STUDY PROGRAMME	ACADEMIC YEAR	SEMESTER
POL & MATA	2023-2024	Second

COURSE TITLE

Welfare and social policy-making in the EU

COURSE PROFESSOR	COURSE ASSISTANT
Amandine CRESPY	Nina GUIBERE

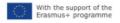| NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL)	LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION
Optional course	English

ECTS CREDITS

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1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to familiarize the students with the political and policy issues pertaining to EU policy making in the realm of social policy. The course will first set the scene by explaining what is to be understood by notions such as "Social Europe" or "The European social model" and how they relate to types of states in Europe. The key actors and theoretical approaches relevant for the understanding of social policy making will also be presented. The key objective of the course is to shed light on the main domains of action of the EU through various modes of governance, namely regulation (including case law), financial redistribution, the European social dialogue and soft coordination. Two essential questions will provide key threads across the sessions. First, what are the policy instruments employed by the EU and how have they changed over time? Second, what are the underlying political dynamics – in terms of ideological and institutional struggles among actors – explaining the developments in the social policy area? The course will especially enlighten how the long-standing dynamics have been altered by the Covid-19 pandemic and policy responses including the recovery agenda and the just green transition.

Beyond scholarly aspects, the course shall be in line with topical policy concerns. This will be reflected in the oral presentations in which students will have to tackle a specific policy case.

On completion of the course, the student will be expected to be able to:
- master the historical developments, the legal and institutional grounds for social policy in the EU
- be aware of the key concepts and authors who are relevant for this policy field
- explain why social policy making at EU level is relevant for national societies
- refer specifically to historical as well as contemporary episodes of EU politics which exemplify the tensions surrounding the social policy of the EU
- be able to analyse one case study in detail by referring to essential aspects in terms of interests, institutions, ideas, and interactions!
- Be able to offer a synthetic account of all the above issues in oral as well as written

communication
- Be able to argue about those issues in contradictory debates (regardless of one's personal opinion)

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 comprehend the disciplinary knowledge and theories specific to EU studies.
- Students possess an in-depth knowledge of fundamental aspects of the EU political system (institutions, actors, policies etc.).
- Students recognize the normative assumptions and implications of theories of European integration.
- Students can recognize, contextualize, explain, and interpret political, societal and economic phenomena in European integration. They can assess events, governance problems and political crises.
- Students can analyse the process and actors of EU policy-making at different levels of governance and can reflect on potential developments.
- Students can transform a complex problem into a research question, mobilize theories, develop a research design, and conduct empirical work to provide solutions in an analytical and balanced way.
- Students can flexibly apply theories and analytical frameworks from different disciplinary perspectives to the main issues of EU politics and policies.
- 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 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 student 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.

3. COURSE CONTENTS
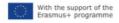
This course is divided into five topical clusters:

1. **Social Europe. Irrelevant, catching-up or dangerous?** We discuss here why the role of the EU vis-à-vis welfare and social policy is so controversial in the literature. To do so, we look at the main approaches in the literature, at the specific competences that the EU has in the field, as well as at the political underpinnings of its actions. We also look at the various ways to approach the topic and the different relevant concepts: how does the EU related to national models of welfare states? Is there one European social model? What is social cohesion or inequality at continental scale?

> ➢ *Reading: Introduction + chapters 1 & 2*

2. **Law making in the field of social policy at the EU level. How does it work?** This bloc is about understanding which institutional and non-institutional actors are relevant for the making of social regulation at EU level, including the EU institutions, trade unions and civil societies, as well as Member States' governments. Special attention will be paid to the role of the Court of Justice and jurisprudence. An important aspect relates to the political underpinnings of EU social policy making. Eventually, the question rises whether regulation in the social policy field (i.e. through the so-called Community Method) has not been superseded over time by other modes of governance.

> ➢ *Reading: Chapters 3 & 4*

3. **Liberalization and the European social dialogue.** This part of the course focusses on the issues raised by the fundamental logic underpinning the Single Market, namely liberalisation (and therefore competition), and how it has an impact on aspects of social cohesion including the provision of welfare services and the regulation of workers' rights. The free movement of workers and people's mobility will be a key aspect here, relating to policy issues such as posted workers or access of EU non-nationals. This module also includes efforts to achieve social partners' negociation through the European social dialogue. We will assess to what extent it has proved conducive of an improvement of workers' rights.

> ➢ *Reading: Chapters 5 & 6*

4. **Coordination and redistribution: two sides of the same coin?** Much of what the EU is doing to enhance social cohesion does not occur through law making but through soft (or voluntary) coordination, on the one hand, and through the distribution of funds, on the other. We will see how those two forms of intervention have developed over time, from the European Social Fund and cohesion policy, to the so-called Open Method of Coordination, the European Employment strategy. The purpose will be to understand how both have become intertwined over time through policy ideas such as activation or social investment. Here we will explore the consequences of the 2008-2010 financial and debt crisis on European societies and how EU policy-making has changed through, for instance, the inception of the European Semester and its transformation in the 2010-2020 decade. A main point of interest will relate to the logic of conditionality, its procedural but also highly political underpinnings.

> ➢ *Reading: Chapters 7 & 8*

5. **Social Europe after Covid-19. Same same or different?** The final bloc of this course explores the consequences of the ongoing pandemic on social policy at EU scale. Changes concern the field of health and, more broadly, the EU socio-economic governance. A main focus will lie on NextGenerationEU and its implications for social policy making at the EU and national level. Does it have to potential to enhance social cohesion *within* and *between* national societies? Last but not least, the key topic for the future is the "just transition": how can the European decision makers ensure that that the urgently needed green transition of the economy is socially just and does not exacerbate existing social inequalities across the continent? This will lead us to examine the heated ongoing political debates about the ETS, the Just Transition Fund and Social Climate Fund, etc.

> ➢ *Reading: Chapters 9 & conclusion*

4. TEACHING METHOD

The course will rely on interactive pedagogy, limiting lecturing time. The professor's latest book serves as a textbook and a basis for students to prepare themselves by reading one chapter corresponding to each topic/session. Since it is expected that students have little background on social policy, the preparatory reading from the book is meant to facilitate understanding and participation in class.

In addition, a limited list of optional readings (journal articles on key aspects of the field, see below) will serve as a basis for interactive discussions in class (Q&A, pros and cons debates, 1, 2, all debates, etc.)

Case studies will be presented by students. One example of a case study is "The implementation of the Youth Guarantee". All case study topics will be suggested and distributed on the first session. A specific methodology will be provided for the students to construct their case study. This methodology relies on identifying the four "i"s, that is the interests, institutions, ideas, and interactions that are relevant to the case (this will be explained in detail in the first session). Case study presentations will be most likely prepared and given in tandem depending on how many students enrol in the course.

5. FURTHER DETAILS ON THE TEACHING METHOD

Additional activities such as documentary watching will also be part of our activities and two guest speakers will be invited to talk about burning issues about social cohesion in EU politics. They will be experts and/or practitioners involved in the making of social policy today.

6. COURSE MATERIAL

Mandatory reading

Crespy, A., The European Social Question. Tackling Key Controversies. Newcastle: Agenda. 2022.

Additional optional reading

- Bailey, David. 2017. Obstacles to 'Social Europe'. In Handbook of European Social Policy. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar: 108–125.
- Graziano, Paolo and Miriam Hartlapp. 2018. "The end of social Europe? Understanding EU social policy change" Journal of European Public Policy 26(10), 1484-1501 https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2018.1531911.
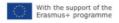- Jordan, J., Maccarrone, V. and Erne, R. (2021), Towards a Socialization of the EU's New Economic Governance Regime? EU Labour Policy Interventions in Germany, Ireland, Italy and Romania (2009–2019). British Journal of Industrial Relations, 59: 191-213. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjir.12522
- Corti, F., & Vesan, P. (2023). From austerity-conditionality towards a new investment-led growth strategy: Social Europe after the Recovery and Resilience Facility. *Social Policy & Administration*, 57(4), 513–548. https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12906
- Kyriazi, A., Miró, J. Towards a socially fair green transition in the EU? An analysis of the Just Transition Fund using the Multiple Streams Framework. *Comp Eur Polit* **21**, 112–132 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41295-022-00304-6

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

7. EVALUATION

- 30% - presentation of a case study in class
- 20% - participation in class
- 50% - final oral exam

Assessment at second attempt
During the second examination session the course is assessed 100% on the basis of a written resit exam.