

Vesalius College

Course description

Course title: Introduction to the European Union

Course code: POL 231E

Teacher responsible: Michel Huysseune

Course description:

This course explores the origin of the European Union and its development, explains the construction of European institutions and discusses its status as an organisation. It surveys historical landmarks in the European Union's development. It focuses on the workings and politics of the major institutions of the European Union and how each of them contributes to the process of European integration.

Course objectives:

The course intends to give the students an in-depth introduction to both the history and the working of the European Union. It will on the one hand retrace all the stages of the development of its institutions, on the other hand explain the working of these institutions, analyse their contribution to the European policy-making process, and discuss a number of policy fields. It also introduces the students to the main theoretical interpretations of the development of the European Union. As such, the course prepares students for advanced courses on the EU.

The course also intends to bring students into contact with the European Union, by visiting the institution and by inviting guest lectures working with(in) the EU into the classroom.

At the end of the course, students should be acquainted with

- the history and the institutions of the EU
- theoretical perspectives on EU integration
- the EU policy making process
- EU policy fields

They should be able to develop research a) in which theories of EU integration is applied on the on-going integration process, b) in which a feature of the EU policy-making process is analysed and assessed.

Grade weighting scheme:

- Presence and participation in classes: 10 %
- First written assignment: 20%
- Midterm Exam: 25 %
- Second written assignment: 20 %
- Final Exam: 25 %

Used course material (handbooks, readers, readings, newspapers, magazines) and references:

Handbook: Elisabeth Bomberg & Alexander Stubb, *The European Union: How Does it Work?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.