

Freie Universität Berlin  
FU-BEST Program  
Dr. Dirk Verheyen

## **CONTEMPORARY GERMANY IN EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE**

### **Course description:**

By placing Germany in a broader European context, this course provides an opportunity to develop a comparative perspective on political and socioeconomic features and trends in the Federal Republic.

The course begins with a brief historical review, and then shifts to a consideration of such topics and issues as German/European society, the political systems (including institutions, parties, and elections), welfare state features, and socioeconomic policies, with accompanying consideration of characteristics and developments in neighboring European countries. Special attention will also be given to the consequences of Germany's reunification in 1990.

### **Required texts (tentative):**

Derek Lewis: Contemporary Germany: A Handbook

Tim Bale: European Politics: A Comparative Introduction

Greg Nees: Germany: Unraveling an Enigma

Course Reader

### **Course work/expectations:**

Midterm exam: 25%

Paper: 25%

Final exam: 30%

Attendance and participation: 20% (includes 3 mandatory independent field projects)

## **SCHEDULE**

**Session 1:** Introduction to Germany and Europe

**Reading:** Lewis, "Timeline of German history;" Conradt, "The Historical Setting" (in Reader); Bale, chapter 1

**Video:** "A Question of Image: Germany in the World"

- Session 2:** Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic, 1949-90  
**Reading:** Lewis, chapter 1, 3; Conradt, "The Aftermath of Unification" (in Reader)  
**Video:** "The Wall: Germany's Internal Borders"
- Session 3:** Societal features, issues, and cleavages (I)  
**Reading:** Lewis, chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10  
**Video:** "One Nation: Germans and Unification"
- Session 4:** Societal features, issues, and cleavages (II)  
**Reading:** Bale, chapters 7 and 8  
**Video:** "The Stranger Within – Foreigners in Germany"
- Session 5:** Political culture and elections  
**Reading:** Conradt, "Political Culture, Participation, and Civil Liberties" and "Elections and Voting Behavior" (in Reader); Bale, chapter 6  
**Video:** "Law and Order: Germans and Authority"
- Session 6:** Political parties and interest groups  
**Reading:** Conradt, "The Party System and the Representation of Interests" (in Reader); Bale, chapter 5 (see also again chapter 8)  
**Video:** "Representatives of the People: German Politicians"
- Session 7:** Midterm Exam
- Session 8:** German political economy and welfare state: Germany in European context  
**Reading:** Lewis, chapters 5 and 6; Bale, chapter 9  
**Video:** "Safety Net: Germans and Social Security"
- Session 9:** Political institutions and policy-making (I)  
**Reading:** Conradt, "Policymaking Institutions I: Parliament and Executive" (in Reader); Bale, chapter 4  
**Video:** "People Power: Democracy in Germany"
- Session 10:** Political institutions and policy-making (II)  
**Reading:** Conradt, "Policymaking Institutions II: Administration, Semipublic Institutions, and Courts" (in Reader); Bale, chapter 3
- Session 11:** Regionalism, federalism, and local government; Conclusion  
**Reading:** Lewis, chapter 2; Conradt, "Subnational Units: Federalism and Local Government" (in Reader); Bale, chapter 2  
**Video:** "Forest Murmurs: Germans and their Trees"
- Session 12:** Final Exam