How does does a political community with people of diverse cultural and historical backgrounds function? The European Union presents a case study to examine this significant challenge for contemporary multicultural societies. The healthy functioning and long-term viability of the EU ultimately depend on its citizens finding a common cause and developing a shared sense of political community. Drawing on a unique set of opinion surveys from the formative years of the EU to the first wave of eastern expansion, Professor Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Assistant Professor Steven Weldon of Simon Fraser University have been researching the development and sources of dyadic trust among EU member states. They challenge the prevailing viewpoint that cultural, religious and economic diversity is an obstacle to integration in a long term, and argue that citizens from diverse backgrounds can learn to trust one another and build a sense of political community over time. This seminar is based on their joint paper.

Professor Hans-Dieter Klingemann is Emeritus Director of Social Science Research Centre, Berlin, and is currently a visiting Fellow at ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences. He has taught at universities in Germany, the U.S., France, and Canada, and served as numerous executive positions, including President of the European Political Science Network (2002-2005). Among many publications, the most recent ones include Dieter Fuchs and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds. 2011. Cultural Diversity, European Identity and the Legitimacy of the EU. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds. 2009. The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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