



Introduction to European Law and Institutions

European School of Political and Social Sciences (ESPOL)

2014-2015

Dr. Giulia SANDRI
Lecturer in Political Science

giulia.sandri@icl-lille.fr

Course Syllabus



“Europe will be forged in crises, and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises”- Jean Monnet

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Convenor

Room Room no. 302, Bvd Vauban, 70 (3rd Floor)
Email address: giulia.sandri@univ-catholille.fr
Office Hours: Wednesday 17.30-19.30

Timetable

Lectures: Time: Wednesday, 14H10-17H30
Dates: 14/01; 21/01; 28/01; 11/02; 18/02; 04/03; 11/03;
18/03;
Venue: C008 St. Raphaël

Content and Structure

This course serves as an introduction to the European Union. This course is designed to introduce students to some of the major topics in European Union politics and law. It includes discussions of the major theoretical issues as well as a number, albeit not all, of the major substantive topics in the field. This course intends to familiarize students with EU institutions and decision-making processes. It outlines the character of European governance and provides a general introduction to the EU political system and its legal order. It explores the key institutions of the Union: Commission, Council, Parliament and Court of Justice. The course examines how the EU institutions are appointed, how they function, their respective powers, how they interact with each other and with the national political institution and civil society actors. Finally, it considers the dynamics of political change, including efforts to democratize decision-making processes and the role of citizens and parties, as well as the prospects of future deepening of the Union.

The main goal of the course is to explore the main institutions and policy processes at European level under an interdisciplinary perspective. The institutional/legal approach contributes in outlining the main remits of EU institutions and their role in EU decision-making. On the other hand, the course aims at explaining the functioning of the EU political system. The course is divided into four parts. The first part sets the scene for the study of the EU and provides an overview of the main concepts and dynamics at the basis of the EU political system and of tis functioning. The second part introduces students to the recent evolution of the EU and the treaty base. The third part of this course explores the composition and powers of the main EU institutions (such as the Commission, the European Parliament, the Council and the Courts). The fourth part deals with the EU legal order: it identifies the EU policy competences, outlines the sources of EU laws and briefly describes the main decision-making processes in the EU and particularly the legislative procedures.

Course Objectives

The objective of the course on European institutions is to provide a better understanding, mainly through a political science approach, of the innovative and complex set of institutions built up over time as an instrument of the European integration process. Students are expected to acquire a detailed knowledge of the legal, political and institutional developments inherent in the creation of the European Union, and of the distinctive features of its processes and decision-making rules. The course develops skills of empirical political analysis and enables students to become familiar with some of the basic sources of information from which they can henceforth renew and update their knowledge of changes and developments in European integration. The course also aims at raising awareness about current developments and controversies which have dominated the political debate about the European Union in recent years. The course seeks to provide a platform for further study of the law and politics of the EU within the European School of Political and Social Sciences.

Studying the EU is certainly relevant for all students of politics and while exploring the main features of EU governance a number of questions arise:

- What exactly is the EU? What exactly is the EU's role and purpose in 2015?
- Which policy areas are regulated at the European level and why?
- How are decisions made at this European level and who decides them?
- Which are the main legal bases of EU policies?
- How far has further enlargement transformed the existing institutional structures and policy priorities?
- In short, what is the EU, what does it do and why does it do it?

This course aims to address all of these fundamental aspects of the past and on-going process of European integration. It comprises three distinct parts.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students are expected to have acquired a particular knowledge of the European Union, its history and institutional set-up. More particularly, upon completion of this course, students will:

- Be familiar with the workings and main features of the EU political system,
- Understand the policy making process and appreciate how policies are formulated, implemented and monitored at the EU level (and on which legal basis),
- Possess a critical understanding of the European institutions and their role in the integration process,
- Appreciate the salient issues confronting the EU in 2015.

Teaching and Course Format

The course is taught through lectures, seminars and face-to-face individual presentations on essay topics known as “khôlles”. Each week there will normally be one lecture and one seminar. Lectures take place once a week, and altogether there are 8 ex-cathedra lectures of 3 hours each. Students are however encouraged to participate and ask questions. Lectures are designed to outline the topic in general, highlight illustrative examples and discuss some salient points. They are meant to introduce to the topic at hand, to build the basis of informed seminar discussion and exam answers. Students are expected to attend both the lectures and the seminars.

Seminars will be held weekly in groups of up to 15-20 people. Altogether there are 8 seminars of 2h each, starting on Week 2 (last week of January). You are required to read the essential literature in preparation for the seminars and follow the news. Seminars are a crucial part of the course and attendance is compulsory. Seminars are designed to help you clarify and build on the lectures with the support of the seminar teacher. Informed discussion plays a vital role in seminars. It is therefore essential to process the relevant essential reading in preparation for each session. The seminars will offer a good opportunity for students to develop their ability to contribute to discussions and debates, hold informed conversations about the issues discussed and generally improve their presentation skills. Everybody will be involved in the discussions at the seminar.

NOTES:

1. All sessions (lectures, seminars, khôlles) start on time and you are expected to be present at the start.
2. All mobile phones must be switched off before entering lectures and seminars.
3. The use of tablets and PCs is not allowed during class. You are required to attend class and take notes.

Course Assessment

Assessment in this course is by means of a final written examination, individual presentations in the form of “khôlles”, seminar attendance and participation, group presentations in the framework of the seminars and a mid-term 30 minutes written exam (quiz) on the content of the set seminar readings. The breakdown of components is as follows:

| Assessment Type | Weight | | Requirements |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| Exam | 50% final grade | | 3 hours written exam, 4 open-ended questions |
| Seminar | 50% final grade | 1/3 seminar grade | One 15 minutes group presentation (counts as 3/4 of the grade) 30 minutes quiz on Week 7 (counts as 1/4 of the grade) |
| Khôlles | | 2/3 seminar grade | Two 30 min presentations (10 min presentation + 10 min Q&A + 10 min feedback) |

Since this course is given in English, the seminars will take place in English, the khôlles will be in English and the entire final exam will be in English. The final examination takes place in May 2015 and covers all the material discussed during the lectures.

Feedback

Students should note that feedback on their academic progress is available in a variety of forms. Students can approach both the course convenor and the seminar teacher in their set Office Hours, or otherwise by appointment (or by email), to talk about their academic progress, issues relevant to the course, or to discuss in more detail the feedback that they receive on set assignments and presentations in the framework of the course seminar and “khôlles”.

II. COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE

Week 1

The EU political system I

- A. Introduction and presentation of the structure of the course
- B. How to study the EU? The main concepts
- C. The political science approach to European integration

Week 2

The EU political system II

- A. The peculiarities of the EU political system
- B. The evolving treaty framework: From Maastricht to Nice
- C. The peculiarities of the previous pillar structure

Week 3

The Evolving Treaty Framework

- A. The constitutional process
- B. The Lisbon Treaty
- C. The EU Institutions: The institutional triangle

Week 4

The EU institutions I

- A. The European Council
- B. The Council
- C. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs

Week 5

The EU institutions II

- A. The Commission
- B. The EU advisory bodies

Week 6

The EU institutions III

- A. The European parliament
- B. The EU financial bodies (ECB, EIB, new financial institutions)
- C. The regulatory & specialized agencies

Week 7

The EU law & Courts

- A. The Court of Justice & the General Court, the Court of Auditors
- B. The legal sources of EU law, the EU law & national law
- C. The EU legal order: status & principles of EU law

Week 8

The EU legal order

- A. The EU's fundamental values, powers & competences
- B. Understanding the EU policy processes: the main decision-making models
- C. Making and Applying EU legislation:
 - 1. The community method: ordinary legislative procedure
 - 2. Intergovernmental decision-making & special procedures, treaty revision procedures
 - 3. The budgetary process & financial programming

III. SUGGESTED READINGS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

Media

Since European Union politics is an area of rapid change it is important to keep abreast of current developments. The easiest way to do this is to read the Financial Times regularly. Its coverage of EU policies and debates easily surpasses all other newspapers. On a less regular basis you may refer to The Economist. Some websites also provide very useful information about current debates and developments in the European Union:

- Gateway to the EU (official EU site): http://europa.eu/index_en.htm
- EU Observer: <http://euobserver.com/>
- EurActiv: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/>
- European Navigator (reference on history of the EU): <http://www.ena.lu>
- E!Sharp: www.peoplepowerprocess.com
- European Voice: www.europeanvoice.com

Academic Journals

Relevant articles to the topics analysed in this course can be found in all mainstream comparative politics journals. Specialized journals on European integration include:

- Comparative European Politics (Palgrave)
- European Journal of Political Research (Blackwell)
- European Political Science (Palgrave)
- European Union Politics (Sage)
- Journal of Common Market Studies (Wiley-Blackwell)
- Journal of Contemporary European Studies (Taylor and Francis)
- Journal of European Integration (Taylor and Francis)
- Journal of European Public Policy (Taylor and Francis)
- West European Politics (Taylor and Francis)

Recommended texts and readings

There is a huge and ever-expanding literature on the EU. From a political science perspective most books tend to either cover the historical aspects of the EU or the institutions of EU governance or else focus upon policy-making and specific policy areas. The following texts should prove very useful as core overview texts (* underlines the most relevant ones, strongly recommended):

Recommended textbooks:

*Bomberg E., Peterson J. and Corbett R. (2012). The European Union. How does it work?, 3rd edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

And if you prefer a textbook in French:

*Costa O., and Brack N. (2014). Le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, Bruxelles, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

Other textbooks:

Peterson, J. and Shackleton, M. (2012). The Institutions of the European Union, 3rd edition, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Cini, M. and Perez-Solorzano Borrigan, N. (2010). European Union Politics, 3rd edition, Nugent, N. (2010). The Government and Politics of the European Union, Palgrave, Basingstoke. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Lelieveldt, H. and Princen, S. (2011). The Politics of the European Union, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

McCormick, J. (2011). European Union Politics, Palgrave, Basingstoke.

Hix, S. and Hoyland, B. (2011). The Political System of the European Union. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Magnette, P. (2005) What is the European Union? Nature and Prospects, Palgrave Macmillan.

Jones, E., Menon, A. and Weatherill S. (2011). Oxford Handbook of the European Union. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Dony, M. (2008). Droit de l'Union Européenne, Bruxelles, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

Reinisch, A. (2012). Essentials of EU Law, 2nd edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Hartley, T.C. (2010). The foundations of European Union Law: An introduction to the constitutional and administrative law of the European Union, Oxford, Oxford University Press.