

HIST/PSCI 339

FALL 2019

Contemporary Greek Politics and Society: Historical Perspectives on Change and Continuity

INSTRUCTOR: Romolo Gandolfo
Available after class, 6:50-7:50pm (or upon appointment)

Class Meetings:
Mondays and Wednesday 5:15-6:50pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This class explores some important aspects of contemporary Greek politics and society, with a special focus on understanding what has happened over the last ten years. We shall do that from a historical perspective. Thus, after introducing some of today's major issues in the first few sessions, we shall spend the following month overviewing the history of Modern Greece, from the Independence War of the 1820s to the economic and social crisis that has been ravaging the country since 2009. This historical overview will allow us to better understand the origins of recurring political and economic problems as well as long-term social issues, such as clientelism, populism, the role of political dynasties, Greece's ambivalent feelings toward its Western allies, and the complex relationship between the Greek 'nation' and the modern Greek state.

Relying on this historical understanding, we shall then focus specifically on the contemporary politics of Greece. First, we shall look at how parliamentary systems work, comparing and contrasting them with the US presidential form of government. We shall also look in a comparative fashion at electoral systems as well the differences between unitary and federal countries. After gaining a sound perspective in comparative politics—strengthened also by a visit to the Greek Parliament—we shall analyze the impact of the Eurozone financial crisis on Greek politics and society: the emergence of protest social movements fueled by social media between 2010 and 2012; the collapse of the traditional two-party system in 2012; the rise of left- and right-wing 'populist' parties; the huge challenges two of these parties faced when they gained power in January 2015; and their failure (in the dramatic summer of 2015) to terminate the harsh austerity policies demanded by European partners in order to prevent Greece from defaulting on her huge public. Our survey will end with the elections of May and July 2019, which saw the same conservative party which was in power ten years ago gaining a solid majority again. Is this a return to the past, or a new, promising beginning?

In the last part of the course, we shall explore how the refugee crisis of 2015 interacted with the unfolding financial and social crisis. We shall put this huge humanitarian crisis in historical perspective by comparing it with the refugee crisis Greece faced in 1922-24, when over 1.2 million Greek Orthodox had to leave their ancestral homes in Asia Minor following defeat in a Greek-Turkish war.

The recent (and still ongoing) arrival of tens of thousands of asylum seekers--most of them from Muslim countries—raises once again the question of the place of religious minorities in a country where national identity is still seen by many to rest on the Greek Orthodox faith. We explore the implications of this idea by looking at the decades-old controversy surrounding the construction of the first 'official' mosque in Athens.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will have developed a sound, **history-based** understanding of the main challenges facing today's Greece.

In particular, they will be able to explain:

- the main historical issues in modern Greek history.
- the major differences between European parliamentary systems and the American presidential form of government.
- the impact of the financial crisis on Greek society.
- the impact of the financial crisis on Greek politics and party system.
- the terms "clientelism" and "populism," as used both in common parlance and political science.

- the origin and political impact of the refugee crisis.
- the complex (and contested) role played by religion in the definition of Greek national identity.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

According to the Program's rules, students are expected to attend *all* course sessions. **Attendance is compulsory at CYA.** Please take note of this school policy when planning your weekend travels in Greece or abroad. According to the Program's rules, unexcused absences will lead to a lowering of the final grade. Absences due to illness should be communicated to the Student Affairs Office, whenever possible before class.

You are expected to come to class prepared to actively participate in discussions. To help you prepare for these discussions, there will be a few **short** written tests or assignments based on the readings.

The final grade will be calculated in the following way:

- 10% based on (up to four) *short* reading assignments and tests.
- 20% based on class presentations and overall participation.
- 30% based on the midterm exam.
- 40% based on the final paper.

The midterm exam will consist of a set of questions to which you have to answer in a short-essay format.

A final **term paper** of 10-12 double-spaced pages is required and is due by Wednesday December 18th at 6pm. You should submit a written proposal (and tentative title) by November 18 (before the Fall/Thanksgiving break) so as to allow enough time for refining the topic and doing some research. You are encouraged to meet me and discuss your paper proposal as soon as you feel ready to do so.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Given the rapid and dramatic changes of the last few years, most books written about current Greek politics and society are, to different degrees, already outdated by the time they get published. The same unfortunately happens with articles published in academic journals: most of them are either too technical for an introductory course like ours, and/or already superseded by the latest political developments by the time they get into print. Out of necessity, we shall often have to navigate this changing Greek reality using a wise mix of academic and non-academic sources.

For the historical background, and as reference textbook, we shall rely mostly on:

- Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everybody Needs to Know*, (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Students taking the course at a higher level will be required to do additional readings from the following books:

- Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*. Third revised edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Beaton, Roderick, *Greece: Biography of a Modern Nation*, (London & New York: Penguin Books, 2019).
- Kostis, Kostas, *History's Spoiled Children: The Formation of the Modern Greek State* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishing, 2018; Greek original first edition 2013)
- Thomas W. Gallant, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1768-1913: The Long Nineteenth Century*, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2015).
- Nicholas Doumani, *A History of Greece*, (London: Palgrave, 2010)
- David H. Close, *Greece since 1945: Politics, Economy and Society*, (London-New York: Longman, 2002).
- John Koliopoulos and Thanos Veremis, *Greece, The Modern Sequel: From 1831 to the Present* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).
- Yiannis Palaiologos, *The 13th Labour of Hercules: Inside the Greek Crisis*, (London: Portobello Books, 2015).

For a comparison between the European parliamentary system of government and the US presidential one, we shall rely on a standard textbook:

- Kenneth Newton and Jan W. van Deth, *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

We shall also use online Greek media available in English, as well as selected articles from the international press and European research centers. These articles will be assigned and made available by email or on Moodle as we proceed.

The reading load will normally be in the range of 2-4 hours *per lesson*.

Perhaps the best Greek media available in English is the daily newspaper *Kathimerini*, which is published inside the international edition of the *New York Times* (printed in Greece). The newspaper is available at the CYA library, as well as online at www.ekathimerini.com

Another interesting--if limited in scope--source of online articles in English is "Athens Live" at <https://medium.com/athenslivegr>

COURSE OUTLINE

Monday, September 9

Introduction to the course general concept and overview of the readings, assignments and requirements.

Wednesday, September 11

A crash introduction to current issues in Greek politics and society in a comparative perspective. Its government, party system, and the main political, economic and social issues.

- Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everybody Needs to Know*, Chapter 1, "What is Greece?" pp. 1-13.
- Marc Mazower, "Democracy Cradle, Rocking the World", *New York Times*, June 29, 2011 <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/30/opinion/30mazower.html>
- Roger Cohen (Opinion piece) "Greece is the Good News Story in Europe". *New York Times*, July 8, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/08/opinion/greece-elections.html>
- Harris Mylonas, "After a decade of crisis, Greek politics are turning normal and more technocratic", *Washington Post*, July 14, 2019. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/07/14/greece-just-threw-out-its-leftist-government-voted-conservatives-heres-what-you-need-know/>

Monday, September 16

Today we shall walk around an Athens neighbourhood, looking for signs of the 10-year-old economic crisis. Students are expected to take notes of the main issues addressed during the walk.

- Anemona Hartocollis, "Greek merchants fear a way of life is disappearing", *The New York Times*, July 13, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/world/europe/greeks-welcome-debt-deal-but-reservations-linger.html>
- Helena Smith, "Greece's economic crisis goes on, like an odyssey without end", *The Guardian*, January 4, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/jan/04/greeces-economic-crisis-goes-on-odyssey-without-end>

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO CONTEMPORARY GREECE

Over the next four weeks, we shall focus on the political and social history of the country, from the War of Independence in the 1820s to the outbreak of the current crisis in 2009, with a view to understanding the most important long-term forces and issues still at play in today's Greece.

Monday, September 23

In this class, we shall discuss the main issues related to the formation of 'modern Greece.' In particular, the role of the Greek diaspora in the independence movement; the main features of the new Greek state (a monarchy under an

'imported', German dynasty; an 'eastern' society called to shed its traditional culture and quickly adopt 'modern, western ways'; as well as its peculiar international status (the issue of the role played by the 'Protecting Powers' during the War of Independence and Greece's international 'dependency' on these powers until the end of WWI).

Required reading

- Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everybody Needs to Know*, Chapter 2, "Emergence", 15-35

Recommended additional readings:

- Clogg, *Concise History of Greece*, Introduction and Chapter 2, "Ottoman rule and the emergence of the Greek state, 1770-1831".
- Gallant, *Modern Greece*, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 1-28.

Wednesday, September 25

As we continue to look at 19th century Greece, we now focus on three broad issues: 1) the huge challenge of building a 'modern' nation-state along Western European models out of an impoverished and small corner of the "non-European" Ottoman Empire; 2) the role of nationalism and 'irredentism' in the construction of a modern Greek national identity; and 3) Greece's transition from absolute to constitutional monarchy (formation of political parties; creation of new institutions; the persistent issue of 'clientelism' in Greek politics and society). While addressing these issues, we shall try to assess to what extent they are still playing a role in contemporary Greece.

Required reading:

- Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everybody Needs to Know*, Chapter 3, "Building", pp. 37-67

Additional recommended readings:

- Clogg, *Concise History of Greece*, Chapter 3, "Nation Building, the 'Great Idea' and National Schism, 1831-1922". Only up to the rise to power of Eleftherios Venizelos in 1910.
- Gallant, *Modern Greece*, Chapters 3 & 4, pp. 31-74. You should pay special attention to the section on "Nationalism and Identity", pp. 67-74.

Monday, September 30

In this class we focus on the 35-year of turmoil that rocked Greece between the outbreak of World War One and the end of the Civil War in 1949. We look in particular at the role of Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos (Greece's dominant political figure in the first half of the 20th century) as he clashes with the monarchy over the issue of whether to enter the Great War and, if so, on which side. We also look at (1) the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, and the challenges posed by the sudden territorial expansion of Greece, which after 1913 included significant minority populations (Muslims as well as Slavs and Albanians); the so-called Great Catastrophe and the forced exchange of minorities between Greece and Turkey of 1922-24; the filo-fascist regime of Ioannis Metaxas; the catastrophic destruction the second World War; finally, the civil war between Nationalists and Communists.

Required reading:

- Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everybody Needs to Know*, Chapter 4, "Turmoil", pp. 69-99.

Additional recommended readings:

- Gallant, *Modern Greece*, Chapters 5.
- Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, last part of Chapter 3

After class, on September 30, you are all invited for dinner at my place.

Wednesday, October 2

From the civil war to the socialists in power. A blocked political system in a rapidly modernizing society: Greece in the 1950s and 1960s. The Military dictatorship of 1967-1974; Constantine Karamanlis, the restoration of democracy and Greece's admission into the European Community. Andreas Papandreou and the rise of PASOK.

Required reading:

- Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everybody Needs to Know*, Chapter 5, "Takeoff", pp. 101-130.

Additional recommended readings:

- Clogg, Chapter 5.
- Gallant, Chapter 9 and 10.

Monday, October 7

Required reading

- Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everybody Needs to Know*, Chapter 5, "Takeoff", pp. 130-151.

Wednesday, October 9

Greece during the first six years of crisis, 2009-2015

- Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everybody Needs to Know*, Chapter 6, "The Great Crisis", pp. 153-193

Friday, October 11

- Stathis Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everybody Needs to Know*, Chapter 7 "Future", pp. 195-204

Monday, October 14

What kind of democracy is Greece today? How does its parliamentary system work? What are the main differences between the Greek parliamentary system and the American presidential one?

- Kenneth Newton and Jan W. van Deth, *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 4 "Presidential and parliamentary government", pp. 60-71.
- Wikipedia. Entry "POLITICS OF GREECE". ONLY Sections 1, 2 and 3 (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary powers, respectively).

Wednesday, October 16

Visit to the Greek parliament in session.

Monday, October 21

MID TERM EXAM

Wednesday, October 23

In this lesson we shall address a range of other important issues in a comparative perspective:

- 1) *Greece's proportional voting system, and its constantly shifting specific rules. How have electoral systems affected over time the make-up of Greek parties, parliaments and governments? We shall do this by taking once again a broad comparative perspective, and relying to a great extent on your knowledge of American politics. We shall address questions linked to: direct vs. indirect elections; proportional vs. majority electoral systems; factors determining voting turnout; party models and party leadership selection.*
- 2) *We shall also briefly outline two more fundamental differences between the Greek and American systems: a) the fact that Greece is a unitary, centralized country (as opposed to the US federal system); and b) the fact that Greece is part of the European Union (and in particular of the so-called Eurozone and the border-free Schengen Area).*

- Kenneth Newton and Jan W. van Deth, *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Chapter 5, pp. 72-85 only; Chapter 11 "Voters and Elections", pp. 200-220, and Chapter 12, "Party government", pp. 221-37.

Now, after having overviewed Greek history and the basics of Greek government, we are ready to go back to the ten years of financial and social crisis and look at how the crisis has impacted Greece's politics and society.

Wednesday, October 30

"The blame game: Whose Fault is the crisis?"

Mnimonio/anti mnimonio. The indignados movement. November 2009-June 2012

Monday, November 4

"Hope is coming!" Left- and Right-wing populists ascent to power.

From the 2012 elections till the Referendum of June 2015. The populists in power, from June 2015 to May 2019. From the NO victory at the June referendum to the signing of the 3rd memorandum a week later, to the split within SYRIZA and the populists' success during the September 2015 national elections.

Monday, November 11

Immigration and far-right, ultra-nationalist politics: The Rise and Fall of the Golden Dawn Phenomenon.

Required reading:

- Ellinas, A. A. (2013). The Rise of Golden Dawn: The New Face of the Far Right in Greece. *South European Society and Politics*, 18(4), 543-565
- Morfis, Tassos. Four Years On: What Greece Can Learn from Golden Dawn Trial: The investigation into the neo-Nazi party reveals it for what it truly is — a criminal organization, *Athens Live*, 20 Apr 2019, <https://medium.com/athenslivegr/four-years-on-what-greece-can-learn-from-golden-dawn-trial-5fea2e452e11>

Optional, recommended readings:

- Doxiadis, A., & Matsaganis, M. (2012). *National populism and xenophobia in Greece*. Counterpoint.
- Karpozilos, K. (2018). Golden Dawn: From the Margins of Greece to the Forefront of Europe. In E. Doxiadis & A. Placa (Eds.), *Living Under Austerity: Greek Society in Crisis*. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books. Pp. 67-89.

Wednesday, November 13

The May 2019 European elections and the July 2019 Greek National elections. What do New Democracy's win and SYRIZA strong 2nd place result mean? A return to normalcy? A return to Greece's traditional two-party system? To dynastic politics? Or the beginning of a new phase in Greek politics, without the bitter divisions of the past?

Students—who over the last three weeks will have followed a particular party or cluster of related parties--will be expected to make presentations from the perspective of their own chosen political side.

Go back to the readings assigned for the class of September 11, and read these additional news analyses, opinion pieces and editorials from the Greek and international press:

- Alexis Papachelas, On the Right Track, *Kathimerini*, August 26, 2019, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/243866/opinion/ekathimerini/comment/on-the-right-track>
- John Pasropoulos, How family and politics shaped new Greek PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis, *alJazeera*, July 10, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/family-politics-shaped-greek-pm-kyriakos-mitsotakis-190709183036529.html>
- Giorgos Katsambekis, Re-igniting political polarization in Greece: the 'liberal' opposition's turn to the right and the challenges for democracy, *openDemocracy*, March 11, 2018, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/re-igniting-political-polarisation-in-greece-liberal-opposit/>
- Helena Smith, Kyriakos Mitsotakis: the new Greek PM hits the ground running, *The Guardian*, July 13, 2019 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/13/kyriakos-mitsotakis-the-new-greek-pm-hits-the-ground-running>
- Matthaios Tsimitakis [former member of SYRIZA government's press office], The adults are back in charge of Greece. And they are really right-wing, *New York Times*, Aug 5, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/05/opinion/mitsotakis-greece-election.html>

Monday, November 18

The refugee crisis of 2015-16, and the current situation. Refugee flows around the Mediterranean. The European dimension and the impact on Greece.

Reading list to be announced.

Wednesday, November 20

Class screening of an award-winning documentary on the life of undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers in Greece before the refugee crisis of 2015-2016

Monday, December 2

The role of Greek-Orthodox refugees in the making of modern Greece: the 'Great Catastrophe' of 1922 and the forced exchange of religious minorities agreed in 1923 between Greece and Turkey with the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.

Required readings:

- Bruce Clark, *Twice a Stranger: How Mass Expulsion Forged Modern Greece and Turkey*, London: Granta Books, 2006. Preface, Introduction and Chapter One, pp. xi-xvii, 1-41
- Renée Hirschon, ed., *Crossing the Aegean: An appraisal of the 1923 compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey*, New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003. Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 3-20

Additional recommended reading:

- Renée Hirschon, *Heir of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, pp. 1-55.

Wednesday, December 4

Immigration and Greek national identity. The Athens Mosque endless saga. Being a Muslim in Greece.

Required readings:

- Anagnostou, D., & Gropas, R. (2010). Domesticating Islam and Muslim Immigrants: Political and Church Responses to Constructing a Central Mosque in Athens. In V. N. Makrides & V. Roudometof (Eds.), *Orthodox Christianity in 21st Century Greece: The Role of Religion in Culture, Ethnicity and Politics* (pp. 89-109).
- Hatziprokopiou, P., & Evergeti, V. (2014). Negotiating Muslim identity and diversity in Greek urban spaces. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 15(6), 603-626. doi:10.1080/14649365.2014.894114

Optional reading:

- Salvanou, E. (2014). Muslims in Athens: Narratives and Strategies of Belonging. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 32(2), 339-366. doi:10.1353/mgs.2014.0043

Monday December 9

What future for youths & students? A generation caught between a culture of anti-establishment politics and the choice of emigrating to a richer EU country. What's the role of Greek schools and universities?

Required readings:

- Yannis Paradeisiadi, "University in Greece: The cradle of politics", openDemocracy, 2015. Available at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/university-in-greece-cradle-of-politics/>
- Aikaterini Andronikou and Iosif Kovras, "Cultures of Rioting and Anti-Systemic Politics in Southern Europe," *West European Politics*, 35:4 (2012), 707-725.

Additional, optional readings:

- Yiannis Palaiologos, *The 13th Labour of Hercules: Inside the Greek Crisis*, Chapter 10 ("Out with the Old").
- Roman Gerodimos, "The Ideology of Far Left Populism in Greece," *Political Studies*, Vol. 63, 2015. [Look in particular at pp. 611-625].

Wednesday, December 11

Conclusions: Where is Greece heading? Class debate to focus on a broad important topic discussed during the semester, to be agreed together.

Wednesday, December 18

Final paper due by 6pm