

**Code**

POL3001

ECTS-credits

7.5

Organisational unit

Center for European Studies

Coordinator

M. Heckman

Description

POL3001 - International Relations and Politics in the European Union - Peace, conflicts and human rights

The European Union started in 1951 as an attempt to prevent a new World-war in Europe. No other region has displayed similar willingness to give up important parts of national sovereignty in pursuit of a stronger global competitive positioning.

The European Union keeps pressuring the integration-process at a pace which is too fast for some and too slow for others. This integration has a direct impact on the daily lives of all citizens in Europe. The accession of the new Central and Eastern European Member-States poses new challenges for the EU. The East-West labour migration, which is driven by wage differentials creates both opportunities and problems. The free movement of people, and the current refugee crisis, has strained social welfare-systems in some of the richer Member-States. Political pressures and the credibility of the EU integration system question the present forms of integration. Pressure such as Brexit, the Eurozone crisis and the related high-unemployment figures make national sovereignty more attractive for some voters.

The course offers a comprehensive coverage of the key political and economic policy areas of the European Union with analysis of the different approaches to regional integration throughout the history of the European Union. The course analyses the historical, political and economic bases for the rise of the European Union from its origins in the post-World War II recovery, to its historic enlargement in 2004 and 2007. Most of the present tensions inside the EU directly relate to the economic integration process and reflect on all other fields of European integration.

Further attention is paid to the protection of human rights within the European integration process. A comparison between the European and UN-framework for the protection of human rights will be made and practically applied to specific cases.

The course will give students an in-depth look at the European legal, economic and political landscape. The course contains academic classes around these themes, as well as field trips to a number of relevant institutions.

This intensive 3 week, 36 hour course includes:

- Weekend excursion to Brussels (visit to the European Parliament and European Commission to be confirmed)
- Weekend excursion to The Hague and Amsterdam (visits to the International Criminal Court and to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to be confirmed)

Disclaimer trips: trips and visits related to the course are conditional. E.g. Dutch travel advice should be positive regarding the region that will be visited and institutions should be able to accept visitors. In case a proposed trip or visit cannot continue due to circumstances, alternatives may be organized.

Disclaimer ECTS: the number of ECTS credits earned after successfully concluding this course is the equivalent of 7,5 ECTS credits respectively according to Maastricht University's guidelines. Please consult with your home university if these credits will be accepted as part of your programme and, if necessary, converted to the credit system acknowledged by your home university.

Goals

By the end of this course:

- Students will be able to describe the current European legal and political landscape.
- Students will be able to summarize aspects of the history of the European Union.
- Students will be able to analyze the current key issues the European Union is facing today.
- Students will be able to compare the institutions that have jurisdiction over European legal and human rights issues.
- Students will be able to reflect on these institutions strengths and weaknesses.
- Students will be able to discuss cultural differences in Europe.
- Students will be able to understand the economic and political logic behind the EU integration.
- Students will be able to review the EU's legal system and main legal principles guiding the economic integration, and describe the legislative processes.
- Students can understand the political and economic framework of the decision-making inside the EU.
- Students should be able to understand the various forms of market-integration in-depth.
- Students can understand the choice and benefits of the Economic and Monetary Union-concept.
- Students can address the current challenges facing the EU, including the accession of new Member-States.
- Students are able to understand the underlying principles of the Common Foreign and Security Policy.
- Students can address the finer details of the EU policy in the field of Justice and Home affairs.
- Students understand the functioning of the Council of Europe and the legal protection offered by the European Convention on Human Rights.

- Students can evaluate the impact of the development of the inner and outer circle movement in European politics.
- Students can explain the influence of national political processes on major EU projects (e.g. Economic & Monetary Union).

Instruction language

EN

Prerequisites

The course is ideal for students studying international relations, history and politics, but students should note that the course does contain quite a bit of content on economic and legal issues. This means that the course may also be appropriate for economics and business students with an interest in the European Union, or law students in combined degrees with a focus on international relations.

Recommend literature

The main book that is used in the course is: 'The European Union', by Susan Senior Nello (McGraw-Hill 3rd ed). Students also read a collection of articles, websites and original EU Treaty texts. CES students receive their book on loan from CES.

Teaching methods

Lectures • Papers • Working Visits

Assessment methods

Final paper • Mid-term exam • Final written exam • Participation