

Vesalius College

Course description

Course title: Brussels: From Capital to Euro capital

Course code: POL 362E

Teacher responsible: A. E. Woodward

Course description:

In 2005 Brussels celebrated 175 years as a national capital, 25 years as a federal state capital and consolidated its place as a Euro Capital of the 25 member state European Union. Within a framework of urban politics and sociology, this course traces the social and cultural development of Brussels as a setting for European ideas about the nation and a crossroads for different identities. How has the city of Brussels utilized its opportunities to mirror Belgian identities as a national capital, and what is its potential as a canvas for the ambitions of the European Union? What are the political challenges that diversity poses for governance and success as an urban cosmopolis? Film and field trips will provide insight into the **re-presentation** of the city from the standpoint of different users and different functions.

Course objectives:

This course aims to develop the following skills and abilities:

- Knowledge about regularities in European urban development from perspectives of urban geography, politics and sociology
- Historical knowledge about major European capitals and their functions in Europe illustrated through the case of Brussels
- Capacity for 'seeing' and 'interpreting' urban environments as a reflection of politics
- Familiarity with the positions of major thinkers on urbanism and urban politics
- Understanding of the political issues involved in managing a diverse capital region in the Belgian and European context
- Ability to integrate interdisciplinary material in addressing an urban policy problem

Grade weighting scheme:

Building presentations	15%
Analysis paper	20%
2 Tests	20%
Final essay	20%
Participation	10%
Book commentary or Discussion questions	15%

Used course material (handbooks, readers, readings, newspapers, magazines) and references:

Le Gates, Richard T. and Frederic Stout *The City Reader 3rd edition* London: Routledge 2003.
Witte, Els, Jan Craeybeckx and Alain Meynen, *Political History of Belgium from 1830 Onwards*
Brussels: VUB Press 2000.
Brussels Guide & Map, Tourist Information Brussels 2005
Copies of required readings provided by professor