Why Brexit?
October 22 – November 19, 2019
Paulette Kurzer, Professor of Political Science,
School of Government and Public Policy
kurzer@arizona.edu

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Course Description
The purpose of this course is to explore the relationship between British political developments and European integration. Such an exploration helps illuminate why Britain held a referendum in the first place, why a small majority of voters voted for leaving the EU, and why the political leadership is struggling to design an exit strategy.

Students do not need any prior knowledge.

Instructor
Paulette Kurzer is a Professor of Political Science in the School of Government and Public Policy. Her specialty is European politics and she has published widely on the impact of European integration on economic policy, housing markets, and consumer protection.

Time and Location
10 a.m. -12 p.m. in the meeting room in the historic side of the Dunbar Pavilion, 325 W. 2nd Street, Tucson, AZ 85705.

Readings
All the readings will be made electronically available to registered students.

Schedule

OCTOBER 22 - Week 1: Postwar British Politics and the Emergence of the EU

British leaders declined to join the EU, though they changed their minds in the early 1960s. By that time, de Gaulle led France and he blocked UK membership.

The readings and lecture focus on the ‘postwar consensus’ and the logic behind the rejection of EU membership and the subsequent change of heart.

OCTOBER 29 - Week 2: The end of the politics of consensus and the relaunching of the EU

The election of Mrs. Thatcher as the Conservative prime minister in 1979 brought about extensive economic and social reforms (liberalization and deregulation).

The EU launched the Single Market in 1986, which was also a project of liberalization and deregulation. Thatcher loved the Single Market and was a strong advocate of pan European liberalization and deregulation, until she wasn’t!

The readings and lecture look at the rise of Euroscepticism and Thatcher’s negotiations with the EU.


NOVEMBER 5 - Week 3: “New Labour” and the onset of the global financial crisis

Tony Blair was elected in 1997, the first Labour government in 18 years. Like leaders of the Conservative party, he refused to join the single currency (in effect since Jan. 2001) and viewed the City (financial services) as critical for British prosperity. However, the Labour party introduced state reforms and granted greater autonomy to Scotland and Wales.

The readings and lecture cover Labour’s continuation of questioning the EU and the rise of a Scottish identity.


NOVEMBER 12 - Week 4: The return of the Conservative party and the ‘Europe’ question

David Cameron led the Conservative party to power by ‘suppressing’ any discussion of Europe or EU membership in 2010.

However, the impact of austerity due to the financial crisis pushed many voters into the hands of anti-establishment political parties such as UKIP. The latter campaigns on leaving the UK.

The readings and lecture cover austerity policy and its impact on the social welfare state and the rising popularity of UKIP.


R. Ford and M. Goodwin Understanding UKIP: Identity, Social Change and the Left Behind. *The
The referendum passed as English Labour party voters in depressed districts, together with older, traditional English Conservative voters voted in favor of leaving the EU.

As this was ‘unexpected,’ the UK government was unprepared on how to extricate itself from the EU.

The Conservative party is divided between Remain and Leave MPs, paralyzing the prime minister who above all tries to keep the Conservative party together. The Labour party is mostly in favor of Remain, but its top leadership consists of euro skeptics.


TBA.