



STUDY PROGRAMME(S)

(1) EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies

(2) Transatlantic Affairs

ACADEMIC YEAR

2023-2024

SEMESTER

2

COURSE TITLE

The EU and the Global Politics of Climate Change and the Environment

COURSE PROFESSOR(S)

Simon SCHUNZ

COURSE ASSISTANT(S)

Jovica JOVIĆ

NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL, ELECTIVE)

(1) Optional course

(2) Elective course

ECTS CREDITS

4.5

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The European Union is a major player in climate and environmental affairs, both through its internal action – which has been given a major boost with the European Commission’s 2019 ‘European Green Deal’ proposal and related strategies and policies such as the 2021 ‘European Climate Law’ and those included in the Commission’s ‘Fit for 55’ package of legislative proposals – and via its participation in global climate and environmental politics. This course comprehensively examines the EU’s external climate and environmental policies, with the aim of understanding and explaining its role(s) as a global environmental player. It begins with an introduction to the rapidly evolving global climate and environmental politics that situates the EU’s quest for ‘sustainable development’ in the international context. EU discourse and internal and external action will then be assessed across various policy areas, starting with the arguably most emblematic contemporary global challenge: climate change. The course will specifically focus on investigating the EU’s role(s) in the global political efforts to contain climate change both through multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, examining in particular its participation in major global summits, especially the 2015 Paris and subsequent Conferences of the Parties. It will then examine EU action on major global environmental challenges related to areas such as biodiversity and biosafety, hazardous substances, freshwater, the oceans as well as forestry. Specific attention will be paid to the actors, structures and processes at play in the design of global environmental policies, as well as to the EU’s actor capacity, strategies and effects in the studied areas. The course concludes by considering the EU’s contribution to attempts to reform global climate and environmental governance, and by trying to explain the EU’s past and present role(s) in global climate and environmental politics as a basis for a critical discussion about the future.

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

- describe, discuss, classify, explain and appraise the EU’s role(s) in global climate and environmental politics



- identify, analyse and explain major challenges of global climate and environmental politics and the EU's external environmental policies and strategies, including on climate change, biodiversity and hazardous substances policies
- recognize and interrelate the structure-related and actor-related enabling and constraining factors for the EU's activities and its effectiveness in global climate and environmental politics
- apply the acquired knowledge and skills in order to analyse and critically reflect upon contemporary practices of EU external climate and environmental policies and their significance for global climate and environmental politics
- master the knowledge and skills necessary to generate ideas about (future) alternative forms of global climate and environmental politics and the EU's external climate and environmental policies.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- 1.1 The graduate masters the most important theoretical approaches and concepts of International Relations, EU Studies and Diplomacy Studies relevant for the analysis of the role of the European Union in international affairs.
- 1.2 The graduate can describe, explain and illustrate the current state of scientific research in the field of EU external relations in a broad sense and is able to critically assess the results of this research.
- 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.
- 1.5 The graduate is able to incorporate knowledge and understanding of various fields of EU external action and of different related disciplines (such as Political Science, International Relations, Law, Economics) at the interface between EU affairs and world politics.
- 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.
- 2.3 The graduate can independently formulate a research question within the field of European affairs, find, select and critically assess relevant sources, answer the question using typical concepts and methods and present the research results in line with the ethical rules of the discipline.
- 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.
- 3.2 The graduate has acquired profound insights into specific fields of EU foreign economic policies and related challenges of sustainable development.

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

- 1.1 The graduate masters the most important theoretical approaches and concepts of, depending on his or her disciplinary focus, Economics, International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, Legal Studies and/or Political Science relevant for the analysis of transatlantic affairs.
- 1.2 The graduate can describe, explain and illustrate the current state of scientific research in the field of transatlantic affairs in a broad sense and, in line with his or her disciplinary focus, is able to critically assess the results of this research.



- 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.
- 1.5 The graduate is able to incorporate knowledge and understanding of various fields of transatlantic affairs and of different related disciplines (such as Economics, International Relations, Legal Studies, Political Science) as well as to adopt both a European and a US perspective on transatlantic affairs.
- 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.
- 2.3 The graduate can independently transform complex transatlantic issues into a research question within the broader field of transatlantic affairs and, depending on his or her disciplinary focus, find, select and critically assess relevant sources, answer the question using appropriate concepts and methods and present the research results in line with the ethical rules of the chosen discipline.
- 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

I. Introduction: decentring the EU – global climate and environmental politics

Session 1: General introduction and introduction to global climate and environmental politics

II. The EU as an actor in global climate and environmental politics: internal bases and external strategies

Session 2: The EU as an actor in global climate and environmental politics

III. EU sectoral diplomacy and global climate politics

Session 3: EU sectoral diplomacy and global climate politics: The basics

Session 4: EU sectoral diplomacy and global climate politics: The EU and the United Nations climate change regime and beyond

Session 5: EU sectoral diplomacy and global climate politics: The EU at the Paris summit and at COPs 22 to 28

Session 6: EU sectoral diplomacy and global climate politics: Key actors in global climate politics and the EU's bilateral climate diplomacy before and after the Paris summit; the future of EU climate diplomacy



IV. EU sectoral diplomacy and global environmental politics

Session 7: The EU and the transboundary movement of hazardous substances

Session 8: The EU and global biodiversity and biosafety politics

Session 9: The EU and other global environmental challenges: deforestation and Arctic governance

Session 10: The EU and other global environmental challenges: (fresh)water diplomacy and ocean governance

V. Conclusion and outlook into the future

Session 11: The EU and the future of global climate and environmental politics

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

4. TEACHING METHOD

- Interactive lectures
- Guest lecture(s)
- Individual or group presentations
- Individual paper assignment

Please refer to the intranet course page for access to further information and instructions.

5. COURSE MATERIAL

Please refer to the intranet course page for access to the detailed reading list (required and supplementary readings) and the slides.

6. EVALUATION

- individual or group oral presentation (20%)
- a class paper (briefing note) (30%)
- written exam (50%): duration of 2h

In case of a second-session resit, the 2h written exam counts for 100% of the mark.

Please refer to the intranet course page for access to further information and instructions.