necessity, structure from agency, and accident or happenstance from long-term processes and logics of social (and increasingly institutional) action.

Two field excursions will anchor the historical and theoretical aspects of this program's curricular focus. Students will travel together to Geneva and Laussane for one week in mid September for meetings and lectures at the International Olympic Committee, the World Trade Organization, and several United Nations agencies (including the UN Development Program). In mid November students will travel to Athens for one week of meetings at a research institute where the North African refugee crisis and immigration politics will be examined from an eyewitness perspective. During both excursions students will visit important historical and political sites in all three cities. Students are encouraged to explore research questions in their independent research projects that ground as well as grow out of knowledge gained on these field trips.

Thus, in addition to the program's focus on European political and economic integration, students will acquire an additional specialization through undergraduate research based in one of the program's four areas: uniformity of national social policies; economic integration; collective security and defense policy; and immigration, refugee accommodation and citizenship amidst nationalist and often race- and class-driven dynamics. Comprising a key component of the minor in Global Engagement, the undergraduate research project represents a significant outcome or "deliverable" of students' participation in the program.

These projects will be carried out in a variety of ways. For example, a Political Science or International Studies student exploring official development assistance in sub-Saharan Africa could pursue an undergraduate research project that engages the UN-FAO or UN-WFP institutions in Rome. A business student focusing in finance could study the policies and politics of the ECB in Frankfurt or in one of the 19 other national capital offices. An engineering student, or a student interested in a career in law, could pursue a study of patent

laws at the EPO in Munich. And a student studying physics could explore nuclear arms control policy at the IAEA in Vienna.

We envision that students may also choose to approach multinational companies based in Europe with their research interests grounded in the above four areas in mind. The teaching faculty who will be in residence at the Steger Center, along with the Steger Center Fellow, will help to secure meetings for our students at these companies and at the many international organizations with offices in European capitals.

V. Relevance

In its vision for undergraduate education presented in Virginia Tech's new strategic initiative, "Plan for a New Horizon, 2012-2018," considerable emphasis is given to the growing importance of international education. By encouraging students to study abroad in a focused and grounded manner, this program, specializing in European Politics and Global Affairs, will enhance the university's mission of educating the leaders of tomorrow about some of the most politically consequential international affairs of our time.

The Steger Center for International Scholarship offers an appropriate setting for the collaborative teaching and research that will serve as the foundation for this program. Intensive study and instruction in the Center's new classroom spaces will make it possible to conduct two-and-a-half-hour classes that mix lecture and seminar-style discussion, thereby facilitating active, project-centered learning and research in the above-mentioned areas. The Center's relatively close proximity to many of Europe's most important cities – including Milan, Florence, Genoa, Zurich, Geneva, Vienna, Munich, Ljubljana, Zagreb, and Sarajevo, to name just a few – will make trips to these and other capitals possible for students to undertake on their own, or in groups, as needed. With so many of the world's international organizations based in these cities, as well as in Lausanne, Rome, Brussels, Strasbourg, and Frankfurt, students will be able to plan trips to these organizations throughout the semester to learn about their work, conduct interviews, and attend public lectures and seminars/meetings.

VI. Required Courses

Course 1: ITAL 1204: Beginning Italian (3H, 3C)

Students will study beginning Italian in a 40-contact-hour class offered in the first six weeks of the semester through the Lugano-based Language Studies Institute.

Course 2: PSCI/IS 3114: Global Security: European, Transatlantic and Global Dimensions (3H, 3C)

This course familiarizes students with the most important security threats facing the world, in general, and Europe, in particular, as well as with the various approaches and institutions aimed at addressing these threats. To this end, special attention will be paid to global and European security governance agendas and mechanisms. Security approaches under examination include: collective security, collective self-defense, peacekeeping, complex multilateralism, and integration. Security institutions under examination include: The United

Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies (e.g., IAEA), NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the European Union (EU).

Course 3: PSCI/IS 3115: Selected World Problems: The Politics of Identity: Immigration, Racism, and Nationalism in Europe (3H, 3C)

The purpose of this course is to examine the rise of identity politics, broadly defined, on the Continent in the early to mid-twentieth century. Topics and issues to be considered include the emergence and rise of nationalism, racism, and fascism in Germany, Italy and elsewhere. Theories of totalitarianism, including Hannah Arendt's famous study, will ground multiple analyses of the politics of race and nation(alism) in a time of political and economic dislocation and uncertainty. Immigration and citizenship will be considered in the European post-War, and especially post-9.11 theoretical and historical context, and special attention will be given to the 2011-present refugee and immigration crises.

Course 4: IS/PSCI 4054: Seminar in Global Political Economy: European Political Economy (3H, 3C)

This course examines the historical antecedents to the European common market and currency. It begins by examining the rise of the gold standard, the causes of its collapse, the emergence of economic nationalism in the interwar period, and the creation of the Bretton Woods system and the gold-dollar peg as a mechanism for insuring global economic stability. Students will study the Marshall Plan and the IBRD, now known as the World Bank, as well as the IMF. The story of Jean Monnet and the emergence of the European common market on the basis of coal and steel will be examined. Special attention will be given to the post-1992 common market accords and the emergence of the Euro in 1999-2001. The course will examine recent calls for a common fiscal system in a time of recession, austerity, and, finally, the course will address the task of balancing dramatically different countries' economies within a single monetary policymaking framework.

Course 5: IS/PSCI 4994: Undergraduate Research (3H, 3C)

Students will be required to undertake a semester-long research project that will require research at one of Europe's international organizations, or a regional accord or treaty within the context of an institution that has outstanding significance in the post-War period of Europe. Students will work closely with faculty in structuring this research project, accessing these organizations, scheduling meetings, acquiring data and integrating findings into a logical analysis in the form of a final research paper. Presentations of these projects will be given at the conclusion of the semester.

Steger Center Study Abroad Program
European Affairs in a Global Context
Fall 2018

Program Structure

Participating faculty:

Scott Nelson, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Political Science
Yannis Stivachtis, Associate Professor and Director of International Studies, Political Science
Steger Center Fellow: Aislinn McCann

Course 1: ITAL 1105: Beginning Italian (3H, 3C)
Course 2: IS/PSCI 3114: Global Security: European and Global Dimensions (3H, 3C)
Course 3: IS/PSCI 3115: Selected World Problems: The Politics of Identity: Immigration,
Racism, and Nationalism in Europe (3H, 3C)
Course 4: IS/PSCI 4054: European Political Economy (3H, 3C)
Course 5: IS/PSCI 4994: Undergraduate Research (3H, 3C)

Total Credit Hours: 15

Program Structure:

Module 1:

20 August – 14 September (four weeks): Faculty: S. Nelson and Steger Center Fellow Aislinn McCann

Course 1: 9 hours per week (36 hours total)
Course 4: 9 hours per week (36 hours total)
Course 5: 3 hours per week (12 hours total)

Module 2:

Faculty-led Multilateral Diplomacy Field Study: Geneva-Laussane: 17-21 September

Module 3:

24 September – 19 October (four weeks): Faculty: Y. Stivachtis and Steger Center Fellow Aislinn McCann

Course 1: 4 hours, first week (4 hours total)
Course 2: 9 hours per week (36 hours total)
Course 5: 3 hours per week (12 hours total)

Module 4:

Faculty-led Refugee and Immigration Field Study: Athens, Greece: 22-26 October

Module 5:

29 October – 16 November (three weeks): Faculty: S. Nelson and Steger Center Fellow
Aislinn McCann

Course 3: 12 hours per week (36 hours total)

Course 5: 9 hour per week (36 hours total)

Module 6:

26 November – 5 December (two weeks): Faculty: Y. Stivachtis and Steger Center Fellow
Aislinn McCann

Course 5: Final Paper Presentations: 9 hours per week (18 hours total)