



STUDY PROGRAMME

POL and MATA

ACADEMIC YEAR

2025-2026

SEMESTER

Second

COURSE TITLE

EU Foreign Policy: Context and Priorities

COURSE PROFESSOR

Giovanni GREVI

COURSE ASSISTANT

Marco NICOLICH

NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL)

Optional course

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

ECTS CREDITS

4

1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

At a time when Europe faces the first large-scale inter-state war on the continent in decades, as well as other conflicts and far-reaching shifts in transatlantic relations, this course addresses EU foreign and security policy in an increasingly challenging strategic environment. It aims to provide a theoretically informed but policy-oriented overview of key developments in this field and of the main dimensions of the EU's foreign policy agenda.

By taking this course, the students will have the opportunity to:

- Familiarise themselves with the unique features of EU policy-making in foreign affairs.
- Form a critical assessment of the EU's performance across various aspects of foreign policy and external action.
- Develop an insight into the role and purpose of the EU in an increasingly challenging strategic environment.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

POL:

- 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 develop a concrete understanding of the logics of policy-making and negotiations within the EU political system, thanks to simulation exercises and the drafting of policy papers.



- Students can communicate in both French and English in an academic or professional context.
- 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 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 can communicate clearly and effectively, through oral presentations or written documents, to different kinds of audiences.

MATA :

1. Knowledge

1.1 Theoretical mastery

The graduate demonstrates advanced and critical mastery of the principal theoretical approaches and analytical concepts in their disciplinary focus (International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, Political Science, Regional Studies) or interdisciplinary focus and can apply them to the analysis of transatlantic affairs.

1.2 Command of the scientific state of the art

The graduate can identify, interpret and critically assess the current state of academic research on transatlantic affairs and can situate them within broader scholarly debates, in line with their (inter-) disciplinary focus.

1.3 Comparative political institutional knowledge

The graduate possesses in depth and comparative knowledge of the political systems of the European Union and the United States, including their institutional structures, policy making processes, and core internal and external policies, and can analyse their interactions in a transatlantic context.

1.4 Historical and contextual understanding

The graduate can contextualise and interpret contemporary transatlantic developments by integrating historical, political, legal and economic perspectives, and can meaningfully explain how past dynamics shape current policy choices, debates and institutional frameworks.

1.5 Integrative, multi perspective knowledge

The graduate can synthesise and integrate insights from multiple disciplines relevant to transatlantic affairs (e.g., International Relations, Political Science, Regional Studies or an interdisciplinary focus) and can adopt and compare both European and U.S. perspectives in analysing and evaluating transatlantic issues.



1.6 Analysis of relative geopolitical standing of the EU and/or US

The graduate can analyse developments within Europe and/or the US that impact their relative geopolitical standing, thereby influencing EU and/or US interests relevant to transatlantic affairs.

1.7 Assessment on capacity to act in transatlantic affairs

The graduate acquires a nuanced perspective of internal political, economic, and/or social pressures and how they may impact, either directly or indirectly, the transatlantic relationship and the capacity of the transatlantic partners to act in accordance with the needs of the transatlantic partnership.

2. Skills

2.1 Analytical openness

The graduate can analyse transatlantic affairs in a broad and multidisciplinary manner, assessing challenges in this domain with intellectual openness, sensitivity to diversity of perspectives, and the ability to understand and navigate complex and ambiguous situations.

2.2 Critical reflection, argumentation, and communication

The graduate is able to critically reflect on a wide range of issues in transatlantic affairs, to develop well informed and evidence based points of view, and to communicate these effectively, both orally and in writing, when working independently or collaboratively.

2.3 Research design

The graduate can independently transform complex transatlantic issues into a clear and feasible research question, find and evaluate relevant sources in line with their (inter-) disciplinary focus, apply appropriate concepts and methods, and present research results in accordance with the ethical standards of the field.

2.4 Information processing, analysis and problem-solving

The graduate is capable of rapidly processing large volumes of information, critically analysing (inter-)discipline relevant sources, and proposing creative, feasible, and analytically grounded solutions to problems within the field of transatlantic affairs.

2.5 Professional autonomy, organisational skills, and intercultural competence

The graduate has the intellectual maturity and professional skills to function autonomously and responsibly in national or international professional environments—particularly in transatlantic contexts—by planning and organising work effectively, setting priorities, meeting deadlines, cooperating across cultural and disciplinary boundaries, and building professional networks.

3. COURSE CONTENTS

This course starts by outlining the main trends shaping change in the international system, how the war in Ukraine is affecting these trends, and the implications for Europe's strategic context. It then traces the evolution of the complex institutional architecture of EU foreign policy and of the strategic approach framing EU's foreign policy, including recent developments following the 2016 EU Global Strategy, the conflict in Ukraine and rising great power rivalry. The course subsequently reviews the extensive debates on what sort of international actor the EU is and on how internal and external factors impact its influence and profile on the global stage.



The central part of the course covers three pivotal components of EU foreign policy and external action, namely the development of the common security and defence policy, the evolution of the EU's approach to neighboring regions and to enlargement, and the European economic security agenda. There is also a focus on the prospects for so-called European sovereignty or strategic autonomy, and the challenges and opportunities facing Europe as it seeks to advance its priorities in a competitive world.

The final part of the course turns to the evolution and state of play of EU relations with major powers – the US and China – and provides deeper insights on other important dimensions of the EU foreign policy agenda. The implications of growing transatlantic turbulence for European integration, foreign policy and security are topics that will be addressed throughout the course.

Students will cluster in groups, each tasked with addressing critical dimensions of the EU's foreign policy agenda, with a view to deliver oral presentations backed up by slides during the second part of the course. Students are also expected to submit an individual policy paper on a topic that they will be asked to define within broad thematic areas, which will be indicated at the beginning of the course.

Students will be assessed based on their oral presentations, their final policy papers as well as a written exam held towards the end of May, which will consist of a short text for comment and 2 thematic questions related to the subjects covered throughout the course.

4. TEACHING METHOD

This course presents three teaching components:

- **Lectures;**
- **Assignments**, including:
 - o **Presentations:** Students are expected to work in groups and deliver group presentations of **25 minutes** overall, followed by feedback from the Professor.
 - o **Policy paper:** Students will have to strike a balance between supplying a well-founded analysis and formulating their own assessment and suggestions. The papers will have to be between **2,200 and 2,400 words** long.
- **Debates** in class addressing key questions on the EU foreign policy agenda, in order to stimulate students' critical analysis of the subject matter.

5. FURTHER DETAILS ON THE TEACHING METHOD

The students are expected to absorb a common body of information on EUFP, develop a more in-depth knowledge on a given theme, and test their ability to 'translate' that in both oral and written form. Therefore, this course improves not only students' research and organisational skills but also their competencies in terms of group work, presentation and communication skills.

6. COURSE MATERIAL

Please refer to the detailed course outline for the full reading list.

7. EVALUATION



Final grades will be given on the basis of:

- written exam (50%) of 2,5h - students will have access to only selected elements of the course syllabus
- oral presentation (15%)
- policy paper: between 2,200 and 2,400 words (35%). This assignment consists of asking AI a policy-oriented question and writing a policy paper for a senior decision-maker that builds on the AI reply. Please note that, beyond receiving the AI response to your question, **any use of AI is prohibited** in the elaboration of your own policy paper.

Assessment at second attempt

During the second examination session the course is assessed 100% on the basis of a resit exam. The format of the resit exam is identical to that of the first session.

Plagiarism: Pursuant to Articles 39a and subsequent provisions of the College of Europe Study Regulations 2025–2026, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, and the falsification of data are expressly prohibited and shall be deemed to constitute academic misconduct. All written work submitted by a student shall be subject to assessment with regard not only to its originality but also to the scope and rigor of the research undertaken. Any instance of plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, or falsification of data, as defined in the aforementioned Study Regulation, shall give rise to the imposition of penalties in accordance with Article 40 thereof.

Artificial Intelligence: Pursuant to Articles 38 and subsequent provisions of the College of Europe Study Regulations 2025–2026, the category of permitted generative AI (genAI) use for the present course is **restricted use**. Students may employ genAI tools exclusively at the foundational stages of the work process, such as brainstorming on structure or approach, screening of literature, or the organisation of data. The use of genAI for advanced stages of the work process, including the analysis or interpretation of data, the generation of arguments, the drafting or writing of text, or translation and rewriting of content, is strictly prohibited.

The non-generative use of AI tools, such as for spell-checking, reference style management, or information searches, is by default permitted for all course work and the Master's thesis.

Any use of genAI, even within the restricted category, must be transparently acknowledged in accordance with the departments referencing guidelines. Students bear full responsibility for the entirety of the content they submit, irrespective of the tools used, and must ensure compliance with College regulations on academic integrity, data protection, and intellectual property. Violations of the permitted scope of AI use, or failures to acknowledge such use, shall constitute academic misconduct and will be sanctioned in line with Articles 39a, 39b, and 40 of the Academic Regulations on plagiarism, falsification of data, and related infringements.