



**Course Title:** The European Union: History, Politics and Society

**Course prefix and number:** Rome 327

**Professor:** Eszter Salgó

**Contact Hours:** 32.5

**Trinity Semester Credits:** 1.0

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Experiential Component (Y/N):** N

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### Course Description

The European Union is a unique institution which currently includes 28 member states and over 500 million citizens. Originally conceived as a primarily economic body, with its origins in the traumatic experience of the Second World War, the EU today has a crucial role not only in financial and economic terms but with regard to security, diplomacy, social welfare, human rights, justice, education and research both within Europe and worldwide. After many years of growth and increased powers, the decade since the global financial crash of 2007-8 has been one of unprecedented challenges for the EU: many of these are economic, such as the ongoing sovereign debt problems and budget deficits in Greece and elsewhere, along with the potential failure of the Italian banking system. But the two greatest problems today are the continuing refugee crisis prompted in part by war and instability in the Middle East, and most recently the UK's decision for 'Brexit'.

This course will trace the history and development of the EU as an institution, as well as the development, structure and functioning of the major bodies which collectively make up the Union. We will explore ongoing controversies within the EU including the democratic deficit, the effects of austerity policies, the impact of globalization, and the possibilities for future reform, enlargement and expansion – or shrinkage. The course will also consider the role of the EU in the global economic crisis since 2008 and discuss the future of the single European currency. In addition, students will be encouraged to keep up to date with current affairs and contemporary developments within EU politics.

### Pre-Requisites

None

### Learning Objectives

By the end of the course students will

- be familiar with the structure and function of the main European institutions
- understand the historical background of European integration

- understand the main theoretical analyses of the EU
- be familiar with the main policy areas in which the EU acts
- be familiar with key areas of criticism and debate about the EU today
- evaluate critically the role of the EU as a global actor
- understand how the enlargements have changed the nature of the organization
- engage critically with the federalist agenda that has been driving the integration process
- interpret the various forms and functions of identity politics in Europe
- understand the causes and the possible consequences of the contemporary challenges facing the EU: refugee crisis, Brexit, the future of transatlantic and EU-Russia relations, etc.
- illustrate the problems relating to democracy in and legitimacy of the EU
- possess skills and ability to independently explore, present and discuss issues related to European integration, both orally and in writing.

## Required Readings

D. Kenealy, J. Peterson and R. Corbett (eds) (2018) (5th edition) *The European Union: How Does It Work?* Oxford University Press

E. Salgó (2018) *Images from Paradise: The Visual Communication of the European Union's Federalist Utopia*, New York & London: Berghahn Books

Journal articles, think tank reports and primary sources will be provided online.

## Schedule of Class Meetings

### Week 1

Tuesday: Introduction

Thursday: Monitoring media outlets: verbal and visual representations of the European Union

### Week 2

Tuesday: Understanding the EU from different theoretical perspectives

Reading: D. Kenealy, J. Peterson and R. Corbett (2018), Chapter 1

Thursday: No class (Trip to Sicily)

### Week 3

Tuesday: The history of the integration process

Reading: D. Kenealy, J. Peterson and R. Corbett (2018), Chapter 2

Thursday: The institutions of the European Union

Reading: D. Kenealy, J. Peterson and R. Corbett (2018), Chapter 3

### Week 4

Tuesday: The member states of the European Union

Reading: D. Kenealy, J. Peterson and R. Corbett (2018), Chapter 4

Thursday: Policies and policy-making in the European Union

Reading: D. Kenealy, J. Peterson and R. Corbett (2018), Chapter 5 and Chapter 6

### Week 5

Tuesday: Democracy in the European Union

Reading: D. Kenealy, J. Peterson and R. Corbett (2018), Chapter 7

Thursday: EU expansion and wider Europe

Reading: D. Kenealy, J. Peterson and R. Corbett (2018), Chapter 8

Week 6

Tuesday: Central Europe challenging the EU?

Reading: Brookings Institute (2019) *The anatomy of illiberal states: assessing and responding to democratic decline in Turkey and Central Europe*

Thursday: The EU as a security actor

Reading: D. Kenealy, J. Peterson and R. Corbett (2018), Chapter 9

Week 7

Tuesday: Review

Thursday: Midterm exam

Week 8

FALL BREAK

Week 9

Tuesday: Brexit...or not?

BBC Storyville 2019 Brexit Behind Closed Doors

Thursday: interpreting the results of the last European Parliament elections

Reading: L. De Sio, M. N. Franklin, L. Russo (eds.) (2019) *The European Parliament Elections of 2019*, Luiss University Press

From Friday to Sunday (Nov 8-19) Fieldtrip to Budapest

Week 10

Tuesday: no class

Thursday: EU-Russia relations

Reading: Andrew Foxall (2019) *From Evropa to Gayropa: A Critical Geopolitics of the European Union as Seen from Russia*, *Geopolitics*, 24:1, 174-193, Tania Marocchi (2017) *EU-Russia Relations: Towards an Increasingly Geopolitical Paradigm*

Week 11

Tuesday: EU-USA relations

Reading: C. Stelzenmüller (2019) *Hostile ally: the Trump challenge and Europe's inadequate response*, Brookings - Robert Bosch Foundation

Thursday: Identity politics: a way to tackle the EU's legitimacy crisis? The role of myths

Reading: E. Salgó (2018) Part I

Deadline for submitting your reflection paper on "The Hungarian government's challenge to the EU: Causes and Consequences")

Week 12

Tuesday: Identity politics: a way to tackle the EU's legitimacy crisis? The role of symbols

Reading: E. Salgó (2018) Part II

Thursday: Identity politics: a way to tackle the EU's legitimacy crisis? The role of rituals  
Reading: E. Salgó (2018) Part III

#### Week 13

Tuesday: "Elite and public perceptions of the European Union in EU member states" Oral presentations  
Thursday: Discussion (relating to the oral presentations)

#### Week 14

Tuesday: Need for a different European Union?

Reading: European Commission (2017), *White Paper on the future of the European Union* and P. Denfeld, E. Kessenich, S. Mary, M. Seyfettinoglu, C. Terhorst (2019) *A Return to Considering Citizens as the Cornerstone of Democracy: A Sixth Scenario for the Future of Europe*

Thursday: Review

#### Week 15

Tuesday: Final exam

### Requirements

**Attendance and participation:** Class attendance will be considered in combination with assessment of students' active participation in general and specifically during the class debates. Students will not be penalized for two absences. If further absences are recorded, grade penalties will be applied. From one to four more absences will reduce the participation score by 5% for each absence. More than six total absences will result in the overall F.

**Midterm exam (October 24):** The midterm exam consists of short essay questions. Students are graded on accuracy, depth of analysis, logical content, creative thinking, and on their ability to formulate a sophisticated argument, provide evidence for their statements, discuss and show understanding of alternative explanations.

**Budapest field trip (November 8-10):** In this fieldtrip students will explore issues such as a) the "attack" launched by the Hungarian government (and other Visegrad countries) on the EU; b) the rise of nationalism and the growing role of the sovereignist vision in Europe; c) democratic backsliding in EU member states (how to explain Hungary's transformation from a model country of democratic transition into a pariah state?); d) why and how the Orban government is challenging the EU's asylum policy; e) the value (and the "threat" of) diversity in the European Union; f) the use of history for political purposes.

**Reflection paper** Students will submit a 1500-word-essay by November 21 on the following topic: "The Hungarian government's "attack" on the EU: causes and consequences"

**Oral presentation** (December 3) Each student will provide a 10-minute-long oral presentation (based on individual research) on elite and public perceptions of the European Union in one of the member states. Oral presentation is graded on ability to provide a convincing and stimulating analysis, critically analyze alternative points of view and to provide satisfying answers to questions raised in the discussion (December 3 and 5).

**Final exam** (December 17) In terms of structure, the final exam is similar to the midterm exam. It is cumulative.

## **Assessment and Grading**

Final grades will be determined as follows:

1. Class attendance and participation: 10%
2. Budapest field trip (attendance and reflection paper): 25%
3. Mid-term exam: 20%
4. Oral presentation: 15%
6. Final exam: 30%

### **-ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:**

A Work of this quality directly addresses the question or problem raised and provides a coherent argument displaying an extensive knowledge of relevant information or content. This type of work demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate concepts and theory and has an element of novelty and originality. There is clear evidence of reading beyond the textbooks for the course, leading to written work of an exceptional quality.

B This is a highly competent level of performance and directly addresses the question or problem raised. There is a demonstration of some ability to critically evaluate theory and concepts and relate them to practice. Discussions reflect the student's own arguments and are not simply a repetition of standard lecture and reference material. The work does not suffer from any major errors or omissions and provides evidence of reading beyond the required assignments.

C This is an acceptable level of performance which displays a solid understanding of the topics covered and provides answers that are clear but limited, reflecting the information offered in the lectures and reference readings.

D This level of performance demonstrates that the student lacks a coherent grasp of the material. Important information is omitted and irrelevant points included. In effect, the student has barely done enough to persuade the instructor that s/he should not fail.

F This work fails to show any knowledge or understanding of the issues raised in the question. Most of the material in the answer is irrelevant.

## **Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism, cheating, submitting another person's work or previous work of one's own without the instructor's permission is unlawful and unethical. Students that demonstrate this kind of behavior will be reported to the Academic Honor Council. Please, read pages 4-8 of the Trinity College Student Handbook for more details.