



## STUDY PROGRAMME(S)

(1) EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies

(2) Transatlantic Affairs

## ACADEMIC YEAR

2023-2024

## SEMESTER

2

## COURSE TITLE

Simulation Game: EU International Crisis Response

## COURSE PROFESSOR(S)

Alejandro RIBÓ LABASTIDA & Quentin WEILER

## COURSE ASSISTANT(S)

Gonçalo CASTRO RIBEIRO & Nicola RASPO

## NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL, ELECTIVE)

(1) Compulsory course

(2) Compulsory course for first-year MATA students

## ECTS CREDITS

3

3

## LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

## 1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this immersive simulation exercise, students will tackle the formidable task of crafting a unified European strategy to address international crises impacting the European Union (EU). Participants will step into various roles within EU institutions, member state delegations, or the media.

Within these roles, students will engage in negotiations to formulate a comprehensive EU crisis response based on EU policies, instruments and mechanisms in crisis management and external action. These negotiations will unfold in both formal settings—such as Council meetings of a Geographical Working Group (WG), the Political and Security Committee (PSC), and the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)—and informal discussions throughout the week.

The negotiation process will culminate in the creation of four key documents: 1) An Options Paper, detailing potential strategies for a comprehensive EU response. 2) Council Conclusions, articulating the EU's stance on the crisis. 3) One (or more) Decision(s) specifying Union action under Article 25 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). 4) A Press Release, summarizing the outcomes of the FAC meeting.

Given that decisions within the Common Foreign and Security Policy/Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP) frameworks are highly political and require unanimous agreement, the negotiation process is often intense, intricate, and time sensitive. This exercise will deepen students' understanding of the EU's external action through hands-on experience.

At the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- better understand the intricacies of decision-making in EU foreign policy



- research, articulate, and defend a position;
- hone political analysis and writing skills;
- practice real-world diplomacy and the art of compromise;
- collaborate efficiently in a team, even under tight deadlines;
- effectively apply drafting, communication and negotiation skills.

This exercise provides a practical platform for students to apply theoretical knowledge gained in other courses, offering a holistic understanding of EU foreign policy and crisis management.

## 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course objectives tie in with the following learning outcomes of the programme **EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies**:

- 1.3 The graduate has good knowledge of the institutional architecture and the decision-making processes in the European Union and in particular in EU external relations.
- 1.4 The graduate has acquired insights into the political, legal and economic aspects of EU external action and can use these insights to contextualise and interpret new developments.
- 2.1 The graduate can approach the field of national, European and international diplomacy analytically by assessing the challenges in this domain with an open mind for diversity and for complex situations.
- 2.2 The graduate has the ability to critically reflect upon problems in international and European affairs, to adopt well-informed points of view and to communicate them effectively orally and in writing, whether working independently or in a team.
- 2.4 The graduate is capable of processing a large amount of information within a short period of time and to work efficiently and effectively through planning, organising, setting priorities and meeting deadlines.
- 2.5 The graduate has the intellectual maturity and skills to function responsibly and autonomously in a professional context at national, European or international level and the capacity of suggesting possible action that contributes to problem-solving in a creative way.
- 2.6 The graduate can apply the acquired skills in the analysis and conduct of multifaceted (international) negotiations, both independently and in diverse and multicultural teams.

The course objectives tie in with the following learning outcomes of the programme **Transatlantic Affairs**:

- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 The graduate has insights into historical, political, legal and economic aspects of transatlantic affairs as well as into those policy areas that are of essential importance to transatlantic affairs. He or she can use these insights to contextualize and interpret new developments.
- 2.1 The graduate can approach the field of transatlantic affairs in a broad sense analytically by assessing the challenges in this domain with an open mind for diversity and for complex situations.
- 2.2 The graduate has the ability to critically reflect upon problems regarding an extensive range of transatlantic affairs, to adopt well-informed points of view and to communicate them effectively orally and in writing, whether working independently or in a team.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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, organizing, setting priorities, meeting deadlines, cooperating across cultural boundaries and networking.



### 3. COURSE CONTENTS

The course has two introductory sessions: one on the institutions and mechanisms of CFSP/CSDP crisis management, and another on the rules and procedures of the exercise itself.

Once the scenario of the simulation exercise is revealed, students are expected to research the potential ramifications of the proposed crises from the perspective of the EU institutions or the Member State they represent. In addition, EU Press Correspondents research about the crisis situations, anticipating the reaction of the EU and, possibly, other actors. This initial stage should thus include research on the interests of the EU or Member States in the country or region concerned, the potential available instruments (economic, civilian and military) to respond to the crises and any political implications that may arise from deploying a crisis management mission in the region. This includes taking into account the overall international context as well as already existing EU and Member States' activities on the ground. As a result of this process, the institutional actors will be preparing different options to respond to the crises (Option Paper) and each delegation its position paper (National Position Brief).

Thereafter, the process of negotiation will start with the formal meetings (WG, PSC and FAC) and informal contacts between delegations. Journalists are expected to report throughout the week about the Council proceedings and comment on the EU's response.

The final day will include an extensive debriefing, comprising both self-assessment and assessment of the other delegations' work as well as comments by the professors.

Please refer to the intranet course page for access to the full course outline.

### 4. TEACHING METHOD

- Introductory lectures
- Practical simulation activities
- Written assignments

### 5. COURSE MATERIAL

Please refer to the intranet course page for access to the course material.

### 6. EVALUATION

Students will receive a 'pass' or 'fail' based on their written tasks and group work, and on their individual active participation, independently of their assigned role.

Students will not fail, or be penalised, for the failure to agree on a joint action provided that the reasons for the breakdown of the negotiations are part of the exercise dynamics. In this case, the main areas of disagreement as well as attempts to find convergence should be clearly indicated.

Should a student fail to participate effectively, whether individually, as part of a delegation, or both, he or she will fail the course (with a mark below 11, depending on the performance). This mark will be mentioned on the transcript. A written 'resit' examination in the form of a paper on a simulation-related topic will be required in the second examination session. Also, in case of a justified absence according to the Study Regulations (i.e. based on a medical certificate) for the whole or a part of the exercise, a paper on a simulation-related topic will be required. The details of this paper (topic, length, deadline) will be assigned after the simulation game by the professors in coordination with the Director of Studies.