

Germany after Covid-19 and Chancellor Angela Merkel

Seminar Leader: Dr. Timo Lochocki

Email: lochocki@hu-berlin.de

Seminar hours: Wednesday 9am til noon

Office Hours: upon request

Description

This autumn the 16-year reign of chancellor Angela Merkel comes to an end. At the very same time, the handling of Covid-19 is altering the balance between legislative and executive in Germany, while the German budget is undergoing severe revisions in the light of the responses to Covid-19 as much as for fighting climate change. The federal elections of September 2021 will function as a major catalyst for change in German politics.

In particular the advent and wider consequences of the “Corona virus” have the potential to alter the dynamics of international cooperation and the socio-economic arrangements of liberal democracies. According to one view, the virus calls for more international cooperation and a much stronger role for the welfare state. However, this perspective diverges from the populist neo-nationalism that has recently been electorally successful in the US and the UK. In this setting, the centrist governments of Western Europe – led by France and Germany – must square a circle: They want to win back voters attracted by a neo-nationalist agenda, while at the same time safeguarding a culture of international cooperation crucial to their own interests. They also need to update their wealth redistribution policies in the face of skepticism from some voters about an expansion of the welfare state.

This course will try to develop a possible solution to this paradox, focusing on Germany as a case study. After addressing the influence of populist attitudes on foreign policy and the impact of the Corona virus on liberal democracies, we will try to craft policy recommendations for the first German government that will form without Angela Merkel at its helm.

Ideally, students will already have a fundamental knowledge of Germany's history and social structure, and of its financial and political systems.

Assignments

In order for you to receive your credits you need to

- Adhere to the general student guidelines at Bard College Berlin
- Prepare all the readings assigned for each class
- This class is dealing with an ongoing subject; thus, we will not use a large reader; instead, it is key to look for more recent information of our topics e.g. via The Economist, Politico Europe and The New York Times
- Participate actively during the in-class discussions
- Give presentations on German scope conditions and policy issues
- Hand in various smaller papers throughout the seminar
- Hand in your final policy recommendations in a format to be discussed

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FALL 2021: Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Grading

Grading will be based on three equally weighted contributions:

- Your in-class participation
- The average of your presentation and smaller papers
- Your final paper

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Learning Outcomes

- Widen your understanding of the complex interactions in German politics
- Get a proper grasp how the EU's interwoven crises affect German politics

- Get an idea of the pivotal role Germany plays in contemporary European politics
- Comprehend the patterns and mechanisms in which democracies' reactions to Globalization are grounded
- Extend your knowledge of the reasons and factors accounting for the delineation between parts of the progressive elites and their more conservative voter base
- Understanding the key factor domestic party politics, right-wing populism and political communication plays in foreign policy making in the 21st century
- Present and convey complex information in a given time frame
- Further develop your analytical thinking in applying Boolean and classic statistical reasoning at the same time
- Find information and apply about contemporary German politics on your own
- Craft hands-on policy recommendations for the German government

Deadlines

Deadlines are listed in the course plan below and will be discussed in detail in class.

Readings

All readings are available online, excluding the following books you ought to obtain either via the library or purchase them yourself:

Kriesi, H.P. et al. (2012): Political Conflict in Western Europe. Cambridge University Press.

Lemke, C. and Welsh A. (2017): Germany Today: Politics and Policies in a Changing World. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

Lochocki, T. (2017): The Rise of Populism in Western Europe. Springer University Press.

MacGregor, N. (2014): Germany. Memories of a Nation. Penguin Books

Mudde, C. and Kaltwasser, C. (2017): Populism. A very short introduction. Oxford University Press.

Rodrick, D. (2012): The Globalization Paradox. Democracy and the Future of the World Economy. Norton Publishers.

Course-plan

The class is organized in three chapters:

- 1) The scope conditions of German policy makers that define their capacities and constraints before and during Covid-19 (September 1 – October 6);

- 2) How the Corona virus has affected Germany in particular, how the German government reacted to it and how this changed the outlined scope conditions (October 27 and November 3)
- 3) How the German government should react to future challenges based on its experiences during Covid-19 (November 10 – December 17)

September 1: Organization of class, no further assignments

September 8: Scope Conditions for Germany policy makers (1/5) – The Strategic Surrounding of the European Union (input presentation 1)

Applebaum, Anne (2015): The risks of putting Germany front and center in Europe's crisis. The Washington Post, 02/20/2015.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/germanys-centralrole/2015/02/20/d1119cd4-b8f8-11e4-aa05-1ce812b3fdd2_story.html

Borger, Julian (2012): Germany slowly comes to terms with sending armed forces abroad, The Guardian, 09/18/2012

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/18/germany-military-moderniseforeign-intervention>

Cohen, R. (2015): The German Question Redux. The New York Times Opinion Pages, 07/13/2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/opinion/roger-cohen-the-germanquestion-redux.html?mtrref=query.nytimes.com&assetType=opinion>

Karnitschigg, M. (2014): Angela Merkel's year of living dangerously, Politico Europe, 12/31/2015.

<http://www.politico.eu/article/angela-merkels-year-of-living-dangerously/>

Kundhani, Hans (2011): Germany as a Geo-Economic Power. The Washington Quarterly, November 2011.

<https://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/18832/uploads>

Kriesi, Hans Peter et al. (2012): Political Conflict in Western Europe. Cambridge.

Schwarzer, Daniela (2015): Learning on the Job. The EU is battling three major crises – with Germany in the lead in every case. But so far Berlin has not been able to create momentum for building a stronger Europe. Berlin Policy Journal, 11/10/2015

<http://berlinpolicyjournal.com/learning-on-the-job/>

Simms, B. (2015): Germany's triumph: from the ruins of war, how a new German empire was built. New Statesman, 07/30/2015

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/07/germany-s-triumph-ruins-warhow-new-european-empire-was-built>

Steinmeier, Frank-Walter (2016): Germany's New Role. Berlin steps up. Foreign Affairs, July/August 2016.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2016-06-13/germany-s-newglobal-role>

September 15: Movie Generation War (4.5 hours)

September 22: Scope Conditions for Germany policy makers (2/5) – Germany’s National Self-Perception (input presentation 2)

Garton Ash, Timothy (2013): The New German Question, The New York Review of Books, 15th of August 2013.

MacGregor, N. (2014): Germany. Memories of a Nation. Penguin Books

Katzenstein, Peter (1997): United Germany in an integrating Europe, Current History, 96, 608, 116-123.

Simms, Brandon (2013): Cracked Heart of the Old World, The New Stateman, 14th of March 2013.

September 29: After the Federal Election: Scope Conditions for Germany policy makers (3/5) – Germany’s Party System and political configuration (input presentation 3)

Lemke, C. and Welsh A. (2017): Germany Today: Politics and Policies in a Changing World. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

October 6: Scope Conditions for Germany policy makers (4/5) – The Rise of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the crucial role of Political Communication (input presentation 4)

Lochocki, T. (2017): The Rise of Populism in Western Europe. Springer Press.

Mudde, C. and Kaltwasser, C. (2017): Populism. A very short introduction. Oxford University Press.

October 13: Scope Conditions for German policy makers (5/5) – The New Nexus between Party Politics and Foreign Policy (input presentation 5)

Balfour, R. (2016): Europe’s Troublemakers – The populist challenge to foreign policy, EPC February 2016.

http://www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?cat_id=17&pub_id=6377

Rodrick, D. (2012): The Globalization Paradox. Democracy and the Future of the World Economy. Norton Publishers.

Task: Write a 3-pager about all scope conditions German policy makers are facing
October 20: no class (fall break)

October 27: How Covid-19 has hit the US and Germany and how the US and the German government reacted to it differently (input presentation 6 and 7)

Readings will be assigned

November 3: How the handling of the Corona virus has changed the scope conditions for German policy makers

Readings will be assigned

Task: Write a 3-pager about how the scope conditions for German policy makers have changed due Covid-19

November 10: Researching Germany – Class on Sources and Tools

Task: Write first bibliography about your assigned policy area

**November 17: Detailed presentation and discussion about policy cluster
1/5: State Finances and Fiscal Policies / Monetary Policies
and Eurozone**

**November 24: Detailed presentation and discussion about policy cluster
2/5: Migration and Integration / Demographics and Labour**

**December 3: Detailed presentation and discussion about policy cluster
3/5: Social Inequality / Welfare and Health System**

**December 10: Detailed presentation and discussion about policy cluster
4/5: Infrastructure / Digital Innovation / Education**

**December 17: Detailed presentation and discussion about policy cluster
5/5: Global Strategy: Trade and Security + Wrap up**

Task: final paper