



STUDY PROGRAMME(S)

(1) EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies

(2) Transatlantic Affairs

ACADEMIC YEAR

2026-27

SEMESTER

1

COURSE TITLE

The Craft and Practice of EU Diplomacy

COURSE PROFESSOR(S)

Riina KIONKA

COURSE ASSISTANT(S)

Jacopo GIRAUDO

NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL, ELECTIVE)

(1) Compulsory Course

(2) Elective Course

ECTS CREDITS

3.5

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

This compulsory course is a skills-focussed and practitioner-oriented class that provides students with an understanding not only of 'the what' of diplomacy but also of 'the how', that is, the craft and the practice of the diplomacy of the European Union (EU). It is built around real-life cases of conducting diplomacy in specific contemporary situations of EU foreign policy. These cases serve as a canvas for exploring various functions that an EU diplomat carries out within complex bureaucracies, political constraints and a rapidly evolving global context. Each case study deals with a different region of the world and illustrates both what worked and what did not... and why.

After an introduction to the course and to EU diplomacy, the second and third sessions will focus on aspects of diplomacy that are more EU-internal in nature like analysis, reporting and coordination; the fourth and fifth sessions will deal with aspects of diplomatic communication including public diplomacy; and the sixth and seventh sessions will exemplify external aspects of diplomacy related to partners and outreach. The course also seeks to equip students with in-demand practical skills such as but not limited to concise writing of scene setters, speaking points and press releases. Except for the introduction, each session will consist of a lecture as well as a part dedicated to developing the related specific skill.

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.
- 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.
- 2.4 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.

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

- 1.3 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 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 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 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 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.
- 2.1 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 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.
- 2.4 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 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

- Session 1: Introduction to EU Diplomacy
- Session 2: Analysis and Reporting: Transatlantic Policy under Trump 1.0 and 2.0
- Session 3: The EU Speaking with One Voice: Russia policy after Crimea and Beyond
- Session 4: Diplomatic Communication and Narratives: The EU's Human Rights Dialogues in China and Elsewhere
- Session 5: Public Diplomacy and Soft Power: GSP+ in Pakistan
- Session 6: Multilateralism and International Law under Fire: The EU and the International Criminal Court
- Session 7: Crisis Diplomacy and Consular Emergencies: The COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa

4. TEACHING METHOD

- Interactive lectures
- Short skills-based exercises
- Tutorial

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

Students will be assessed on the basis of a final written closed-book examination of 3h, counting for 100% of the mark.

In case of a second-session resit, the written exam (3h) will also count for 100% of the mark and follow the same format.