



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

Introduction to Theories and Strategies of European Integration

SEMESTER

1

PROFESSOR(S)

WESSELS Wolfgang

ACADEMIC ASSISTANT(S)

STEINGASS Sebastian

COURSE TYPE

Introductory Course

MAJOR(S)

Not applicable

ECTS CREDITS

0

TEACHING HOURS

0

INDIVIDUAL & GROUP STUDY TIME

8

TUTORIAL(S)

COEFFICIENT

0

LANGUAGE(S)

EN

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This introductory course confronts students with an astonishing puzzle: Sovereign European states have constructed during the last 65 years a unique political multi-level system, while broadening the scope of the EU agenda, deepening the EU's institutional architecture and widening the membership from 6 to 27. To understand the academic and political debates on the European Union, students will learn major theoretical approaches with respective political keywords (e.g., spillover).

By using the ALIS scheme (assumptions and respective logics as well as lessons for the EU's institutional architecture and integration strategies), the student will get familiar with five theoretical Schools and respective political narratives. The course also presents useful approaches for pursuing a Master's thesis in European studies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- 1) Understand the main theoretical approaches to European integration and their respective political concepts (A1, B7, MATA1.1);
- 2) Engage critically and theoretically informed in debates on the functioning of the institutions of the European Union, its decision-making processes, and its principal policies (A3, B7);
- 3) Apply theoretical approaches in the formulation of research questions and research design in the study of phenomena in European integration (A3, B5, B7, MATA2.3).

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION

None.

TEACHING METHOD(S)

E-learning.

ASSESSMENT METHOD(S)

None.

COURSE CONTENTS

Module 1: Introduction to the EU system
Module 2: Comparing theories: Methodological considerations
Module 3: Schools (Neo-)Realisms
Module 4: Schools of (Neo-)Federalism
Module 5: Schools of (Neo-)Functionalism
Module 6: Schools of Intergovernmentalism
Module 7: (Post-)Functionalism
Module 8: Vertical and Horizontal Fusion
Conclusions: Controversies and limits of our understanding

COURSE MATERIALS (readings and other learning resources/tools)

Course materials include videos, readings (articles and chapters), interactive materials, and quizzes.