



## STUDY PROGRAMME

1. POL  
2. MATA

## ACADEMIC YEAR

2023 - 2024

## SEMESTER

1st – 2nd

## COURSE TITLE

The EU's International Role and External Action: CFSP, CSDP, EEAS, Enlargement, ENP, Russia, EU's Power

## COURSE PROFESSOR

Ana E. Juncos

## COURSE ASSISTANT

Marie Ketterlin

## NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL)

1. Research Seminar

## LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

## ECTS CREDITS

15

## 1. COURSE OBJECTIVE

Debates around the conceptualization and practice of the EU as a global actor have gained increased centrality in the current context of multi-layered crises. The Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine, and the increasing geopolitical competition between the US and China, are just a few examples. These challenges have emphasized the need for the EU to reduce vulnerabilities and external dependences, with current policies geared towards increasing strategic autonomy and resilience as illustrated by the EU's Strategic Compass of 2022. External and internal contestations of the EU's norms and values have also had a significant impact on the EU's foreign policy raising issues of effectiveness, legitimacy and credibility of its external action. Increasing investment in defence capabilities, a renewed focus on the enlargement process and the need to revisit its engagement with the neighbourhood are part of the EU's foreign policy response to both deal with internal challenges and the contested international order. Thus, taking stock of these changing contexts and dynamics is fundamental to grasp the many dimensions of the EU as a global actor. In view of these developments, this research seminar aims at:

1. Analysing the EU's actorness in the international system with reference to both academic conceptualisations and specific case studies of EU external policies and (multilateral) activities;
2. Looking at the EU's architecture, including political, institutional and administrative mechanisms of the EU's external action in and across all several external policy domains with a focus on the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and later developments (e.g. in relation to the CFSP, CSDP, development, enlargement, ENP policies);
3. To understand the impact of major crises (e.g. Covid-19; Russia's war in Ukraine) and systemic changes at the international level on the role of the EU as an international actor, including debates



on European strategic autonomy and the EU as a geopolitical power.

4. Discussing potential future roles and models of the EU in the international arena, with a particular focus on the concepts of 'global actor', 'geopolitical power', 'civilian', 'normative', 'smart', and 'structural' power;

5. Understanding the complex relations of the European Union with its neighbours, including actors such as Russia and Turkey, and the perspectives of enlargement in the Balkans and Eastern Europe;

The result of the student's work, the "master thesis", should be a valid contribution to the understanding and – if possible – to the improvement of the political and administrative workings of the EU in the world system. The work is expected to combine selected elements of theories with empirical research and, where appropriate, policy recommendations (a list of criteria and yardsticks will be made available on the intranet).

At the end of the semester, the student will have written a Master's thesis on a chosen topic. Students are expected to learn the fundamentals of the methodology in social science research's work, as well as in the field of EU external relations.

This entails:

- identification of a specific topic
- identification of an initial research puzzle
- realisation of a state of the art of the literature in the selected topic
- formulation of a precise research question
- identification of testable hypotheses
- choice of a research protocol
- conduct of empirical work (field interviews with actors, observation, analytical documentation, realisation and diffusion of questionnaires, work on qualitative and/or quantitative data, etc.)
- test of the hypotheses
- drafting of the thesis as such, with full respect of the Departmental guidelines (length, referencing, bibliography...)

## 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The research seminars are not content-related as such: they all offer similar methodological guidance and support to groups of students who focus on a common topic.

Every seminar is supervised by a professor, assisted by an academic assistant, and focuses on a research area. The seminars alternate plenary sessions, bringing together the professor and all the students of the seminar to discuss research methods, and individual meetings during which students present their research project and discuss the progress of their work with the professor and the academic assistant.

These course objectives therefore link up with the programme-specific learning outcomes applicable to the master's thesis.

## 3. TEACHING METHOD(S)

This seminar alternates individual interviews, sessions in small groups and a plenary session.

Guidance is usually provided by the Professor through group interviews gathering students working



on similar topics, with the Professor and the Academic Assistant, on the basis of outlines sent to the Assistant one week in advance. Additional individual interviews can be organized if needed when the Professor is in Bruges, and the Academic Assistant is available to provide counselling between the Professor's visits.

In late September, the Professor presents the seminar in front of the students, which is a useful step for them to identify if the seminar corresponds to their academic wish. In November and December, the students and the Professor exchange on key questions via email. They start to identify fitting research topics. Mid-January, a plenary session is organised, which allows for a discussion on the theoretical approaches. It is followed by a first round of individual interviews. From January to April, students and the Professor clarify the topics and the supervision goes on via group discussions. Finally, in June, the Professor gives a feedback session. This final session provides an opportunity to debate on strengths and shortcomings of the thesis.

#### 4. COURSE MATERIAL

Students are provided with the common departmental guidelines on the master thesis as well as with criteria for thesis assessment which serve as guidelines for structuring their work.

Late September: Presentation of the course (0,5 hour)

Nov/Dec: Presentation of key question via mail - Exchange about the research topics

Mid-January: Plenary session for all students: pinning down the theoretical approaches and the research methodology – First round of individual interviews

January-April: Clarification of topics and progress supervision via group discussions

June: Feedback session: professor's assessment and debate on thesis

In view of the highly complex and fragmented role of the European Union in the international system, the Professor proposes the following categories for analysis:

- a) The Common Foreign and Security Policy: institutional aspects and performance;
- b) The Common Security and Defence Policy: institutional aspects and performance;
- c) Management of crises - in the Eastern or Southern neighbourhood (example: Belarus, Sahel);
- d) External aspects of several policy fields (security, migration, climate);
- e) External aspects of co-operation in the field of Justice and Home Affairs;
- f) EU relations with specific countries, groups of countries or international organizations;
- g) Assessing the EU's neighbourhood policies;
- h) Assessing the Eastern Partnership;
- i) The EU's role in the Southern neighbourhood (e.g. EU relations with Egypt);
- j) The EU's enlargement policy, with a particular focus on the Western Balkans;
- k) EU relations with Turkey and perspectives on Turkish accession;
- l) The 2016 EU Global Strategy: analysis and assessment;
- m) The 2022 Strategic Compass: analysis and assessment;



- n) The development of EU defence capabilities, e.g. PESCO
- o) The EU in a multipolar international order;
- p) European strategic autonomy in theory and in practice
- q) Transatlantic relations
- r) The role of the EEAS in the institutional architecture;
- s) The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the EU's global role.
- t) The EU's response to the war in Ukraine.

The research should, of course, not deal with areas as vast as those mentioned, but rather look at particular political and administrative sub-elements, at specific (current) issues or at (aspects of) the theoretical debate.

The thesis subject should, if possible, fit into one of the following four chapters:

a) **Geographical orientation**

1. Europe and its regional neighbourhood in the East and South (i.e. Ukraine, Syria)
2. Relations with US, Russia, Turkey, China
3. Europe in the Western Balkans
4. Europe's link with third countries or groups of countries
5. Europe as a global player in political, security and defence matters

b) **The evolution of institutions and procedures concerning Europe's role in the international system**

1. The High Representative: expectations and performance (e.g. a balance sheet for Ashton, Mogherini and Borrell)
2. The President of the European Council in the external action (expectations and performance a balance sheet for van Rompuy, Tusk and Michel)
3. The European External Action Service
4. The role of PSC
5. The role of the EDA
6. The European Parliament and External Action
7. The Commission and External Action
8. EU Delegations
9. Policy-making in European foreign policy

c) **Sectorial orientation**

1. CFSP
2. CSDP
3. EU development policies



4. External dimension of specific policies (e.g. energy, climate, migration)
5. The EU and challenges of global governance (e.g. contestation of liberal international order)

## d) Theoretical and strategic perspectives

1. Academic theories (e.g. classical realism, neo-realism, geopolitics, federalism, neo-institutionalism, neo-intergovernmentalism, constructivism, feminism, critical theories)
2. Political concepts/programmes (e.g. Macron's idea of European strategic autonomy/sovereignty)
3. Concepts for EU foreign policy analysis (e.g. normative, civilian power vs. military power, resilience, actorness, Europeanisation)
4. Designing scenarios and educated guesses of future developments (e.g. about the EU's contribution to a peace settlement in the Middle East)

## 5. EVALUATION

Students are required to draft a Master's thesis. The outlines and the thesis can be drafted in English or French.

Students are expected to draft a Master's thesis, on the topic of their choice, after validation by the Professor. This thesis must comply with the Departmental rules on length, formatting and content.

The Professor has a key role in guiding the students, first to choose their topic, then to fine-tune their research project. He then follows up with a continuous supervision, dealing with various questions on the methodology, on the topics, on the theories, etc.

Students are required to send to the Professor written outlines describing their progress. It usually entails the topic, a provisional title, the research question, the hypothesis, some theoretical framework, etc. This outline is updated by the student through the semester.