



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

ECTS CARD

STUDY PROGRAMME(S) / STUDY TRACK(S)

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies
Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (Study Track: European Security and Strategy)
Master of Arts in Transatlantic Affairs (Study Track: European Interdisciplinary Studies)
Master of Arts in Transatlantic Affairs (Study Track: European Interdisciplinary Studies - European Security and Strategy)

YEAR

2026-2027

COURSE TITLE

EU Institutions and Decision-making

SEMESTER

1

PROFESSOR(S)

LORD Christopher

ACADEMIC ASSISTANT(S)

KIVI Emmi-Ilona

COURSE TYPE

Core Course

MAJOR(S)

Not applicable

ECTS CREDITS

4

TEACHING HOURS

20

INDIVIDUAL & GROUP STUDY TIME

80

TUTORIAL(S)

0

COEFFICIENT

1

LANGUAGE(S)

EN

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course provides an introduction to the institutions of the European Union. It briefly sets out different institutional configurations that are used to make different EU policies (Community method vs. Union method). It also introduces debates about the nature of the EU's institutional order.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, the students will be able to:

- 1) Understand the principal institutions of the European Union, notably the European Commission, the European Council, the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, the European Court of Justice (A3, MATA1.3);
- 2) Analyze both the internal workings of each of the foregoing institutions and the ways in which those bodies interact with one another to form an overall institutional order (A3, MATA1.3);
- 3) Understand why policies are made at the European level and the main difficulties raised by attempts to make policies through the institutions of the Union (A3, MATA1.3);
- 4) Follow the principal debates in the literature on the institutions and policies of the European Union, including debates about the nature of the Union as a polity, about its legitimacy, about its democratic quality and about its identity (A3, MATA1.3).

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION

None.

TEACHING METHOD(S)

Lectures supported by student participation in group discussions.

ASSESSMENT METHOD(S)

Assessment is based on the following elements:

- Final exam (100% of the final mark): 2 hour, written, digital, closed-book, on-site exam. Students will have access to the Lisbon Treaty during the exam (no copies can be brought by the students). No other document is allowed. For the exam, students will be asked to answer one longer question from a list of two (50% of the exam mark) and two shorter questions from a list of four (50% of the exam mark). Students should answer the longer question as an essay question that requires a reasoned argument. The shorter questions will be more factual. There is no limit – save relevance – on the length of answers to the exam questions.

COURSE CONTENTS

The content of the course is divided into three parts as follows:

The first part (approximately 2 hours) introduces the European Union's political order, as well as the 'Community and 'Union' methods.

The second part comprises four modules (approximately 4 hours each) that analyse the Commission, the Council of Ministers/European Council, the European Parliament and the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The third part (approximately 2 hours) concludes with an analysis of the overall character and legitimacy of the Union's institutional order.

COURSE MATERIALS (readings and other learning resources/tools)

The lectures are supported by extensive data from the literature (on the composition of the Commission, on voting in the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament and so on). There is also a practical exercise in which students are asked to compute different majorities in the Council. However, students should also read for themselves: Hodson, D., Puetter U. et al (2022), *The Institutions of the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.