



STUDY PROGRAMME

1. POL
2. MATA-POL

ACADEMIC YEAR

2025-2026

SEMESTER

First

COURSE TITLE

Governance, Politics and Policy-Making of the EU

COURSE PROFESSOR

Michael KAEDING

COURSE ASSISTANT

Luis MATOS & Sara AREZES

NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL)

1. Compulsory
2. Compulsory

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

ECTS CREDITS

5

1. COURSE OBJECTIVE

This compulsory course situates the EU's institutions and key actors of its policy cycle, the legal order and the central policy domains in their particular European context. It offers a concise account of the reasons and principles behind EU institutions and decision-making, together with illustrations of the different ways in which the EU works. Its starting point is to explain why the EU system of institutions and decision-making is as it is, without following any particular normative approach towards integration. Eventually, this compulsory course offers students the tools to critically analyse and reflect on European integration (laboratory of European integration) and its consequences in order to form their own critically informed opinion on how the EU offers an appropriate answer to the many questions and challenges it faces in the complex European multi-level and global context.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

POL:

- Students develop a multidisciplinary understanding of the European political system.
- Students have a general knowledge of the main components of the EU political system: institutions, actors, decision-making procedures, competences and policies.



- Students can flexibly apply theories and analytical frameworks from different disciplinary perspectives to the main issues of EU politics and policies.
- Students can analyze the process and actors of EU policy-making at different levels of governance and can reflect on potential developments.
- 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 recognize the normative assumptions and implications of theories of European integration.
- Students can evolve in a multi-cultural context and of taking into account the variety of political systems, institutional logics and cultural backgrounds.
- Students can analyze, 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 are capable of working as part of a complex project, individually or collectively, and they develop skills of planning, organization, prioritization and time management.

MATA:

- The graduate demonstrates advanced and critical mastery of the principal theoretical approaches and analytical concepts in their disciplinary focus (International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, Political Science, Regional Studies) or interdisciplinary focus and can apply them to the analysis of transatlantic affairs.
- The graduate can identify, interpret and critically assess the current state of academic research on transatlantic affairs and can situate them within broader scholarly debates, in line with their (inter-) disciplinary focus.
- The graduate possesses in depth and comparative knowledge of the political systems of the European Union and the United States, including their institutional structures, policy making processes, and core internal and external policies, and can analyse their interactions in a transatlantic context.
- The graduate can contextualise and interpret contemporary transatlantic developments by integrating historical, political, legal and economic perspectives, and can meaningfully explain how past dynamics shape current policy choices, debates and institutional frameworks.
- The graduate can synthesise and integrate insights from multiple disciplines relevant to transatlantic affairs (e.g., International Relations, Political Science, Regional Studies or an interdisciplinary focus) and can adopt and compare both European and U.S. perspectives in analysing and evaluating transatlantic issues
- The graduate can analyse developments within Europe and/or the US that impact their relative geopolitical standing, thereby influencing EU and/or US interests relevant to transatlantic affairs.
- The graduate acquires a nuanced perspective of internal political, economic, and/or social pressures and how they may impact, either directly or indirectly, the transatlantic relationship and the capacity of the transatlantic partners to act in accordance with the needs of the transatlantic partnership.
- The graduate can analyse transatlantic affairs in a broad and multidisciplinary manner, assessing challenges in this domain with intellectual openness, sensitivity to diversity of perspectives, and the ability to understand and navigate complex and ambiguous situations.
- The graduate is able to critically reflect on a wide range of issues in transatlantic affairs, to develop well informed and evidence based points of view, and to communicate these effectively, both orally and in writing, when working independently or collaboratively.
- The graduate can independently transform complex transatlantic issues into a clear and feasible research question, find and evaluate relevant sources in line with their (inter-) disciplinary focus, apply appropriate concepts and methods, and present research results in



accordance with the ethical standards of the field.

- The graduate is capable of rapidly processing large volumes of information, critically analysing (inter-)discipline relevant sources, and proposing creative, feasible, and analytically grounded solutions to problems within the field of transatlantic affairs.
- The graduate has the intellectual maturity and professional skills to function autonomously and responsibly in national or international professional environments—particularly in transatlantic contexts—by planning and organising work effectively, setting priorities, meeting deadlines, cooperating across cultural and disciplinary boundaries, and building professional networks.

3. COURSE CONTENTS

In view of the current state of European integration, this compulsory course proposes a fresh, accessible and interdisciplinary take on EU governance, politics and policy-making and what the EU is for to engage all students with the wider context of the EU project and its future.

The European Union is a key player in determining policies and politics in Europe and globally, and yet understanding how it works remains a challenge also because the EU's combination of institutions is unique and can be characterized as 'a polity with many principals'. The EU, like most of the decisions that emerge from it, is the result of a compromise negotiated between different preferences and shaped by multiple pressures in a changing world. Indeed, the Union may not only never become a State; it may always remain a process.

Seven (7) Lecture Sessions (total of 15h):

1. Understanding EU Governance and Decision-Making and its Future: The EU as a legal order and its priorities for 2024-2029 (2h)
2. Why Do we have the EU Institutions and how to work with EU institutions? (4h)
3. The EU as a Regulator: Legislative Procedures, Delegated and Implementing Acts (1,5h)
4. The EU as a Market: Making the Internal Market Work (standardisation bodies, EU agencies, European social partners, interest groups) (1,5h)
5. The EU as a Political Union: What type of democracy for the EU? (2h)
6. Enforcing EU Regulation: Transposition, Practical Implementation and Monitoring Implementation across EU Member States and beyond (2h)
7. Guest lecture by Claude Wiseler, serving as the current and 40th President of the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies on the Brussels effect on national parliaments: A Luxembourgish case study (2h)
8. The EU as a Unity: (Re-)Designing Europe's Differentiated Present and (further enlarged) Future (2h)

Six (6) Discussion Group Sessions (total of 10h):

1. DG 1: Introduction to the DGs and Theories
2. DG 2: The EU Single Market at a Crossroads: History, Theories, and Contemporary Debates
3. DG 3: Rethinking the Common Agricultural Policy
4. DG 4: Governance Unpacked: Theories and Policy Cycles in Action
5. DG 5: Bridging or Dividing? Cohesion Policy and the Future of the EU Budget
6. DG 6: European Defence Policy & Strategic Autonomy

4. TEACHING METHOD(S)

The course contains two main teaching components: lectures and discussion groups.

Lectures are given by Professor Kaeding and provide a holistic understanding of present and future EU governance and policymaking.

The accompanying discussion groups, each led by one of the Academic Assistants, comprise eight to nine students and take the form of an interactive seminar. There will be six sessions in total. Students



are required to take an active role, presenting and debating topics.

An in-depth description of the structure of the discussion groups can be found on the Intranet. Attendance to all course components is mandatory for POL students.

The language of instruction in both lectures and discussion groups is English.

5. COURSE MATERIAL*

Beaudonnet, L., C. Belot, C. Le Gall and V. Van Ingelgom (2024) Taking stock of the 2024 European elections in the 27 Member States, *Politique européenne* 24/4 No 86, special issue.

Best, E. (2016) *Understanding EU decision-making*, Wiesbaden: Springer.

Best, E. (2025) 'Policy-Making in the European Union', in M. Cini and N. Pérez-Solórzano Borragán (eds.) *European Union Politics* (8th edition), chapter 15 (pp. 219-236).

Cini, M and N Pérez-Solórzano Borragán (2025) (eds.) *European Union Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 8th edition.

Coman, R., A. Crespy and V. A. Schmidt (2020) *Governance and Politics in the Post-Crisis European Union*.

Hix, S. and B. K. Høyland (2022) *The Political System of the European Union*, Bloomsbury Academic, 4th edition.

Kaeding, M., M. Müller and A. Hoppe (2025) (eds.) *The 2024 European Parliament Elections. A Turn to the Right in the Shadow of War*, Wiesbaden: Springer.

Kaeding, M., J. Pollak and P. Schmidt (2019) (eds.) *The Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals*, London: Palgrave.

Kaeding, M., J. Pollak and P. Schmidt (2020) (eds.) *Euroscepticism and the Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals*, London: Palgrave.

Lelieveldt, H. and Princen S. (2023) *The Politics of the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3rd edition.

Leuffen, D., B. Rittberger and F. Schimmelfennig (2022) (eds.) *Integration and Differentiation in the European Union. Theory and Policies*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lodge, J., J. Smith and S. Fotopoulos (2025) *Palgrave Handbook on the 2024 European Parliament elections*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

McCormick, J. (2020) *European Union Politics*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 3rd edition.

Zimmermann, H. and A. Dür (2021) (eds.) *Key Controversies in European Integration*, 3rd edition, Bloomsbury Publishing, 3rd edition.

6. EVALUATION

Students will be graded based on their performance in a final exam and the discussion groups:

- A final exam (worth 50% of the final grade), covering topics dealt with during the 16 lectures and the discussion groups. The exam will consist of multiple-choice. It will be closed book and will take place on-site in a digital format.
- The discussion groups (worth 50% of the final grade). The assessment of the performance in the discussion groups is based on:
 - A group presentation (40%)
 - An individual oral defence (pro- or con-side) of a statement, including a one-page handout as well as active moderation of the ensuing debate (40%)



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolir

ECTS CARD

- Participation (20%)

Plagiarism: Pursuant to Articles 39a and subsequent provisions of the College of Europe Study Regulations 2025–2026, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, and the falsification of data are expressly prohibited and shall be deemed to constitute academic misconduct. All written work submitted by a student shall be subject to assessment with regard not only to its originality but also to the scope and rigor of the research undertaken. Any instance of plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, or falsification of data, as defined in the aforementioned Study Regulation, shall give rise to the imposition of penalties in accordance with Article 40 thereof.

Artificial Intelligence: Pursuant to Articles 38 and subsequent provisions of the College of Europe Study Regulations 2025–2026, the category of permitted generative AI (genAI) use for the present course is **restricted use**. Students may employ genAI tools exclusively at the foundational stages of the work process, such as brainstorming on structure or approach, screening of literature, or the organisation of data. The use of genAI for advanced stages of the work process, including the analysis or interpretation of data, the generation of arguments, the drafting or writing of text, or translation and rewriting of content, is strictly prohibited.

The non-generative use of AI tools, such as for spell-checking, reference style management, or information searches, is by default permitted for all course work and the Master's thesis.

Any use of genAI, even within the restricted category, must be transparently acknowledged in accordance with the departments referencing guidelines. Students bear full responsibility for the entirety of the content they submit, irrespective of the tools used, and must ensure compliance with College regulations on academic integrity, data protection, and intellectual property. Violations of the permitted scope of AI use, or failures to acknowledge such use, shall constitute academic misconduct and will be sanctioned in line with Articles 39a, 39b, and 40 of the Academic Regulations on plagiarism, falsification of data, and related infringements.

7. Assessment at second attempt

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