

# Institutions and Challenges of the European Union

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## Aim and approach

Institutions and challenges have always been intertwined in the building of the European Union (EU). On the one hand, challenges shaped institutions: WWII, financial crisis, migration, global warming, etc. On the other hand, institutions generated challenges: growing powers of the European Parliament, cooperation within the European Council, citizens and the so called 'democratic deficit', etc. The aim of this seminar is to provide an overview of these issues, be they in the EU's past, present or future.

The seminar will require oral participation; it is therefore compulsory for students to read the documents provided, and to further prepare each class with additional research. The goal is for students to significantly improve their ability express themselves in English.

## Assessment

The knowledge and skills developed during the seminar are assessed through three mandatory exercises, two collective exercises (press review and debate), and one collective exercise (paper).

### 1) Press Review (25%)

Each session will begin with a press review in the form of a role play. The students are divided into four groups. Each group represents one of the four main institutions of the European Union: the Commission, the European Council, the Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Each group is asked to present in exactly three minutes (not two minutes, not four minutes) a current event that has taken place in the last two weeks in the institution you represent. You can therefore choose any current event you wish as long as it has taken place in the last two weeks and has a direct link with the institution you represent. You don't need a Powerpoint. Student groups are formed by the professor.

Two or more groups can deal with the same current event (Covid-19, Afghanistan, climate change, etc.) but necessarily with different angles of analysis. Of course, you can't deal with the same current event for each of your presentations: you have to change each time. At each session (from session 2

to session 5), a different person from the group will present the press review. Thus, each student will make a press review presentation during the semester. If your classmates from other groups ask questions, the entire group (not just the person who presented) can answer the questions.

The point of this exercise is to understand what is going on in an institution and to share it in an understandable way with your classmates. Thus, each week we will have four different insights into each of the main institutions of the European Union.

Three evaluation criteria are used to assign the weekly group grade:

- interest of the subject (why does this current event matter?)
- time management and clarity of the analysis (what do you want us to keep in mind from your presentation?)
- responsiveness to questions posed to the group (did you respond accurately to questions posed by other students or the professor?)

You will receive four marks for this exercise (one per press review).

## **2) Debate (25%)**

The second part of the seminar will consist of two debates that will focus on two major questions concerning the institutions and challenges of the European Union. These questions, which are listed below in the syllabus, are formulated by the professor.

For each question, there will be two possible answers corresponding to two 'theses'/answers. Each group (composed of two students) will have to defend one of the two theses by finding the best arguments to convince the class. For example, in session 2, one of the two debates is about 'Executive powers: who governs, the Commission or the Member States?' One group will have to defend the answer 'The Commission' and the other group the alternative 'The Member States'. Each group will have to focus its argumentation exclusively on one thesis/answer. If the required reading is to be used during the presentation, students are advised to mobilize other scientific references to defend their thesis.

The debate will take place in three parts: the first group will present its arguments to answer the question posed for 6 minutes (not four, not five!) with answer/thesis x; the second group will argue for the opposite answer/thesis y for 6 minutes (not four, not five!). Finally, there will be a Q/A session for 5 minutes. If you use a Powerpoint, which is not mandatory, it must be sent the day before your presentation (before 6 pm) to the professor. Each student will be required to provide one debate during the semester.

The point of this exercise is to work on building the strongest, most convincing argument in a rigorous way (with data, scientific references, theoretical arguments, etc.), even if your personal opinion goes against it.

Each group's oral presentation will be evaluated by three criteria:

- Time management and clarity of presentation



- the strength of the argument through the choice of data and references
- the quality of the answers during the Q/A session

### 3) Paper (50%)

Each student must write a paper in English or French not to exceed 1000 words (two pages), without footnotes and bibliography (plus or minus 10%). This note should be sent before Thursday, November 4 at 11 am. Each hour of delay will result in a penalty of one point.

It consists of :

- formulate a puzzle on topic/case study of your choice linked to EU institutions and challenges (see list below). Reminder: in social sciences, a problematic begins with a 'how' (when we are interested in political processes) or with a 'why' (when we are looking for explanatory variables). The outline completes the definition of the puzzle in a synthetic introduction (one paragraph)
- respond by presenting two competing theoretical arguments that shed complementary light on the problematic previously formulated (see the list below). The bibliographic reference in French preferred for this exercise is the manual of theories of European integration available at the library and on Cairn: <https://www.cairn.info/theories-et-concepts-de-l-integration-europeenne--9782724626353.htm>
- briefly conclude by underlining the main insights of your paper (one paragraph)

Grading takes into account three main criteria:

- the quality of the formulation of the problematic based on a case study/subject
- the clarity and relevance of the theoretical choices to develop the demonstration
- the quality of the writing and the respect of the presentation standards
  - Times New Roman, 12-point font, single-spaced, justified text, default margins
  - Each note must be followed by a bibliography
  - Footnotes and bibliography must comply with the rules of use (for this purpose, see note: [How to reference a research paper? Footnotes and bibliography](#))
  - The first and last names of students must appear at the top left-hand side of the page
  - The document must be paginated at the bottom right-hand side of the page

| Topics / Case studies             |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| The crisis of the empty chair     | Estonia                              |
| Populist movements                | Emmanuel Macron                      |
| Strategic autonomy                | The EU and the regions               |
| Marine Le Pen                     | The EU and the world                 |
| France and the EU                 | The French Presidency of the Council |
| European sovereignty              | The Common Agricultural Policy       |
| The transfer of sovereignty       | Geopolitical Europe                  |
| Opt-out                           | The democratic deficit               |
| The European Council              | The EU and Africa                    |
| The parliamentarization of the EU | European diplomacy                   |



|                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Brexit                             | The European defense policy       |
| Migration                          | The Community method              |
| The politicization of the European | Charles Michel                    |
| The crisis of the Covid-19         | The creation of the single market |
| Differentiated integration         | The European Central Bank         |
| The crisis of the euro zone        | The intergovernmental method      |
| The Commissioners                  | Interest groups                   |
| Commission                         | European disintegration           |
| Enlargements                       | Angela Merkel                     |
| Political regime                   | European governance               |
| Crises and European integration    | Future of the EU                  |

| Theories / Approaches        |                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Constructivist               | Multi-level governance               |
| Discursive institutionalist  | Political theory                     |
| Europeanization              | Rational choice institutionalist     |
| Historical institutionalist  | Sociology of elites                  |
| Liberal Intergovernmentalist | Sociological institutionalism        |
| Neo-functionalism            | Sociology of international relations |
| New Intergovernmentalist     | Sociology of public action           |

## Programme

The seminar is organised into five two-hour sessions. Students are advised to arrive on time and activate the 'silent' mode of their phone.

Class attendance is compulsory. Any absence must be duly justified to both the professor and to Franck Hurel. If possible, the professor shall be informed in advance.

### Session 1 (15 Sep) – Introduction

Compulsory reading Didier GEORGAKAKIS. Le Covid-19, un tournant pour l'Union européenne?. *AOC média*, 10 April 2020 [<https://aoc.media/analyse/2020/04/09/le-covid-19-un-tournant-pour-lunion-europeenne/>]

Debate #0 What are the effects of the Covid crisis on the European Union: *statu quo* or shift?

### Session 2 (29 Sep) – Institutions

Compulsory reading Frédéric MÉRAND, Julien WEISBEIN. *Introduction à l'Union européenne*. Bruxelles : De Boeck, 2011, p. 41-66.

Debate #1 Executive powers: Who governs, the Commission or the member states?



Debate #2 Legislative powers: who legislates, the MEPs or the national technocrats?

### Session 3 (13 Oct) – Decision-making

Compulsory reading Stéphanie NOVAK. La prise de décision dans l'Union européenne. In Olivier COSTA, Frédéric MÉRAND (eds.), *Études européennes*, Bruxelles: Éditions Bruylant, 2017, p. 55-94.

Debate #3 How are decisions made in the EU?

Compulsory reading Guillaume COURTY, Hélène MICHEL. Groupes d'intérêt et lobbyistes dans l'espace politique européen: des permanents de l'eurocratie. In Didier GEORGAKAKIS (ed.). *Le champ de l'Eurocratie. Une sociologie politique du personnel de l'UE*. Paris: Economica, (Etudes politiques), 2012, p. 213-239.

Debate #4 Do lobbyists affect the decision-making process: in a decisive way or in a marginal way?

### Session 4 (27 Oct) – Policy Challenges

Compulsory reading Clément FONTAN. Frankenstein en Europe: l'impact de la Banque centrale européenne sur la gestion de la crise de la zone euro. *Politique européenne*. 2013, vol. 42, no 4, p. 22-45.

Debate #5 Has the Eurozone crisis weakened or strengthened the European Central Bank?

Compulsory reading Samuel B.H. FAURE. Négocier l'armement au sein de l'Union européenne. Le travail politique de la Commission européenne. *Négociations*. 34 (2) : 47-62.

Debate #6 Is the EU's arms policy governed by the Member States or by the Commission?

### Session 5 (10 Nov) – Democratic and Institutional Challenges

Compulsory reading Virginie VAN INGELGOM. Mesurer l'indifférence. Intégration européenne et attitudes des citoyens ». *Sociologie*. 2012, vol. 3, no 1, p. 1-20.

Debate #7 Democracy: citizens opposed or in favour of the European Union?

Compulsory reading Thierry CHOPIN, Christian LEQUESNE. Reverse to disintegration: The cohesive effect of Brexit on the EU27. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*. 2019.

Debate #8 Has the Brexit reinforced the disintegration of the EU or its integration?



## References

### *Multilingual glossary*

<https://iate.europa.eu/home>

### *Handbooks*

#### *In English*

- Bache, Ian, Bulmer, Simon, George, Stephen, Parker, Owen. *Politics in the European Union*. 4th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Bickerton, Chris. *The European Union: A Citizen's Guide*. London: Pelican, 2016.
- Bulmer, Simon, Lequesne, Christian. *The Member States of the European Union*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Cini, Michelle, Pérez-Solorzano Borrigan, Nieves. *European Union Politics*. 6th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Costa, Olivier, Brack, Nathalie. *How the EU really works*. 2nd edition. London: Routledge, 2018.
- Hix, Simon, Hoyland, Bjorn. *The Political System of the European Union*. 3th edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011.
- Magone, José M. (ed.). *Routledge Handbook of European Politics*. Londres: Routledge, 2015.
- Nugent, Neill. *The government and politics of the European Union*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Jones, Erik, Menon, Anand, Weatherill, Stephen (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Lelieveldt, Herman, Princen, Sebastiaan. *The politics of the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Wallace, Helen, Pollack, Mark A., Young, Alasdair (eds.). *Policy-Making in the European Union*. 7th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

#### *In French*

- Costa, Olivier, Brack, Nathalie. *Le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne*. 2th edition. Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2017.
- Costa, Olivier, Mérand, Frédéric (dir.). *Études européennes*. Bruxelles: Bruylant (Traité de science politique), 2017.
- Magnette, Paul. *Le régime politique de l'Union européenne*. 4th edition. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po (Références Gouvernances), 2017.
- Cohen, Antonin. *Le régime politique de l'Union européenne*. Paris: La Découverte (Repères), 2014.
- Courty, Guillaume, Devin, Guillaume. *La construction européenne*. 4th edition. Paris: La découverte (Repères sciences politiques - droit), 2018.
- Dehousse, Renaud (dir.). *L'Union européenne*. 4th edition. Paris: La documentation française, 2014.
- Dehousse, Renaud (dir.). *Politiques européennes*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2009.
- Doutriaux, Yves, Lequesne, Christian. *Les institutions de l'Union européenne après la crise de l'euro*. 9th edition. Paris: La documentation française, 2013.
- Mérand, Frédéric, Weisbein, Julien. *Introduction à l'Union européenne*. Bruxelles: De Boeck (Ouvertures politiques), 2011.



## **MOOC**

« Géopolitique de l'Europe » (Sciences Po) par Sylvain Kahn, Philippe Perchoc, Thomas Raineau :  
<https://www.coursera.org/learn/geopolitique>

## **Scientific Journals**

European Journal of Political Research (Wiley)  
European Union Politics (Sage)  
Journal of Common Market Studies (Wiley)  
Journal of European Public Policy (Routledge)  
Politique européenne (L'Harmattan)  
West European Politics (Routledge)  
CAIRN (<http://www.cairn.info/>)  
JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org/>)

## **Specialized information sources**

|                                       |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Brussels Blog                         | <a href="https://www.ft.com/brussels-briefing">https://www.ft.com/brussels-briefing</a>   | Blog of FT correspondents in Brussels                          |
| Bruxelles 2                           | <a href="https://www.bruxelles2.eu/">https://www.bruxelles2.eu/</a>                       | Blog on military issues  |
| Le Grand Continent                    | <a href="https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/">https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/</a>             | Specialized journal  |
| Contexte                              | <a href="https://www.contexte.com/">https://www.contexte.com/</a>                         | Specialized journal  |
| Coulisses de Bruxelles                | <a href="http://bruxelles.blogs.liberation.fr/">http://bruxelles.blogs.liberation.fr/</a> | Blog of the Libération correspondent in Brussels               |
| Décrypter la communication européenne | <a href="http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/">http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/</a>               | Blog of an expert of the political communication               |
| EU Observer                           | <a href="https://euobserver.com/">https://euobserver.com/</a>                             | Specialized journal  |
| Euractiv.fr                           | <a href="http://www.euractiv.fr/">http://www.euractiv.fr/</a>                             | Specialized journal  |
| Fondation Robert Schuman              | <a href="http://www.robert-schuman.eu/fr/">http://www.robert-schuman.eu/fr/</a>           | Think Tank   |
| Notre Europe                          | <a href="http://www.institutdelors.eu/">http://www.institutdelors.eu/</a>                 | Think Tank   |
| Institut Jacques Delors               |   |  |
| Toute l'Europe                        | <a href="http://www.touteurope.eu/">http://www.touteurope.eu/</a>                         | Information website funded by the French government and the EU |
| VoxEurop                              | <a href="http://www.voxeurop.eu/en">http://www.voxeurop.eu/en</a>                         | Specialized journal  |

