



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natoiln

ECTS CARD

STUDY PROGRAMME(S)

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STUDY TRACK(S)

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

YEAR

2026-2027

COURSE TITLE

The Sources of EU Power in Times of War

SEMESTER

1

PROFESSOR(S)

AUER Stefan

ACADEMIC ASSISTANT(S)

DAMIANI Giulio

COURSE TYPE

Core Course

MAJOR(S)

Not applicable

ECTS CREDITS

4

TEACHING HOURS

20

INDIVIDUAL & GROUP STUDY TIME

80

TUTORIAL(S)

COEFFICIENT

1

LANGUAGE(S)

EN

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Politics is about power. Who rules over whom and to what ends? Yet, however important power is for understanding politics, it remains an elusive concept. It is impossible to quantify and difficult to describe. This subject will introduce students to different conceptualisations of power, drawing on thinkers as diverse as Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt, Václav Havel and Jürgen Habermas, and apply them to the challenges that the European Union currently faces, such as the Russian aggression against Ukraine. As an experimental polity committed to a set of shared values in pursuit of peace, the EU was meant to have defied traditional political categories, including power. Amongst the key questions animating this subject are: Does normative power Europe remain a viable option? Can Europe ever become a major geopolitical actor?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- 1) Understand power as a key category in political theory (A1);
- 2) Identify the unique nature of the sources of EU power and their limitations (A5, MATA1.5);
- 3) Be able to analyze contemporary challenges that Europe faces, including facing up to Russian imperial ambitions (A6, MATA1.4, MATA1.6).

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION

None.

TEACHING METHOD(S)

Lectures, discussions, and student presentations.

ASSESSMENT METHOD(S)

Assessment will be assessed based on the following elements:

- Oral presentation (30% of the final mark): 10 minutes presentation followed by a Q&A. The format of the exercise (individual or group presentations) will depend on the number of participants.
- Final Exam (70% of the final mark): 3-hour, written, digital, closed-book, on-site exam. The exam will consist of one long essay question (from a selection of three, maximum 1,500 words) and three short essay questions (maximum 500 words per answer).

COURSE CONTENTS

This course seeks to expose students to key debates within political theory of power in order to equip them to better understand the nature of the European Union and to assess its ability to deal with contemporary challenges. Thus, recommended readings entail classic texts (e.g. Weber, Schmitt, Arendt) as well as contemporary analysis (Jürgen Habermas, Ivan Krastev, Mark Leonard) and interventions by major political actors (Emmanuel Macron, J.D. Vance). Considering the fluid nature of those political challenges, the reading list will be updated closer to the time of subject delivery.

COURSE MATERIALS (readings and other learning resources/tools)

Please see the course outline and course page.