

# Theories and Strategies of European Integration

Compulsory course – 25 h

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Beyond the everyday debate about the politics and policies of the European Union, students of European integration should take a deeper analytical look at the theoretical assumptions and “strategic choices” that have underlain the evolution of the EU polity from an initial community of 6 to the EU of 28. This reflection is even more important in the context of the current financial and Euro crisis, which has shown the limits of the Lisbon Treaty to provide a coordinated response to the economic challenges and which has embarked the EU on a broad debate about its *finalité* and its post-crisis institutional design. The question of calling for a new constitutional convention after the European Parliament elections in 2014 has also come back to the agenda.

Although theoretical assumptions or “mental maps” clearly underline the current debates, few of them are thoroughly defined or discussed. It is, therefore, both worthwhile and necessary to look at Europe’s theoretical and strategic *acquis académique*, i.e. the collection and “patrimony” of visions, concepts, designs, programmes and views in order to analyse the different understandings of such terms as “federalism”, “multi-speed Europe” or “political union”, which are inherent in all public and academic discourses on the EU.

Accordingly, this course will not only aim at conveying a more thorough theoretical understanding of the basic features of the EU’s evolution and its future path(s). It will also focus on applying the theoretical insights to the current and future strategies to shape the future of the European Union, including also different variations of flexibility.