



Vesalius College
Brussels

**POL 234G:
ECONOMICS AND POLITICS OF THE EUROPEAN
UNION**

**COURSE SYLLABUS
SUMMER 2015**

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2. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

Course Description

In the alphabet soup of regional groupings the European Union is unique because it has a system of sovereignty-sharing between nation-states. The course will examine precisely what that means, how it has been discussed at the theoretical level and how it expresses itself in terms of institutional arrangements. The EU is also unique in having built up a single market in which business activity in another member state is intended to be (and in some cases has become) as straightforward as activity in another region of the same state. The course will examine both of these aspects.

Students will develop a firm understanding both of the institutional make-up of the European Union and of how this contributes to the success of the single/internal market. In addition, students are encouraged to reflect on how this system compares with those in other parts of the world with which they may well be more familiar.

The course is divided into **four main parts**.

Part 1 will provide an introduction to the origins and development of the European Union. Why did such a strange (indeed unique) creature emerge? What were the forces driving it? Once it had begun (essentially in 1951 with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community), what drove it forward and what held it back? Why and how did it grow both in size (from 6 members to 28) and in the range of its competences? How did it cope with strong nationalist feeling resisting its development – for instance de Gaulle in France and Thatcher in the UK?

Part 2 will introduce students to the core elements of the EU anatomy – the institutions and their complicated interrelationships. **Part 1** will already have outlined how they have developed over the years, **Part 2** is more of a close look at them now, in the first full year during which a new College of Commissioners begins its work (including a new President of the Commission), not to mention a new President of the Council and a new High Representative.

In **Part 3** of the course we will focus upon the creation of the internal market. Once again, the insights of earlier weeks (**Part 1** and **Part 2**) will be essential background to this. How did the EU manage the creation of an internal market, whose intention was to make doing business across twenty-eight member states as easy as doing business across twenty-eight regions of a single member state? How successful has it been? What have been the pitfalls – for instance, in creating a single currency for that single market?

Finally, **Part 4** will look at more specific economic/political issues in the EU. This part will involve contacts with parts of the European Commission that have key responsibilities in these fields – including a visit to DG Agriculture and Rural Development in order to discuss the Common Agricultural Policy. This part will also involve **case studies** where students address particular issues and consider how best to deal with them given the constraints imposed by the EU system.

COURSE ETIQUETTE

Please do not miss classes unexcused. If you need to miss classes for a valid reason, please make sure you inform me beforehand. Please try to be on time – I shall try to do the same!

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, it is hoped that students will have a firm grasp of

-in terms of substantive knowledge-

- a) what makes the European Union different from other organisations.
- b) the role and significance of key theoretical buzzwords such as ‘intergovernmentalism’, ‘supranationalism’, ‘realism’, ‘neo-realism’, ‘liberalism’ and the rest.
- c) The changing nature of the key issues facing the European Union
- d) The problems of forming a single market, particularly in terms of the free movement of the outputs of the economic process (goods and services) and the inputs (people and capital)
- e) The important practical issues facing the EU in areas where politics and economics clearly overlap – agriculture, the environment and external relations

-and in terms of skills-

- a) how to carry out independent research using a wide range of sources
- b) to understand, synthesise and apply key terms which can help but may hinder the understanding of the European Union
- c) to argue clearly (whatever conclusions you reach) and to be able to summarise and assess different points of view

3. COURSE MATERIALS

The Course Material ranges from chapters of core textbooks (some of which could usefully be read in their entirety) through journal articles to online material (such as *pdf* files of varying length). These are made clear in the detailed reading and study material below.

4. TEACHING METHOD AND COURSE ELEMENTS

The teaching method will be based on a combination of lectures and interactive seminar-based teaching, which aims to encourage you to engage in critical discussions as well as thorough and creative textual analysis and independent research. **Lectures** will provide you with concise introductions and overviews of the main approaches, concepts and core issues. **Seminars** provide you with an opportunity for actively engaging with, the topics, issues and concepts introduced by the lectures. That said, it may be that we can combine the two to some extent if the lectures are punctuated by lively and critical comments – we can end up with ‘Lectinars’.

You are encouraged to develop your own critical analyses and assessments of the core academic arguments and security issues. **Case Studies and Field Trips** will complement the lectures and seminar-style teaching.

5. ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

Students will be assessed on their research, writing and analysis skills as well as on their grasp of the course content. This is an intensive summer course, but there will be the same degree of ongoing assessment in the form of class participation, written assignments, case studies and final examination as in a course that lasts a whole semester.

1. Participation (10 %)

This involves not only attendance but full participation in discussions of issues. It's very important that you are prepared to comment when anything seems unclear or wrong or both! There will also be a requirement to do one short oral presentation in class during the course.

2. Policy Briefing to EU Leaders (25%) – HAND IN: 19.06.2015

Imagine you are working for the European Commission. Please choose a policy issue you are interested in. Then imagine yourself as working for the relevant Directorate-General which will take the lead on this issue and prepare a 1,500 word Policy Briefing to your Head of Unit.

- a) Outline why this is a policy area for the particular DG you have chosen.
- b) Outline the different options that might available to tackle the issue (here you should show an awareness of the different institutional forces at play and the range of competences which the Commission has). You should discuss here what other DGs might be involved and what the response from the other EU institutions is likely to be.

ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTING

Participation	10%
Policy Briefing	25%
Mid-Term Exam	25%
Final Exam	40%

'HANDING IN DATE' TO REMEMBER!!

Assessment Type	Due Date
Policy Briefing	19.06.2015

Letter grades are given as follows:

Letter Grade	Scale of 20	Scale of 100
A	17.0-20.0	85-100
A-	16.1-16.9	81-84
B+	15.3-16.0	77-80
B	14.5-15.2	73-76
B-	13.7-14.4	69-72
C+	13.1-13.6	66-68
C	12.3-13.0	62-65
C-	11.5-12.2	58-61
D+	10.7-11.4	54-57
D	10.0-10.6	50-53
F	0-9.9	0-4

6. COURSE SCHEDULE

Summer Course – Economics and Politics of the EU - Schedule		
Session 1	26.05.2015	Introduction to the Course
Session 2	29.05.2015	Part One Historical Overview – Origins and Development of the EU
Session 3	02.06.2015	Part Two Anatomical Survey – the Institutions of the EU and its Logical Structure
Session 4	05.06.2015	Part Three Economic Overview – from Coal and Steel to the Single/Internal Market
Session 5	09.06.2015	Part Four – Case Study: Agriculture and the Common Agricultural Policy. Including field trip to DG Agriculture and Rural Development
Session 6	12.06.2015	What can be learned from the study of the CAP concerning economic policy in the EU?
Sessions 7, 8 and 9	16/19/23.06.2015	June 16: Class presentation of policy briefings. Discussion ahead of the mid-term exam June 19: Mid-term exam June 23: Discussion and briefing following the mid-term exam
Sessions 10 and 11	26.06.2015 and 30.06.2015	Case Study: How the EU Tackles Problems Associated with Vehicle Emissions. A speaker from DG Clima. What can be learned from studying EU controls on vehicle emissions about the way the EU works?
Session 12	03.07.2015	A special session on the eurozone
Session 13	07.07.2015	Final Q & A Session
Session 14	10.07.2015	Final exam

7. READING LIST

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Session 1 (26.05.2015)

Introduction to the Course

This Session will provide you with an overview and objectives of the Course.

Reading

There is no single introductory textbook. But see (if I may!) my *The EU: An Introduction* (London: IB Tauris 2014) and Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borragán's *European Union Politics* (Oxford: OUP, 4th Edition, 2013). These two books will be the ones used most and at least one of them should be regarded as a **compulsory textbook**.

What sort of animal is the EU? (You will be asked this in several courses and may feel you are being asked this question YET AGAIN (!), but bear with me). Why do you find this animal in Europe and not elsewhere? What are its chances of spreading elsewhere (or alternatively of becoming extinct)

Session 2 (29.05.2015)

Historical Overview

Reading:

The late Tony Judt's *Postwar* (London: Penguin 2006) is a wonderful account of European history from the end of the Second World War till the end of the twentieth century. It is quite difficult to 'extract' the sections of direct relevance to the EU (though there is an index), but I'm obviously not expecting you to read the whole book! On the other hand...

A good short history of the EU (up until the last ten years) is provided by Desmond Dinan in *Europe Recast* (London: Palgrave 2004).

An article-length summary is provided by chapter 3 of John McCormick's *Understanding the European Union: a Concise Introduction* (London: Palgrave 2011, 5th Edition), pp. 48-74 or the chapter entitled 'History' in Mark Corner: *The EU: An Introduction*

How did the end of the 'hot war' and the rise of the 'cold war' affect the rise of the EU? Why did Germany and France want to agree to a sharing of sovereignty? Why did the UK eventually agree to do so? Why did nationalist leaders like de Gaulle in France and Thatcher

in the UK continue to stay within the European Economic Community? What is the situation in 2015 with the rise of new eurosceptic/nationalist parties in Europe?

Session 3 (02.06.2015)

Anatomy

Reading:

Neill Nugent's *Government and Politics of the European Union*, (London: Palgrave, 7th Edition 2010) and Desmond Dinan's *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration* (London: Palgrave 4th Edition 2010) are excellent, but very detailed. You can always use them as reference books for aspects of the EU anatomy that seem bewildering.

A more manageable overview is provided by Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borrágán's *European Union Politics* (Oxford: OUP, 4th Edition, 2013), pp. 129-199 (Part 3: Institutions and Actors); See also chapter 3 of Mark Corner's *The EU: An Introduction* entitled 'Anatomy'.

A useful short guide is *How the European Union Works: A Guide to the EU Institutions*, which can be downloaded for free or ordered as a 39-page illustrated pamphlet from the EU bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/how-the-european-union-works-pbNA3212336/>). Published in 2012, it is a very helpful introduction to the institutions.

How do the various institutions of the EU interrelate? Are some more important than others? Is there an overall logic to the structure or is it more a product of accident than of design? How is it likely to develop in the future? Is the quagga about to become a horse or a zebra?

Session 4 – (05.06.2015)

Reading:

Economic Overview – The Single Market

This session will focus more specifically on the creation of the single/internal market. For short, succinct summaries see Michelle Egan's chapter in Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borrágán's *European Union Politics* (pp. 255-268) or her contribution to E.Jones, A. Menon and S. Weatherill (eds) *Handbook of the European*

Union. John McCormick's *Understanding the European Union*, Chapter 7, 'Economic Policy' and Chapter 4 of Anand Menon's *Europe: the State of the Union*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2008), 'Making the Market', are also useful. See also chapter 4 of Mark Corner's *The EU: An Introduction*.

How has the institutional make-up of the EU contributed to the effective formation of the Single Market? How much of a single market is there in the EU? Is a single market possible without a single currency?

Sessions 5 and 6 – (09.06.2015 and 12.06.2015)

Tackling particular policies: 1. The Common Agricultural Policy

This will include a visit to DG Agriculture and Rural Development where John McClintock, who has worked in four different African countries, including Ethiopia during the famine of the 1980s, and who is now working for DG Agric here in Brussels, will talk about the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) and the thinking behind it.

Reading:

See the chapter by Eve Fouilleux in Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borrágán's *European Union Politics* (pp.309-325) and Chapter 5 of Mark Corner's *The EU: An introduction*. On particular policy issues, the situation is constantly changing, so you need to go online. Commission websites on agriculture and aquaculture are easily accessible via www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/ and www.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/ respectively. Alan Matthews, Emeritus Professor of European Agricultural Policy at Trinity College, Dublin, has produced excellent and readable work on reforming the CAP (see www.capreform.eu) and Professor Wyn Grant produces a regularly updated blog on the CAP, at <http://commonagpolicy.blogspot.com>.

Is the Common Agricultural Policy an example of protectionism? Does it interfere too much with market mechanisms? Is it a system that could or should be adopted by developing countries in order to protect their farmers? Does the experience of the CAP in Europe show that food reserves are a good thing or a bad thing?

Session 7 – Class Presentations (16.06.2015)

Session 8 – Midterm Exams (19.06.2015)

Session 9 – (23.06.2015)

During this Session, you will receive feed-back on your performance on the mid-term exam and in the policy briefing, and you have the opportunity to address any questions / difficulties you might have encountered during the exam and the course so far.

Sessions 10 and 11 (26.06.2015 and 30.06.2015)

Tackling particular policies. 2. Vehicle Emissions

There will be a speaker from DG Clima at this session.

Reading:

For general background to EU environmental policy see David Benson and Andrew Jordan's chapter of Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borragán's *European Union Politics* (pp. 325-337) and chapter 8 of Mark Corner's *The EU: An introduction*. In order to keep abreast of developments you should consult the webpages of DG Environment http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/environment/index_en.htm and DG Clima <http://ec.europa.eu/clima/>. The latter has a section on 'reducing emissions from transport'. There is also a useful independent body, the Institute for European Environmental Policy, keeping an eye on EU developments at <http://www.ieep.eu>

Is the control of vehicle emissions a poor substitute for a real transport policy or an example of imaginative thinking in dealing with pollution? What problems are there in implementing the policy? What does it show about the nature and effectiveness of EU policy-making?

Session 12 (03.07.2015)

Special session on the eurozone

Reading:

See Amy Verdun's chapter on 'Economic and Monetary Union' and the chapter on 'The European Union and the Economic Crisis' by Dermot Hodson and Uwe Puetter, both of which are in Michelle Cini and Nieves Pérez-Solórzano Borragán's *European Union Politics* (pp. 296-309 and 367-381). Since this is very much an ongoing crisis, it is useful to keep up with it through articles in the media – for instance the Economist and the Financial Times (which has a 'Brussels blog' providing up-to-date coverage of the crisis – see <http://blogs.ft.com/brusselsblog/> - it does not charge for this, all you have to do is register).

Why are there so many difficulties making the eurozone work? What are the options for Greece staying in the eurozone and for the UK staying out? Is a single currency a natural outcome of a single market or is it a step too far in the direction of integration?

Sessions 13 and 14 (07/10.07.2015)

Last-minute revision, Q and A session and final exams

FINAL EXAMS

COURSE INSTRUCTOR'S BIO

Mark Corner is on the staff of the University of Leuven but teaches at a college in Brussels that Leuven has half adopted. He is also an external speaker or 'conférencier' for the European Commission, dealing with groups of visitors who come to the Commission for introductions or briefings on various aspects of EU policy. His research focuses on the European Union as a model for global governance (as outlined in his book *The Binding of Nations: From European Union to World Union* London: Palgrave Macmillan 2010). To promote this further he is President of an asbl (non-profit organisation) called ACTION for Food Reserves (for more information see www.action-for-food-reserves.org) He holds an MA from the University of Cambridge and a PhD from the University of Durham. His book *The EU: An Introduction* (London: IBTauris) was published last year (2014). When relaxing, he translates novels from Czech into English for the Karolinum (Charles University) Press in Prague. His latest translation, *Of Mice and Mooshaber*, a novel by Ladislav Fuks, was published in 2014. He is married to a Czech fonctionnaire and they have two sons, four cats and two hens. The hens are no trouble.