



STUDY PROGRAMME(S)

(1) EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies

(2) Transatlantic Affairs

ACADEMIC YEAR

2026-27

SEMESTER

1

COURSE TITLE

External Dimensions of EU Internal Policies: Decentring Migration, Gender and Religion

COURSE PROFESSOR(S)

Sarah WOLFF

COURSE ASSISTANT(S)

Blanca COROMINAS PERÁLVAREZ

NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL, ELECTIVE)

(1) Compulsory course

(2) Elective course

ECTS CREDITS

2.5

3.5

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

1. COURSE OBJECTIVES

This compulsory course investigates the rapidly evolving external dimensions of European Union (EU) internal policies with the help of several emblematic case studies chosen from the policy areas of migration, gender, religion and secularism. These policy areas have traditionally received less attention in many curricula on EU external action and are characterised by a common feature of having a direct impact on such groups as migrants, asylum-seekers, women, LGBTQ+, as well as religious and faith-based actors. Drawing from the decentring approach in the study and practice of the EU as an actor in international relations (Fisher-Onar and Nicolaidis, 2013; Keukeleire and Lecocq, 2016; Wolff et al. 2021), this course will address critically the gap between a Eurocentric mode of externalising EU policies and the need to take into account increasing contestations of the liberal world order, where the mere externalisation of EU policies alone is not sufficient anymore. For the EU to remain a relevant order, the 'Brussels effect' and attractiveness of EU internal policies to third countries need to be complemented by a self-reflexive external dimension that can respond to the contestation of norms increasingly seen as post-colonial and Eurocentric.

While introducing the students to the latest policy developments in each area and to traditional policy explanations for such an expansion of EU competences (governance, externalisation, institutionalist, securitisation and geopolitical approaches), the course will provide students with elements of critical thinking on the external dimension of EU internal security by mobilising post-colonial, feminist and queer theories. The decentring approach will enable students not only to think critically but also to provide constructive policy solutions to improve the EU's engagement with the rest of the world on these pressing matters. The decentring approach will provide the analytical framework of this course as it aims at reconstituting European agency through three main steps: provincialisation, engagement and reconstruction of diplomatic and policy praxis.



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.
- 1.4 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.
- 2.2 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.

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

- 1.1 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 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 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.
- 2.3 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 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 and decentring approach (2 h)
- Session 2: EU religious engagement: an outside-in perspective (3 h)
- Session 3: The external dimension of EU gender policies (2 h)
- Session 4: EU migration diplomacy and diasporic geopolitics (2 h)
- Session 5: Conclusion (1 h)

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

4. TEACHING METHOD

- Interactive lectures.
- Participation: students are expected to regularly attend the class, to prepare the required readings and to participate actively in the discussions.
- Tutorials: a tutorial will be offered by the course assistant in order to discuss the 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

- Exam paper (100%) to which the 'restricted use' of generative AI (as per art. 38 Study Regulations) applies

The requirements for the exam paper differ slightly for students in the Master of Arts in Transatlantic Affairs as compared to students in the EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies programme. Detailed instructions for both student groups can be found in the course outline.

In case of a second-session resit or a justified absence in the first session, students will be evaluated on the basis of a two-hour written exam (100%).

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