



## STUDY PROGRAMME

1. European Political and Governance Studies (POL)
2. Mata

## ACADEMIC YEAR

2019-2020

## SEMESTER

Second

## COURSE TITLE

Working in the EU institutions, Why, What and How: Theory and Practice

## COURSE PROFESSOR

Albane DEMBLANS and Manuel PALAZUELOS

## COURSE ASSISTANT

Eva GERLAND

## NATURE OF COURSE (COMPULSORY, OPTIONAL)

Optional course

## LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

English

## ECTS CREDITS

5

## 1. 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 various categories, the hierarchy of positions, the different types of status and 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.

## 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

POL:

- Students possess a pluri-disciplinary understanding of European integration, allowing them to understand fully the nature, dynamics and functioning of the EU system.
- Students have a general knowledge of the main components of the EU political system: institutions, actors, decision-making procedures, competences and policies.
- 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 negotiation within the EU political system, thanks to simulation exercises and the drafting of policy papers.
- Students can analyse the process and actors of EU policy-making at different levels of governance and can reflect on potential developments.
- Students are able to analyse, in a limited amount of time, complex and new issues, by finding and investigating various sources of information and delivering an analytical and critical synthesis.
- Students are capable of working as part of a complex project, individually or collectively, and they develop skills of planning, organisation, prioritisation and time management.
- Students can communicate clearly and effectively, through oral presentations or written documents, to different kinds of audiences.
- Students are capable of evolving in a multi-cultural context and of taking into account the variety of political systems, institutional logics and cultural backgrounds.

#### MATA:

- The graduate has good knowledge of, depending on his or her disciplinary focus, the political and/or legal systems, the decision-making processes, the economic structures and the main internal and external policies of the European Union and the United States.
- The graduate is capable of processing a large amount of information and appropriately analyse relevant sources depending on his or her disciplinary focus within a short period of time and of suggesting possible actions that contribute to problem-solving in a creative way.
- The graduate has the intellectual maturity and skills to take responsibilities and function autonomously in a professional environment at national or international level, and especially in a transatlantic context, and to work efficiently and effectively through planning, organising, setting priorities, meeting deadlines, cooperating across cultural boundaries and networking.

### 3. COURSE CONTENTS

1. Analysis and presentation of the European public administration from the point of view of career paths, positions and status in the EU institutions, as well as their priorities
2. The EPSO competition: the preselection tests, the e-tray and the assessment centre
3. Exercises: preparation for the preselection tests (verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, abstract reasoning and situational judgment)
4. Exercises: preparation for the e-tray and the assessment centre (simulations of case study, oral presentation, group exercise, competence-based and motivational interview)
5. Masterclass on how to carry out successful interviews



## 4. TEACHING METHOD

This optional course is a highly interactive class providing academic, professional and practical insights. The course combines a lecture followed by a discussion, and numerous written and oral exercises (including simulations) 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 participation throughout the class and their homework in the form of a case study.

## 5. 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.

## 6. 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 2018*, András Baneth, 5 March 2018, John Harper Publishing
- *The Ultimate EU Test Book, Assessment Centre 2018*, András Baneth and Jan De Sutter, 19 February 2018, 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



- *The EU explained - Ten priorities for Europe*, European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, October 2015
- *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, 2014
- *You're Hired! Interview Answers: Impressive Answers to Tough Interview Questions*, Ceri Roderick and Stephan Lucks, 15 March 2010, Trotman UK edition
- [Website](#) of the European Personnel Selection Office
- [EU staff regulations](#), January 2018
- [General rules governing open competitions](#), Official Journal of the European Union, C70A, volume 58, 27 February 2015

## 7. EVALUATION

- Active participation (**10% of the final grade**): the course is meant to have a high degree of participation of students, which will be assessed through their attendance and attention, questions asked and their involvement in the written and oral cases organised in class.
- Homework (**30% of the final grade**): students will be asked to carry out a case study exercise replicating the model of the EPSO exam as homework.
- Written examination (**60% 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 verbal reasoning, abstract reasoning, numerical reasoning and situational judgment exercises, in line with the content of and in the conditions of the EPSO competition.



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# ECTS CARD

## *Assessment at second attempt*

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