



College of Europe  
Collège d'Europe

Brugge



Natolin

European Political and Governance Studies  
Academic Year: 2020-2021  
Professors: Albane DEMBLANS &  
Manuel PALAZUELOS MARTINEZ  
Academic Assistant: Oriane GILLOZ

## OPTIONAL COURSE

### WORKING IN THE EU INSTITUTIONS, WHY, WHAT AND HOW: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Language of instruction: English

Profile of the Professors:

#### Albane Demblans:

Albane Demblans is Policy Counsellor to the Director for “Growth and Innovation”, and Programme Manager, at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. She is fluent in French, English, Italian, Spanish and German.

Previous professional responsibilities: Albane Demblans joined the European Commission as an Administrator in 2011. Between 2011 and 2013, she worked as Economic Analyst in charge of Italy at the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs of the European Commission. Between 2013 and 2017, she was Policy Coordinator at the Secretariat-General of the European Commission, responsible for the European Semester, the Europe 2020 strategy and economic governance. In 2017, she became Policy Coordinator and Scientific Officer at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, dealing with research and innovation policies, in particular Smart Specialisation in the European Union and worldwide. Over the past years, she also worked as a Lecturer in Sciences Po Paris, in charge of preparing students for the competitions of the European institutions.

Education: Albane Demblans graduated from ESCP Europe (Ecole Supérieure de Commerce de Paris) in 2008, Sciences Po Paris in 2010 and the College of Europe in 2011 (Promotion Albert Einstein).

Latest publications:

- Demblans, A., Lavallo, C., Palazuelos Martínez, M., Chapter "Place-based solutions to territorial challenges: how policy and research can support successful ecosystems" in Šucha, V. and Sienkiewicz, M. (editors), *Science for Policy Handbook*, 2020, Elsevier
- Demblans, A., Cagnin, C., Gómez Prieto, J., *Smart Specialisation, an innovation bridge between the EU and Latin America - Evidence and lessons from the International Urban*

*Cooperation Programme*, EUR 30232 EN , Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-9 2-76-19001-1, doi:10.2760/39443, JRC120873

- Gómez Prieto, J., Demblans, A., Palazuelos Martínez, M., *Smart Specialisation in the world, an EU policy approach helping to discover innovation globally*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019, ISBN 978-92-76-08393-1, doi:10.2760/962643, JRC117005

### Manuel Palazuelos Martínez:

**Professional activities:** Manuel Palazuelos works for the European Commission, where he is currently Team Leader of a team of around 25 people at the DG Joint Research Centre working on the economics of research and innovation. Previously, he developed his career at DG ECFIN, the DG of Economic and Monetary Affairs, where he held several relevant positions. Prior to joining the Commission, Manuel taught in university for five years, at the Department of Economics of the London School of Economics (LSE), where he was awarded five annual prizes for excellence in teaching, including a national UK award. Manuel has around 35 publications in international economics, and he has presented his research at numerous universities such as Columbia in NY, Oxford, Cambridge, LSE or Georgetown in Washington DC, where he also received a best paper award.

**Education:** Manuel Palazuelos completed his postgraduate studies on European economics at the London School of Economics, as well as other Masters, postgraduate and university graduate degrees in both Spain and the UK, mostly in areas related to international economics, obtaining many academic distinctions and awards. He is fluent in Spanish, English, French and Italian, and has some knowledge of Portuguese and German.

### Course Objectives

This course aims to equip students interested in a career in the institutions of the European Union (EU) with an adequate set of tools: (i) the knowledge about career trajectories in the EU institutions, the different types of status, contracts and positions, as well as the priorities governing work therein, (ii) the know-how on the competitions organised by the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) through a comprehensive training covering all the phases of the selection procedure, building on detailed guidance and a wide range of concrete cases, examples and simulation exercises and (iii) the know-be about the culture of the EU institutions and the core values of the European public service. As such, this course offers students an interesting mix of theory and practice to guide them in their future career paths.

### Course Contents

1. Analysis and presentation of the European public administration from the point of view of careers in the EU institutions, as well as the overarching political priorities and agenda
2. The EPSO competition: multiple-choice question tests and the assessment centre
3. Exercises (1): preparation for the tests (verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, abstract reasoning and additional possible tests)

4. Exercises (2): preparation for the assessment centre (simulations of written and oral tests)
5. Masterclass on how to carry out successful interviews

## Teaching Method

This course is a highly interactive class providing academic, professional and practical insights. The teaching modalities combine a lecture followed by a discussion, and numerous written and oral exercises to practice the various tests of the competition, as well as a masterclass to prepare and train students for interviews. The students are expected to actively take part in the various activities of the course, to pursue a reflection on their motivation for working in the EU institutions and to follow up on the content of the class through additional readings and exercises. For the final assessment, they will be evaluated on the basis of (i) their understanding and their knowledge of the European public service and of the core principles and priorities governing work in the EU institutions and (ii) a written test mirroring the model of the EPSO competition. The grade obtained will be combined with an assessment of their homework in the form of a written assignment.

## Further details on the teaching method

At the end of this course, the students are expected to have gained in-depth knowledge about working in the EU institutions from several angles (priorities, careers, positions, status) and to have acquired and developed a number of key competences, which will be useful to embrace a European career, and beyond. They will have built upon their organisational skills, their quick-wittedness and their abilities in terms of time management to cope with new situations and challenges. Moreover, they will have deepened several core competences, such as analysis and problem solving, communication, delivering quality and results, learning and development, prioritising and organising, resilience, working with others and leadership. Their written and oral English language skills will have been further strengthened through the participation of students in the different parts of the course.

## Course Material

- *Working for the EU: How to Get In*, Johannes de Berlaymont, 4 May 2018, John Harper Publishing
- *The Ultimate EU Test Book, Administrators (AD) Edition 2020*, András Baneth, 17 March 2020, John Harper Publishing
- *The Ultimate EU Test Book, Assessment Centre 2020*, András Baneth and Jan De Sutter, 17 March 2020, John Harper Publishing
- *The Ultimate EU Career Development Book*, Jan De Sutter, 22 April 2016, John Harper Publishing
- *Préparer les concours européens - Volume 2 - Epreuves de sélection et démarches de*

*recrutement - Edition 2016*, Nicolas Dross, Martin Pouliot, 25 May 2016, La Documentation française

- *How the EU institutions work and... How to work with the EU institutions*, Alan Hardacre and Erik Akse, 22 June 2015, John Harper Publishing
- *Préparer les concours européens - Volume 1 - Les tests de présélection sur ordinateur - Edition 2014*, Nicolas Dross, Laure Gaillochet, Martin Pouliot and Sandra Sornin, 27 November 2013, La Documentation française
- *The EU explained - How the European Union works - Your guide to the EU institutions*, European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, 29 October 2014
- *You're Hired! Interview Answers: Impressive Answers to Tough Interview Questions*, Ceri Roderick and Stephan Lucks, 15 March 2010, Trotman UK edition
- [Priorities and goals of the European Commission](#), 2020
- [Website](#) of the European Personnel Selection Office
- [EU staff regulations](#), 1 January 2020
- [General rules governing open competitions](#), Official Journal of the European Union, C70A, volume 58, 27 February 2015

\* This bibliography has been put together by the Professors. The formatting of the references does not necessarily correspond to the referencing rules applicable in the Department.

## Evaluation

- Homework (30% of the final grade): students will be asked to carry out a written exercise replicating the model of the EPSO exam as homework.
- Final examination (70% of the final grade): based on the substance and the training provided in class, the written examination will include an assessment of students' understanding of the functioning and of the values of the European public administration, as well as tests inspired by and in line with the spirit of the EPSO competition.

### *Assessment at second attempt*

- During the second examination session, the course is assessed 100% on the basis of a written resit exam.

\*The evaluation modalities of the final exam may be subject to adaptations in function of the evolution of the sanitary situation

Note:

1/ Submission: Papers can only be submitted once. Only the first version received will be corrected.

2/ Referencing: Any written work submitted by a student is assessed on its originality as well as the depth and breadth of research undertaken. (It follows that plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion and the falsification of data are all prohibited.) No written work (even if it is not strictly academic e.g. policy brief, memo, etc.) can consist of assembling existing texts, unless the sources used are clearly indicated. If an exercise does not provide for the possibility of indicating sources, verbatim reproduction of an existing document is prohibited.

3/ Language: all papers must be submitted in the language of the course.

4/ Penalties regarding late submissions: for every 24 hours of delay, or part thereof, after the specified submission deadline, 2 points will be deducted from the final mark of the paper.