



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

ECTS CARD

STUDY PROGRAMME(S) / STUDY TRACK(S)

YEAR

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)

2026-2027

COURSE TITLE

SEMESTER

The EU Legal Order: Rights, Norms and Values

1

PROFESSOR(S)

ACADEMIC ASSISTANT(S)

VAN ELSUWEGE Peter

BEN MEFTEH Nour

COURSE TYPE

MAJOR(S)

ECTS CREDITS

Core Course

Not applicable

4

TEACHING HOURS

INDIVIDUAL & GROUP STUDY TIME

TUTORIAL(S)

COEFFICIENT

LANGUAGE(S)

20

80

1

EN

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to provide students with a general understanding of key concepts and principles of EU constitutional law dealing with such topics as the EU as an autonomous legal order and its interaction with national and international legal systems, the EU's legal sources and its hierarchy as well as a complete review of judicial protection and the procedures and jurisdiction of the CJEU. Additionally, the course aims to provide students with practical skills on legal writing and legal case-solving so that eventually students are able to apply EU law and explain it.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- 1) Understand the functioning of the EU's legal order and the concepts and principles which underpin them (A4, MATA 1.1);
- 2) Understand the dynamic nature and scope of the EU legal order in relation to the broader economic and political context (A3, A4, MATA 1.3, MATA 1.4);
- 3) Assess the implications of the EU legal order for the domestic legal order of the Member States (A3, A4, MATA 1.3);
- 4) Critical analyse issues and cases concerning EU judicial protection (A4, B6, MATA 2.1);
- 5) Analyse and comment judgments of the EU Court of Justice with a good understanding of the various legal procedures (A3, A4, B4, MATA 2.2);

- 6) Conduct legal research including the identification, retrieval and evaluation of primary and secondary sources of EU law (B5, B6, MATA 2.3).

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION

No specific prior knowledge about EU law is required.

TEACHING METHOD(S)

Combination of lectures, e-learning and interactive class discussion based upon presentation of case comments.

ASSESSMENT METHOD(S)

Assessment is based on the following elements:

- Group paper (25% of the final mark): Students will work in groups to prepare a brief written commentary (2,000–2,500 words, footnotes included) on an assigned judgment. They are expected to identify and discuss the relevant legal questions and arguments used by the parties in view of the relevant legal doctrine and evolution of the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union. During the lectures, students are given the opportunity to discuss key points of the judgment in relation to the core principles of EU law explained in class. "Restricted use" of AI applies.
- Final exam (75% of the final mark): 2-hour, written, digital, closed-book, on-site exam. Students are expected to provide structured and legally motivated answers and illustrate them with the relevant case-law rendered by the Court of Justice of the European Union.

COURSE CONTENTS

The course starts with an introduction to the understanding of the EU as 'an autonomous (and differentiated) legal order'. The point of departure is the landmark 'Van Gend en Loos' judgment of 1963. In this context, the specific characteristics of the EU legal order will be explained. Subsequently, the categories of EU competences, the sources of EU law and the EU law-making procedures will be studied on the basis of concrete examples. In a third section, specific attention will be devoted to the role of the Court of Justice and the rule of law in the EU legal order. In this context, the various procedures (preliminary rulings, infringement proceedings, actions for annulment, actions for failure to act, actions for damages) will be explained on the basis of concrete case studies and relevant judgments of the CJEU. In a fourth and final section, the protection of EU values in the EU legal order will be addressed, with a particular emphasis on respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights. This will be explained on the basis of concrete case studies and relevant judgments of the CJEU.

COURSE MATERIALS (readings and other learning resources/tools)

Syllabus and reader with recommended literature and relevant case law provided on Natolin e-learning platform, supported with powerpoint presentations.