



## STUDY PROGRAMME

1. POL
2. MATA-POL

## ACADEMIC YEAR

2025-2026

## SEMESTER

Second

## COURSE TITLE

**Shifting Global Order: The EU's Foreign Policy, Security and Defence Responses**

## COURSE PROFESSOR

**Seda GÜRKAN & Alison WESTON**

## COURSE ASSISTANT

**Luís MATOS**

## NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL)

1. Optional
2. Optional

## LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

## ECTS CREDITS

4

## 1. COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course is designed to deepen participants' understanding of the European Union's (EU) foreign, security, and defence policies. While it will focus primarily on the EU, it will also cover NATO and these institutions' respective processes, instruments, and tools for addressing new and emerging security challenges in the broader European context. The course will address key topics related to foreign policy, security and defence in Europe, with a specific emphasis on EU institutions and policies for conducting diplomacy, addressing security threats, and safeguarding peace and stability in a new geopolitical environment.

The global world order is in transition and it has become increasingly volatile. In recent decades, the pillars of the international liberal multilateral order have come under significant strain. Since the start of Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, the rules-based international order has been increasingly challenged by Russia and other powers that seek to advance, in their words, a 'multipolar' world as an alternative to the post-WWII international order. Rising competing powers in global affairs, along with their confrontational approach to international relations, have compelled European security institutions to adapt their foreign policy instruments, policies, and engagement tools with the world in transition.

Against the backdrop of this rapidly changing security environment, several key questions will be addressed in this course:



- What are the main challenges to European peace, security and stability? How do these challenges compel the EU to adapt its institutions, policies and foreign, security and defence policy instruments?
- What is the role of the EU in the new geostrategic environment?
- How do the main European institutions dealing with diplomacy, security and defence function?
- How do these institutions cope with the complex and multidimensional challenges they face today?
- What strategies do European security institutions employ to counter emerging threats to peace and security?
- How effective and coherent are the EU's policies and tools in responding to the new realities of the international order?
- How do the key institutional actors involved in European foreign, security and defence policies cooperate with each other (i.e. NATO and the EU)?
- How is European diplomacy actually practised, and with what effects on third countries as well as on the peace and stability of the international system?

This course is designed for students aspiring to careers in public administration (regional, national, or European), in the EU's specialised foreign and security policy bodies such as the European External Action Service (EEAS) or the European Defence Agency (EDA), or in international (security) organisations, including NATO and the United Nations. It also provides a strong foundation for those who wish to pursue research in European studies.

## 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course participants will have:

### 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-POL

- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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

The course combines conceptual and theoretical approaches to international and European security with practical insights on contemporary foreign policy questions. It provides students with the opportunity to engage with main scholarly literature and key debates surrounding European security in a new geopolitical context.



The course is made up of 8 sessions of 3 hours each. It is designed as a highly dynamic and participatory course. Each session will combine theory (lecture) and practice (in-class discussions and group presentations).

## The course is structured in two broad parts:

**The first part** sets the fundamentals of European foreign, security and defence policies, and introduces the main pillars of the EU's response to the changing security environment. In this first section, students will be introduced to the main concepts relating to the EU's security environment, as well as traditional, new and emerging security threats. The EU's decision-making processes in foreign and security policy will also be analysed, identifying the relevant actors and dynamics in CFSP and CSDP. The impact of the war in Ukraine on EU and NATO security perceptions will be analysed in a comparative perspective, as well as the evolving EU-NATO relationship. Building on this foundation, in the first part, the course then turns to the pressing security challenges currently facing the EU. We will discuss the changing dynamics of democracy promotion, engagement with the Eastern Neighbourhood, enlargement in a new geopolitical environment, evolving NATO–EU relations, and renewed salience of collective self-defence in light of recent developments in Europe. The analysis of these issues will be anchored in case studies and contemporary debates that dominate Brussels' security and defence policy agenda.

The purpose in the first part of the course is:

- understanding changing security dynamics in Europe and main European institutions' approaches to these changes;
- mapping the actors who practise EU foreign, security and defence policy and the institutions through which they act;
- understanding the institutional, legal and political frameworks of action within which actors of EU foreign, security and defence policy operate today;
- learning and critically analyzing major contemporary security issues that are high on the EU's agenda;
- applying theoretical knowledge to the distinct empirical realities.

**The second part** of the course will focus on examining in more detail the recent developments in the EU security and defence agenda. Using the 2022 Strategic Compass for Security and Defence as an organising framework, there will be an in-depth examination of recent security and defence initiatives. Under the chapter ACT, students will be encouraged to explore the EU's ambitions in the area of crisis management and the challenges faced in its deployment of civilian and military missions and operations. Under INVEST, new defence capabilities initiatives including the Defence White Paper and support to Ukraine will be examined. New and emerging security threats, such as cyber security and hybrid threats, will be addressed under the PROTECT chapter, and the final chapter PARTNER will be an opportunity to discuss the EU's growing identity as a global and international actor on security and defence issues.

Students will be expected to give presentations on key topics relating to the EU's security and defence identity and policies.

**The assessment of the course combines the following:** 1) Active participation in class; 2) in-class student presentations on a topical issue related to European security and defence; 3) a final written exam.

## 4. TEACHING METHOD(S)



Sessions combine lectures, in-class discussions, case studies, student (group) presentations and practical exercises on a topical issue. This course presents three teaching components:

- Lectures;
- Assignments, including:
  - **Presentations:** Students are expected to work in groups and deliver group presentations of 20-25 minutes overall, followed by debate with the class and feedback by the Professor. The group size and the length of the presentations will depend on the number of participants in the course.
  - **Written Exam:** Students will be invited to draft a policy brief on a topic related to the EU's foreign, security and defence policies that involves a crisis situation intended for the attention of the HRVP or a broader audience. Further information on the final exam will be provided by the Professors during the first session.
- Debates in class on the key themes addressed in the course.

Students are expected to understand the main aspects and developments in EU security and defence and the specific challenges and dynamics relating to this policy area at the European level. They are expected to demonstrate individual research and analytical skills in both written and oral contexts. Group presentations will test their ability to collaborate and their communication skills.

## 5. COURSE MATERIAL\*

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

## 6. EVALUATION

Final grades will be given on the basis of:

- active participation in class (10%)
- oral presentation (30%)
- final exam (policy brief): max 1.500 words (60%)

**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



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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.

## 7. Assessment at second attempt

During the second examination session the course is assessed 100% on the basis of a final written exam. The format of the 2<sup>nd</sup> session written exam is identical to that of the first session.