



**Maastricht University**  
Center for European Studies



**CISAustralia**  
Study | Intern | Volunteer Abroad

# **POL3001**

## **International Relations and Politics in the European Union**

Peace, conflicts and human rights

**Course Manual**

January term



# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Opening

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 supranational integration process has unique features:

- The EU can pass legislation, in many cases even if its Member-States are not unanimous
- EU law is binding and automatically overrules conflicting national law
- The Court of Justice of the EU can give rulings originating in national courts. The Council of Europe is often confused with the EU and deals with one of the most significant international instruments of its kind: the European Convention on Human Rights. It has its own court, the European Court for the Protection of Human Rights and includes the right of individual petition.

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 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. The euro-crisis and the related high-unemployment figures make a further limiting of national sovereignty for some voters unattractive.

## Course structure

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, 2007 and 2013. 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 main topics will be discussed in historic order:

- Introduction to the EU
- History of EU/Integration
- International and European Human Rights Law
- The institutional-framework
- The four basic freedoms
- Legal aspects of the Economic and Monetary Union
- The EU competition law

- The Council of Europe and ECHR
- The accession of new member states
- The cooperation between EU Member-States in the field of Justice and Safety
- The future of European integration: EU on the way to a political union?
- EU Common Foreign and Security Policy; cases and analysis
- Coercive and peaceful settlement in Europe
- Multinational Enterprises and Human rights

## 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.

## Class hours and credits

The course consists of 36 class hours divided over 2 weeks. Students earn 7.5 ECTS credits when they obtain a passing grade.

## Chapter 2 Objectives

By the end of the course students will demonstrate knowledge about/the ability to:

### Learning & skills objectives

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 and the reasons for the present euro-crisis and its impact on national elections.

Students can address the current challenges facing the EU, including the accession of new Member-States, and the resulting migration of people of East to West.

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.

## Chapter 4 Assessment

The examination rules for this course are specified in the CES Academic Guide 2023-2024. It is the responsibility of the student to carefully read this document and comply with all rules and regulations.

### Course specific assessment overview

For the attendance regulations see chapter 5 "attendance rules".

Type of Assessment	Main topics	Percent of final grade
1. Mid-term exam – Open essay questions	Topics covered until the mid-term	20%
2. Final exam- Open essay questions	Cumulative (including guest lectures)	35%
3. Final paper 2000-2500 words	Topics to be given during the course	35%
4. Participation	Preparation and active class participation will be graded	10%

#### 1+2 Mid-term and Final exam

The open essay questions should be answered by elaborated answers. Please discuss all the relevant material related to the question. Do not give brief, short answers.

#### 3 Final paper

You will receive a list of topics from your professor during the course. You will be required to find literature which will be listed in a bibliography at the end of the paper.

The paper should be submitted at the latest on Sunday 18 February 2024, 11.59pm (GMT+1) on Canvas.

**\* Fulfilled attendance is a condition for your final grade to be valid. For more information about the attendance, see chapter 5 "attendance rules".**

**Please note: Pass/fail elements related to assessments indicate that a "pass" for this part of the assessment is necessary in order for the grade to be valid. A "fail" indicates that that part of the assessment is incomplete.**

When assessment is incomplete and no grade can be assigned (for example when students fail the attendance, practical assignment or the course exam), 'No grade (NG)' will be awarded which automatically constitutes a "fail".

#### **Attendance synchronous meetings**

See chapter 5 below regarding the specific attendance rules and regulations for this course.

## Chapter 5 Attendance rules

The attendance rules for this course are specified in the CES Student Handbook 2023-2024.

### Course specific attendance rules

At CES, students are expected to attend all meetings. If circumstances prevent students from complying with this rule, **they are permitted to miss 2 meetings per course except the last 2 meetings of the course (maximum of 4 hours). Students who miss more than 4 hours of class automatically fail the course.**

CES courses may include field trips. Field trips may contribute to the overall grade of a course and are always mandatory. Please note that often field trips count as two meetings (4 hours).

The professor/tutor notes attendance at the start of each meeting. In order to be registered as "present" students need to be on time and participate in an active manner. Students who are more than 15 minutes late or who leave before the meeting has officially ended will be registered as absent.

In case of absence due to illness or other personal circumstances, students are required to email the course coordinator and the education office **before the start of the meeting**. The written notification should include the students name and a brief description of the reason or cause and the expected duration of the absence.

In case of longer absence, the programme coordinator may require additional proof of the cause of the absence, for example a doctor's note. When the student returns, they must report to the programme coordinator on the first day of their return. CES cannot be held responsible if a student fails a course due to long-term absence, even if this absence is due to illness or other exceptional personal circumstances.

### Field trip

The field trip is an intrinsic part of the course and attendance is therefore mandatory. *Please note that individual travel plans that might clash with the excursion are not a valid reason for missing it!*

### Electronic devices

Laptops, iPads, smartphones, and other electronic devices are **not allowed in class** as they distract from the group discussion. Students will be asked to leave the class in case they don't follow this guideline.