

Europe's Largest Economy - Germany in Comparative Perspective

Final year module

Lecturer: tbc

Germany is the largest and one of the most complex economies in the EU. This module analyses the political economy of Germany in the context of Europeanisation, globalisation and demographic change. Once praised as an economic miracle, the 'German model' has come under severe pressure since the 1980s. Although being the world export champion, the country suffers from high unemployment and low growth. Further, more than 20 years after the fall of the Berlin wall, East-West integration is still not fully achieved. There are also concerns that the estimated decline in the population may cause problems for the labour market and social security systems.

In this context, the module deals with institutions, norms of governance and economic policies in Germany. Drawing upon approaches such as 'varieties of capitalism', 'public choice', 'fiscal federalism' and 'multi-level governance', the course explores the impact of economic and political agents, welfare state institutions, labour and finance market design, and corporate governance on economic and social performance. Furthermore, some key policy areas and reform options will be examined including: education and innovation policy, environmental policy, public finance and social policy reform. The analysis of such policies is carried out in terms of Germany's position in the EU, as well as relying on a comparative perspective that relates the case of Germany to other European states.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the functioning of the 'German model'
- Discuss Germany's role in the EU
- Investigate the impact of socio-economic institutions on economic performance, exemplified by the German case
- Analyse historic and recent developments in the German economy and compare them with other European countries
- Evaluate different reform proposals concerning selected economic problems (unemployment, welfare state retrenchment, reunification, environmental issues etc.), using Germany as a central case study

Assessment

- 1 x 4000 word assessed work (50%)
- Presentation (10%)
- 2 hour examination (40%)