Course Syllabus POL 233G

EU’S APPROACH TO DEMOCRATIZATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Summer 2015

Number of ECTS credits: 6

Contact Details for Professor
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Classes: Mondays and Tuesday from 2pm to 6pm
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10am -11am

Course Description

This course offers a critical review of the literature on EU democracy and human rights policies. It aims to provide a systematic analysis of core features and outcomes of these policies and more broadly of the character and effects of external attempts to promote democracy and human rights. The course integrates both the supply-side and demand-side of EU policies. On the supply-side, it examines the objectives, instruments and strategies of the EU in relation to promoting democracy and human rights in a variety of countries. On the demand-side, it explores the character of problems that recipient countries face as well as the targets or subjects for change of EU policies. Finally, the course evaluates the outcomes of EU policies in light of selected cases and critically revisits the premise and limits of external efforts to promote democracy and human rights.

Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, you should be able to:

In terms of knowledge:

- Acquire a comprehensive understanding of the historical development of EU human rights and democracy policies;
- Acquire a comprehensive understanding of the main strategies and outcomes of EU democracy and human rights;
- Distinguish and compare the degree of and reasons for success or failure of EU attempts to promote democracy and human rights in specific countries;
- Assess critically debates about the conditions for and challenges to the spread of democracy and human rights;
- Critically assess the potential and limits of external attempts to promote human rights and democracy.

In terms of skills:

- Engage critically with scholarly literature, distinguish details from the core of an argument, and assess its strengths and weakness in a creative and constructive manner;
- Distinguish and understand relations among key concepts such as democracy and human rights;
- Comprehend the core features and logic of the functioning and EU human rights and democracy policies;
- Identify the key actors, interests and outcomes of EU human rights and democracy policies;
- Distinguish among key political and socio-economic conditions for the external promotion of democracy and human rights;

In terms of attitudes:

- Adopt inquisitive and critical attitudes and approach dominant opinions and arguments with constructive doubt;
- Value open, critical and constructive engagement with ideas and arguments;
- Adapt one’s opinions and views in light of new ideas and arguments.
## Course schedule

| Week 1 | 25 May | Introduction to the course.  
Human rights and democracy: key notions |
|--------|--------|------------------------------------------------|
| 26 May |      | Human rights, democracy and the EU: key concepts  
Guest lecture: Karen Fogg (tbc) |
| Week 2 | 1 June | EU Goals, Strategies and Instruments  
Guest lecture: tbc |
| 2 June |      | Democracy and human rights within the EU |
| Week 3 | 8 June | Human Rights and Democracy in EU development policy  
Guest speaker: Tiago Faia (tbc) |
| 9 June |      | Human rights and democracy in EU Trade Policy  
Guest speaker: tbc |
| Week 4 | 15 June | EU human rights and democracy policies toward Southern neighbours  
Guest lecture: Michail Hamntan, European External Action Service |
| 16 June |      | ****MID-TERM EXAM**** |
| Week 5 | 22 June | EU human rights and democracy policies towards Eastern neighbours  
Guest speaker: tbc |
| 23 June |      | EU human rights and democracy policies toward Central and Eastern Europe  
Guest speaker: tbc |
| Week 6 | 29 June | EU human rights and democracy policies toward Western Balkans  
Guest lecture: Dr Pierre Mirel, former Director of the European Commission's DG Enlargement Unit for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo |
| 30 June |      | Review session |
| Week 7 | tbc | ****FINAL EXAM**** |
Reading

WEEK 1:

Monday 25 May 2015: Human rights and democracy: key notions

Description:
The first session gives an overview of the course requirements and themes and introduces basic notions of human rights and democracy as well as their incorporation in foreign policy.

Leading questions:
- What is special about human rights?
- What distinguishes a democracy from a non-democracy?
- What is the relationship between human rights and democracy?
- How have human rights and democracy been included in foreign policy?

Required reading:


Tuesday 26 May 2015: Human rights, democracy and the EU: key notions

Guest speaker: Karen Fogg (tbc)

Description:
The purpose of this session is to familiarise students with the creation, scope and character of EU human rights and democracy policies.

Leading questions:
- How did the EU include democracy and human rights in its foreign policy?
- Who are the main EU actors promoting human rights and democracy?
- Why are EU human rights and democracy polices skewed toward non-EU countries?

Required Reading:


**WEEK 2:**

**1 June 2015: EU Goals, strategies and instruments**

*Guest speaker:* tbc

*Description:* This session offers an overview of the goals and tools of EU human rights and democracy policies as well as the relevant actors.

*Leading questions:*  
- What are the principles and objectives of EU human rights and democracy policies?  
- What kind of strategies and instruments does it employ?  
- How much money and where does the EU give for human rights and democracy?

*Required reading:*  

Chapter 2 EU Democracy Promotion Instruments: Evolution and Shortcomings

*Plus skim-reading of:*  


2 June 2015 Democracy and human rights within the EU

*Guest speaker:* tbc

*Description:*
This session discusses core human rights violations within the EU and its (limited) capacity to address them.

*Leading questions:*
- What are the main problems with human rights and democracy in the EU?
- What is the practice and track record of the EU in dealing with these challenges?
- Why is the EU limited in its capacity to addressing them?

*Required reading:*


**WEEK 3:**

**Monday 8 June 2015: Human Rights and Democracy in EU development policy**

*Guest speaker:* Tiago Faia (tbc)

*Description:*
In this session we discuss the inclusion and effect of human rights and democracy closes in one of the oldest policies of the EU, namely its development policy.
Leading questions:
- Why did the EU insert human rights and democracy requirements to its aid recipients?
- Why did third countries accept these conditions?
- What does the application of these conditions so far reveal about their character and function?

Required reading:


Lucarelli, Sonia, and Ian Manners. 2006. Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy. Taylor & Francis. Chapter 10: Values in European Union development cooperation policy

Tuesday 9 June 2015: Human rights and democracy in EU Trade Policy
Guest speaker: tbc

Description:
This session offers an overview of the role of human rights and democracy in EU free trade agreements with third countries.

Leading questions:
- How and why did the EU insert democracy and human rights clauses in trade agreements with third countries?
- How do such clauses condition EU relations with its trading partners?
- Why does the EU continue to trade with countries that violate human rights?

Required Reading:


WEEK 4:

Monday 15 June 2015: EU Human rights and democracy policies toward Southern neighbours
Guest Speaker: Michail Hamntan, European External Action Service

Description:
This session offers a broad overview of the character and failures EU human rights and democracy policies towards its Mediterranean neighbours before and after the “Arab Spring”.

Leading questions:
- What has driven the EU’s policies toward its Mediterranean neighbours?
- How have EU policies contributed to improvement in human rights and democracy?
- What have been the main shortcomings of EU policies toward the region?
- In what ways does the current EU approach differ from its pre-2011 period?

Required reading:


Tuesday 16 June 2015: ***MID-TERM EXAM****

WEEK 5:

Monday 22 June 2015: Human rights and democracy toward Eastern neighbours
Guest speaker: tbc

Description:
This session discusses EU efforts to promote democracy and human rights in its Eastern neighbourhood, with particular focus on Ukraine and Russia.

Leading questions:
In what ways did the EU try to advance democracy and human rights in Ukraine and Russia?
To what extent has the EU been coherent its approach?
What explains the EU’s limited success?

**Required reading:**
Chapters: 4: Reluctant engagement: EU foreign policy towards Ukraine;
5: Implementing human rights and democracy: press freedom in Ukraine;

Lucarelli, Sonia, and Ian Manners. 2006. *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*. Taylor & Francis. Chapter 8: Promoting human rights and democracy in European Union relations with Russia and China

**Tuesday 23 June 2015: Human rights and democracy policies toward Central and Eastern Europe**
*Guest speaker: tbc*

**Description:**
This session discusses the track record of the EU’s policies of introducing democratic reforms in Eastern and Central European Countries before acceding to the EU.

**Leading questions:**
- What were the key features of the EUs approach toward Central and Eastern Europe?
- Why have the EU policies been so successful?
- What can be the lessons learned from this experience, regarding both domestic factors and the credibility of EU commitments?

**Required reading:**


**WEEK 6:**

**29 June 2015: EU Human rights and democracy policies toward Western Balkans**
Guest Speaker: Dr Pierre Mirel, former Director of the European Commission's DG Enlargement Unit for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo

Description:
This session analyses the attempts of the EU to promote human rights and democracy in Balkan countries in view of their aspiration and attempts to become members of the EU.

Leading questions:
- What drives the EU's approach toward South-East Europe?
- What are the main challenges the region faces?
- To what extent has the EU been able to stabilise and reform this region?

Required reading:
Elbasani, Arolda. 2013. European Integration and Transformation in the Western Balkans: Europeanization or Business as Usual?. Routledge. Chapters
1: Europeanization Travels to the Western Balkans: Enlargement Strategy, Domestic Obstacles and Diverging Reforms;
6: EU Administrative Conditionality and Domestic Obstacles: Slow, Hesitant and Partial Reform in Post-Communist Albania;
7: Where does the European Union Make a Difference? Rule of Law Development in the Western Balkans and Beyond;
11: When Europeanization Hits Limited Statehood. The Western Balkans as a Test Case for the Transformative Power of Europe

30 June 2015: Review session

Description:
In the final session we will go over the main issues discussed in previous classes with the purpose of highlighting the main findings and insights with regard to both the attempts of the EU to promote human rights and democracy and the local constrains it faces in doing so, and systematising failures, successes and mixed results.

Additional Sources:

Journals
Democratization
Democracy Journal
Human Rights Quarterly
Journal of Human Rights
Third World Quarterly
Journal of Conflict Resolution
Journal of Peace Research
Journal of European Public Policy
Journal of Common Market Studies
Southeast European and Black Sea Studies
Mediterranean Politics
The Middle East Journal
British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies
African Affairs

Websites
http://enar-eu.org/
https://www.amnesty.org/en/
http://www.hrw.org/
http://eedpm.org/
https://euobserver.com/
https://www.opendemocracy.net/
http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/home.html
http://www.haaretz.com/
http://www.jadaliyya.com/
http://www.pambazuka.net/en/

Course Assessment
The students will be evaluated on the basis of their performance as follows:

- In-class participation: 10%
- Written assignments: 20%
- Midterm examination: 30%
- Final examination: 40%
- TOTAL: 100%

Grading Scale of Vesalius College

Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Scale of 20</th>
<th>Scale of 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>17.0-20.0</td>
<td>85-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>16.1-16.9</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>15.3-16.0</td>
<td>77-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>14.5-15.2</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>13.7-14.4</td>
<td>69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>13.1-13.6</td>
<td>66-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12.3-13.0</td>
<td>62-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>11.5-12.2</td>
<td>58-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>10.7-11.4</td>
<td>54-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10.0-10.6</td>
<td>50-53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Description of activities and Grading Criteria

In-class participation:
Active participation in class is essential for the learning of the material and the quality of the discussion and therefore strongly recommended. It can involve raising specific questions about the reading or the way in which it is discussed in class or expressing specific ideas about specific notions and their application.

Written assignments:
From session two onward, students will be asked to write a two-page critical assessment of a reading of choice from the required reading. This assessment should have two parts. The first part should identify and assess the core question, argument, evidence and the relation between the three.

The second part should assess the strengths and weaknesses of each of these three elements as well as their overall cohesion and conclude with suggestions of how the analysis could be improved.

Please bear in mind that the assignment is not about summarising the literature, but about critically engaging with it. The assignments should be sent by email to gjovalin.macaj@vub.ac.be the day before class. Failure to do so and in time will result in a zero for this component.

Mid-term exam:
The mid-term exam assesses the understanding of core notions of human rights and democracy and features of EU human rights and democracy policies as well as their application in practice. Particular emphasis will be placed on the strategies and tools as well as the challenges and constrains of EU policies and its effects on the ground.

Final exam:
For the final exam you will be assessed on factual knowledge coming from lectures and assigned reading and mainly your capacity to link and think creatively about deferent aspects of attempts to promote human rights and the nature of resistance to such efforts.
The exam is a combination of short factual questions and essay questions. There will be three essay questions from which students will be asked to chose and respond to one of them. The essay questions counts for 70% of the final exam, whereas factual questions for 30%.

**Grading form for written assignments**

The following criteria will be applied in assessing your written work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinguish and assess core components of a scientific work</th>
<th>F to C-</th>
<th>C to B-</th>
<th>B to A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic reproduction of some information without distinguishing details from key points</td>
<td>Summary of relevant points but failure to distinguish core insights</td>
<td>Clear identification and discussion of core question, argument, evidence and their cohesion</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical thinking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flat replication of information, poorly structured narrative</td>
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<tr>
<td>General discussion of some insights, strengths, weaknesses of the scientific work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear assessment and logical presentation of key insights, strengths and weaknesses of the work</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Creative thinking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incoherent opinion on how the work could be improved, with poor or no substantiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good engagement with the text, some suggestions on how it could be improved further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative engagement with the text, solid argumentation and substantiated suggestions for improvement</td>
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<th>Total points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-61</td>
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<td>62-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-100</td>
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**Additional Course Policies**

Late assignments will not be accepted unless there are serious legitimate reasons. Provision of a signed medical note is required, and notice must be given prior to the deadline.

**Academic Honesty Statement**

Academic dishonesty is NOT tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.
Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean for Students and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else’s work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments.

Further reading


Elbasani, Arolda. 2013. European Integration and Transformation in the Western Balkans: Europeanization or Business as Usual?. Routledge.


