



STUDY PROGRAMME

1. European Political and Governance Studies (POL)
2. Mata

ACADEMIC YEAR

2021-2022

SEMESTER

Second

COURSE TITLE

Working in the EU institutions, Why, What and How: Theory and Practice

COURSE PROFESSOR

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COURSE ASSISTANT

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NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL)

Optional course

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

ECTS CREDITS

5

1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to equip students interested in a career in the institutions of the European Union (EU) with an adequate set of tools: (i) the knowledge about career trajectories in the EU institutions, the different types of status, contracts and positions, as well as the priorities governing work therein, (ii) the know-how on the competitions organised by the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) through a comprehensive training covering all the phases of the selection procedure, building on detailed guidance and a wide range of concrete cases, examples and simulation exercises and (iii) the know-be about the culture of the EU institutions and the core values of the European public service. As such, this course offers students an interesting mix of theory and practice to guide them in their future career paths.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The above course objectives link up with the following programme-specific learning outcomes:

POL:

- Students possess a pluri-disciplinary understanding of European integration, allowing them to understand fully the nature, dynamics and functioning of the EU system.
- Students have a general knowledge of the main components of the EU political system: institutions, actors, decision-making procedures, competences and policies.
- Students possess an in-depth knowledge of fundamental aspects of the EU political system (institutions, actors, policies etc.).



- Students develop a concrete understanding of the logics of policy-making and negotiation within the EU political system, thanks to simulation exercises and the drafting of policy papers.
- Students can analyse the process and actors of EU policy-making at different levels of governance and can reflect on potential developments.
- Students are able to analyse, in a limited amount of time, complex and new issues, by finding and investigating various sources of information and delivering an analytical and critical synthesis.
- Students are capable of working as part of a complex project, individually or collectively, and they develop skills of planning, organisation, prioritisation and time management.
- Students can communicate clearly and effectively, through oral presentations or written documents, to different kinds of audiences.
- Students are capable of evolving in a multi-cultural context and of taking into account the variety of political systems, institutional logics and cultural backgrounds.

MATA:

- The graduate has good knowledge of, depending on his or her disciplinary focus, the political and/or legal systems, the decision-making processes, the economic structures and the main internal and external policies of the European Union and the United States.
- The graduate is capable of processing a large amount of information and appropriately analyse relevant sources depending on his or her disciplinary focus within a short period of time and of suggesting possible actions that contribute to problem-solving in a creative way.
- The graduate has the intellectual maturity and skills to take responsibilities and function autonomously in a professional environment at national or international level, and especially in a transatlantic context, and to work efficiently and effectively through planning, organising, setting priorities, meeting deadlines, cooperating across cultural boundaries and networking.

3. COURSE CONTENTS

1. Analysis and presentation of the European public administration from the point of view of careers in the EU institutions, as well as the overarching political priorities and agenda
2. The EPSO competition and its steps and stages
3. Exercises (1): preparation for the tests (verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, abstract reasoning and additional possible tests, depending on the competition)
4. Exercises (2): preparation for the assessment centre (simulations of written and oral tests)
5. Masterclass on how to carry out successful interviews

4. TEACHING METHOD



This course is a highly interactive class providing academic, professional and practical insights. The teaching modalities combine a lecture followed by a discussion, and numerous written and oral exercises to practice the various exams of the competition, as well as a masterclass to prepare and train students for interviews. The students are expected to actively take part in the various activities of the course, to pursue a reflection on their motivation for working in the EU institutions and to follow up on the content of the class through additional readings and exercises. For the final assessment, they will be evaluated on the basis of (i) a written test mirroring the model of the EPSO competition and (ii) their understanding of the core principles and priorities governing work in the EU institutions. The grade obtained will be combined with an assessment of their homework in the form of a written assignment.

5. FURTHER DETAILS ON THE TEACHING METHOD

At the end of this course, the students are expected to have gained in-depth knowledge about working in the EU institutions from several angles (priorities, careers, positions, status) and to have acquired and developed a range of key competences, which will be useful to embrace a European career, and beyond. They will have built upon their organisational skills, their quick-wittedness and their abilities in terms of time management to cope with new situations and challenges. Moreover, they will have deepened several core competences, such as analysis and problem solving, communication, delivering quality and results, learning and development, prioritising and organising, resilience, working with others and leadership. Their written and oral English language skills will have been further strengthened through the participation of students in the different parts of the course.

6. COURSE MATERIAL

- *Working for the EU: How to Get In*, Johannes de Berlaymont, 4 May 2018, John Harper Publishing
- *The Ultimate EU Test Book, Administrators (AD) Edition 2020*, András Baneth, March 2020, John Harper Publishing
- *The Ultimate EU Test Book, Assessment Centre 2021*, András Baneth and Jan De Sutter, March 2021, John Harper Publishing
- *The Ultimate EU Career Development Book*, Jan De Sutter, 22 April 2016, John Harper Publishing
- *Préparer les concours européens - Volume 2 - Epreuves de sélection et démarches de recrutement - Edition 2016*, Nicolas Dross, Martin Pouliot, 25 May 2016, La Documentation française
- *How the EU institutions work and... How to work with the EU institutions*, Alan Hardacre and Erik Akse, 22 June 2015, John Harper Publishing



- *Préparer les concours européens - Volume 1 - Les tests de présélection sur ordinateur - Edition 2014*, Nicolas Dross, Laure Gaillochet, Martin Pouliot and Sandra Sornin, 27 November 2013, La Documentation française
- *The EU explained - How the European Union works - Your guide to the EU institutions*, European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, 29 October 2014
- *You're Hired! Interview Answers: Impressive Answers to Tough Interview Questions*, Ceri Roderick and Stephan Lucks, 15 March 2010, Trotman UK edition
- Priorities and goals of the European Commission, 2020
- Website of the European Personnel Selection Office
- EU staff regulations, 1 January 2020
- General rules governing open competitions, Official Journal of the European Union, C70A, volume 58, 27 February 2015

*This bibliography has been put together by the Professors. The formatting of the references does not necessarily correspond to the referencing rules applicable in the Department.

7. EVALUATION

- Homework (30% of the final grade): students will be asked to carry out a written exercise replicating the model of the EPSO exam as homework.
- Final examination (70% of the final grade): based on the substance and the training provided in class, the written examination will include tests inspired by and in line with the spirit of the EPSO competition, as well as an assessment of students' understanding of the functioning, the priorities and the values of the European public administration.

Assessment at second attempt

- During the second examination session, the course is assessed 100% on the basis of a written resit exam.

*The evaluation modalities of the final exam may be subject to adaptations in function of the evolution of the sanitary situation