



STUDY PROGRAMME

POL & MATA

ACADEMIC YEAR

2021-2022

SEMESTER

Second

COURSE TITLE

The EU's legitimacy in question. 'Exit, Voice, Loyalty'

COURSE PROFESSOR

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COURSE ASSISTANT

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NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL)

Optional course

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

ECTS CREDITS

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1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

From debates around Maastricht to Brexit, the contested legitimacy of the EU is one of the key aspects which put the viability of the European Union into question. The aim of this course is to provide an understanding of the conceptual issues at stake, to present the actors who have been at the centre of the related debates, and explain the ways in which decision makers have responded to the crisis of legitimacy. Albert Hirschman's book *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* offers a refreshing and thought-provoking framework to think about the EU's legitimacy issues and its consequences on politics and policy making. The purpose is not to study the book extensively, but to see how these analytical categories (and the hypotheses developed by Hirschman) can help us to conceive of the EU's contemporary legitimacy issues.

In each of the four clusters presented below, the course will provide an explanation of the key concepts, a historical perspective as well as an in-depth discussion of how contemporary episodes of contention from Maastricht to the 2008 financial crisis, treaty ratifications, Brexit and the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

From a practical angle, the course consists in students elaborating a Wikipedia article on a topic of their choice in order to contribute actively to the expansion of quality knowledge in the public sphere.

On completion of the course, the student will be expected to be able to:

- master the propositions implied by Hirschman's triptych "exit, voice, loyalty"
- explain why it is relevant to discuss the legitimacy issues of the EU
- refer specifically to historical as well as contemporary episodes of EU politics which exemplify why the legitimacy of the EU is problematic
- be extensively knowledgeable about one particular issue related to exit, voice and/or loyalty in the EU
- master the intellectual as well as technical process involved with the creation/revision of a Wikipedia page

The above course objectives link up with the following programme-specific learning outcomes:

POL

- Students possess a pluri-disciplinary understanding of European integration, allowing them to understand fully the nature, dynamics and functioning of the EU system.
- Students have a general knowledge of the main components of the EU political system: institutions, actors, decision-making procedures, competences and policies.
- Students comprehend the disciplinary knowledge and theories specific to EU studies.
- Students possess an in-depth knowledge of fundamental aspects of the EU political system (institutions, actors, policies etc.).
- Students recognize the normative assumptions and implications of theories of European integration.
- Students can recognize, contextualize, explain, and interpret political, societal and economic phenomena in European integration. They can assess events, governance problems and political crises.
- Students can analyse the process and actors of EU policy-making at different levels of governance and can reflect on potential developments.
- Students can transform a complex problem into a research question, mobilize theories, develop a research design, and conduct empirical work to provide solutions in an analytical and balanced way.
- Students can flexibly apply theories and analytical frameworks from different disciplinary perspectives to the main issues of EU politics and policies.
- Students are able to analyse, in a limited amount of time, complex and new issues, by finding and investigating various sources of information and delivering an analytical and critical synthesis.
- Students can communicate clearly and effectively, through oral presentations or written documents, to different kinds of audiences.
- Students are capable of evolving in a multi-cultural context and of taking into account the variety of political systems, institutional logics and cultural backgrounds.

MATA

- The graduate student is capable of processing a large amount of information and appropriately analyse relevant sources depending on his or her disciplinary focus within a short period of time and of suggesting possible actions that contribute to problem-solving in a creative way.

3. COURSE CONTENTS

This course is divided into four topical clusters:

- **The legitimacy of the EU and Hirschman.** There has been a long-standing debate on the legitimacy of the EU. Hirschman helps us to go from a purely normative debate - what should a genuine European democracy look like and how can we measure the gap with the existing state of the EU - to more explanatory insights - why are certain categories of people unhappy with the EU and why are they more likely to be geared towards exit, voice or loyalty. The first bloc in the course aims at pin pointing a set of key propositions made by Hirschman as a starting point and, in that way, make sure that everybody is on the same page.
- **Denying loyalty.** Political and academic debates tackled the issue of the democratic deficit and the end of the so-called 'permissive consensus' over EU integration. Various models have been put forward for assessing the democratic legitimacy of the EU: the regulatory state, parliamentarism at EU level, and deliberative democracy. European elites have developed strategies for responding to lacking loyalty towards the EU including a stress on transparency, or specific policies. Yet, in the absence of strong socialization mechanisms and



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institutions, citizens' loyalty remains the Achilles heel of the EU.

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- **Exerting voice.** Political parties have been key actors driving the rise of active Euroscepticism, notably during European elections or in referendum campaigns on European matters. Besides political parties, unions, NGOs, social movements, etc. have also contested the legitimacy of the EU and its policies. They have often sought to organise transnationally in order to influence policy making at the level of the EU. Yet, such coalitions have to face particular organisational and political challenges. The rise of populism and the coming of age of EU critical governments presents an important challenge to the EU.
- **Exiting the EU.** Legitimacy issues have conducted citizens, groups or governments to adopt strategies for exiting EU policies (when peoples and governments require opt-outs), EU politics (when individuals refuse to be European citizens), or the EU polity (when debates are engaged about countries leaving the EU or the Euro area). Brexit, Grexit or the rise of populist forces questioning EU membership (e.g. in France or Italy) are all signs that exit is no longer a taboo.



4. TEACHING METHOD

Besides lectures, the course is based on the production of Wikipedia pages by students. This means that half of the sessions are used to conduct Wikipedia collaborative workshops where the content, difficulties faced, etc. are discussed in the group.

5. FURTHER DETAILS ON THE TEACHING METHOD

N/A

6. COURSE MATERIAL

Indicative reading list:

Crespy, A., 'The Legitimacy of the EU and Deliberative Democracy. A Reappraisal of Conflict', *Political Studies*, vol. 62, no. 1, 2014, pp. 81-98.

Hirschman, A. O., *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970.

Jachtenfuchs, M & C. Kasack (2017). "Balancing sub-unit autonomy and collective problem-solving by varying exit and voice. An analytical framework", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(4), 598-614.

Schmidt, V. A., 'Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output and Throughput', *Political Studies*, vol. 61, no. 1, 2013, pp. 2-22.

Schrag Sternberg, C., *The Struggle for the EU's Legitimacy*, Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2013.
Van Ingelgom, V., *Integrating indifference*, Colchester, ECPR press, 2014.

**This bibliography has been put together by the Professor. The formatting of the references does not necessarily correspond to the referencing rules applicable in the Department.*

7. EVALUATION

The course includes one main assignment, namely the production of a Wikipedia page on a chosen topic.

Below is the breakdown of the course grade:

- 20% - regular work and participation in class in Wikipedia workshops (presentation, feedback given to others, etc.)
- 30% - final Wikipedia page
- 50% - final oral exam

Assessment at second attempt

During the second examination session the course is assessed 100% on the basis of a written resit exam.

**The evaluation modalities of the final exam may be subject to adaptations in function of the evolution of the sanitary situation.*