

Europe in Crisis? European Politics and Policies

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Email Address:	info@fubest.fu-berlin.de
Time Slot:	Thursdays, 1:30 p.m.
Language of Instruction:	English
Contact Hours:	45
ECTS Credits:	6

Course Description

European Politics, and the history and politics of European Integration more specifically, have been characterized by crises. Many contemporary and current observers have highlighted this again and again. During the past two decades, Europe has been shaken by a series of crises at an accelerating pace – from the failed EU constitution and the financial crisis to the migration, Brexit and the COVID crises, and most recently the return of war. Populism has been on the rise and democratic institutions have come under pressure in several member states. Why is Europe so crisis-ridden – and what does this imply for European integration, created to foster democracy, rule of law, peace, and prosperity? Policy-makers and publics have variously responded to these crises. By contrast, we may also ask to what extent have these crises perhaps strengthened European integration, too, even if that feels counter-intuitive at first sight.

This course will introduce students to the politics of the European Union (EU), its history, its peculiar institutions and some of its key policies. It will address and explain the – often crisis-ridden – processes of widening and deepening of this unique political entity, drawing on some relevant theorizing. Students will learn how institutions changed and how policies are being made, as well as the role of the different supranational and intergovernmental institutions. Next to the formal institutions, interest representation, lobbying, and the media have shaped processes of policy-making and polity-building, and crisis responses. Special emphasis will be placed on Europe's most recent crises – the Euro crisis, the migration crisis, Brexit, and the Russian war in Ukraine – and the lingering challenges of the environmental and climate change.

The sessions consist of lectures, literature-based discussions, a close reading of sources, in smaller and larger groups. Students will be expected to participate actively, collaborate with other students, and prepare oral presentations. The course also includes a visit to the Europa House near Brandenburg Gate. In addition to a presentation and opportunity to discuss with a speaker from the Commission's Team Europe, we will visit the exhibition on the European Parliament.

Learning Objectives

The goal of this course is threefold:

1. To familiarize students with the politics, history, and the institutional structures of the European Union, and its policies
2. To discuss, understand and explain these developments and decisions as the outcome of structures and agency, characteristic conflicts, contradictions, and dilemmas, drawing on concepts and (elements of) theories from the field of interdisciplinary EU Studies
3. To assess and evaluate, and to reflect on European integration, in the light of different perspectives and underlying assumptions

At a practical level, the course trains reading skills with a view to academic literature and different genres thereof (such as journal articles), academic writing, and presentation skills.

Student Profile

Should be in their fourth semester of college/university education or beyond.

Assignments and Grading

Midterm Exam: 200 Points

Final Exam: 350 Points

Class Participation (incl.1 Independent Project report): 300 Points

Group Presentations: 150 Points

Completion of the Midterm Exam as well as the Final Exam is needed for a grade.

FUB Grade	Points of 1,000
1.0	980-1,000
1.3	950-979
1.7	900-949
2.0	850-899
2.3	800-849
2.7	750-799
3.0	700-749
3.3	650-699
3.7	600-649
4.0	500-599
5.0	< 500

Attendance

Attendance in class is mandatory. We also expect you to be punctual out of respect to both your instructor and your fellow students. If you cannot attend class because you are ill, please report sick to the FU-BEST office (info@fubest.fu-berlin.de) and to your instructor by e-mail before class.

Absences are **excused** in case of **illness**; however, for the fifth sick day and every other sick day after that (consecutive or cumulative, counted not per individual course but for the program overall), you will need to turn in a doctor's notice ("Attest" in German) to the FU-BEST office in order for them to count as excused, too.

If you miss an exam due to an excused absence, your instructor and the FU-BEST team will arrange a make-up exam for you; you may also be entitled to a term paper deadline extension. If you, however, do not fulfill all course requirements needed for a grade by the (later) date determined by the program, passing the course is no longer possible.

Please also note that if you miss more than half of a course's sessions (even if due to excused absence), passing the course is no longer possible.

Personal travel and visits by relatives or friends are **not** accepted as reasons for absence (i.e., absences for these reasons always count as unexcused).

Regarding **unexcused** absences, please note the following:

- Any unexcused absence has consequences for at least the participation portion of the grade.
- Two unexcused absences lead to a formal warning and a lowering of the course grade by a fraction.
- Three unexcused absences will result in an "F" (5.0) on the transcript.

An absence for more than half of a particular day's session will be considered an absence for that day.

Literature

Readings will be posted on the online learning platform Blackboard.

Course Schedule

Calendar	Topics, Readings, etc.
Session 1	<p>Topic: European integration and crisis – Introduction</p> <p>This session introduces the structure, requirements, assignments and activities of this course, and we will discuss the guiding concept of “crisis”. In order to prepare students to deal more effectively with the assigned texts, we will explore together how scholarly articles are structured, and develop effective strategies for reading them.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christiansen, Thomas. 2020. "The EU's New Normal: Consolidating European Integration in an Era of Populism and Geo-Economics." JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies 58 (S1): 13-27. Fontaine, Pascal. 2018. The European Union explained: Europe in 12 lessons. (Very useful introductory reading) <p>Groupwork: How to read an academic journal article</p>
Session 2	<p>Topic: History I: Why integrate? A response to Europe's perennial crises?</p> <p>This session explores the early history of European integration from the late 1940s onwards and continues the overview until the crisis-ridden 1970s. In order to get a first-hand insight into the reasoning of the contemporaries, we will read and learn to analyse a historical source, written by one of the key promoters of European integration.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leucht, Brigitte. 2023. "The formation of the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Economic Community and Euratom, 1945–58." In Reinventing Europe: The History of the European Union since 1945, edited by Brigitte Leucht, Katja Seidel and Laurent Warloutzet, 7-26. London: Bloomsbury. Historical Source: Spaak, Paul-Henri. 1950. The Integration of Europe: Dreams and Realities. Foreign Affairs 29 (1): 94-100.
Session 3	<p>Topic: History II: Why relaunch European integration? A response to Europe's economic crises</p> <p>This session continues the historical overview, arguing that the so-called “relaunch” of European integration in the 1980s with the Single Market and the founding of European Union and European Monetary Union with the 1991/93 Maastricht Treaty was a response to the economic crises and political deadlock of the 1970s. We will discuss a documentary on the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT), a very influential industry lobbying group that pushed for the completion of the European Single Market, and analyse a historical source which reflects this lobbying.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Cowles, Maria. 1995. "Setting the Agenda for a New Europe: The ERT and EC 1992," Journal of Common Market Studies 33 (4): 501-526. Source: European Roundtable of Industrialists: Foundation for the Future of European Industry, 1983 <p>Video: The Brussels Business: https://youtu.be/xMuUEd6w54E</p>
Session 4	<p>Topic: European institutions: What do they do? Institutions and Policy Making</p> <p>In this session, students will learn about the different European institutions and examine how they co-operate, compete and interact in the practice of policy- and law-making. We discuss the different stages of the policy process and the relevance of the different institutions therein.</p> <p>Readings</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCormick, John. 2017. Understanding the European Union. A Concise Introduction. 7th ed., pp. 73-95 [The European Institutions] • Kenealy, Daniel, Peterson, John, Corbett, Richard. 2018. The European Union. How does it work? 5th ed., pp. 123-145 [How policies are made]. <p>Assignment: Familiarize yourself with the five European institutions (Council, European Council, Commission, Parliament, Court of Justice) for a group work assignment.</p> <p>Input: Exam preparation: We will discuss the structure and expectations of the midterm exam.</p>
Session 5	<p>Topic: Excursion: Europe in Crisis. Visit to Europa House / European Parliament Representation:</p> <p>This excursion to the Europa House, the representation of the European Parliament, and the exhibition "European experience" near Brandenburg gate, will offer an opportunity to discuss with a speaker from the European institutions about the institutions and current crises, and how they impact, in particular, on the European Parliament and political parties represented. It is a chance to apply the knowledge acquired so far and have a first-hand encounter with the institutions and their approach to the public.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anderson, Jeffrey J. 2021. "A Series of Unfortunate Events: Crisis Response and the European Union After 2008." In <i>The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises</i>, edited by Marianne Riddervold, Jarle Trondal and Akasemi Newsome, 765-89. Cham: Palgrave. [Crises] • Raunio, Tapio. 2022. "European parties: a powerful caucus in the European Parliament and beyond." In <i>The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition</i>, edited by Dermot Hodson, Uwe Pütter, Sabine Saurugger and John Peterson, 348-67. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [European Parliament and Parties] <p>Independent project report due: 1,000 words project report on a European institution. Detailed instructions will be provided in the first two sessions.</p>
Session 6	MIDTERM EXAM
Session 7	<p>Topic: Energy Policy – between geopolitical challenges and the climate crisis</p> <p>Energy is a key factor in modern economies, and central to competitiveness, and prosperity, central EU objectives. The session will look at the internal and international dimensions of EU's energy policy, which has only thrived in times of crises. Despite the early involvement with key energy resources through the Coal and Steel Community and Euratom, EU energy policy only really started after the 1973 oil crisis. In the wake of the Single Market programme, the EU imposed liberalisation in the 1990s, particularly in the electricity and gas sectors, to reduce prices. Issues of energy security have returned with a vengeance in recent, as has the impact on climate change, which emphasize the international dimension of EU energy policy.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buchan, David. 2020. "Energy Policy. Sharp Challenges and Rising Ambitions." In <i>Policy-making in the European Union</i>. 8th ed., edited by Helen Wallace, Mark A. Pollack, Christilla Roederer-Rynning and Alasdair R. Young, 321-42. Oxford: Oxford University Press. • Vogler, John. 2023. "The Challenge of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change." In <i>International Relations and the European Union. Fourth Edition</i>, edited by Christopher Hill, Michael Smith and Sophie Vanhoonacker, 207-35. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Session 8	Topic: European Monetary Union and the Euro Crisis

	<p>European Monetary Union (EMU) had been on the agenda of the European Communities, the EU's predecessor, from the late 1960s onwards. EMU had been controversial from the start, and even though the Euro has been in Europeans' wallets for more than two decades now, the Euro crisis has exposed some of the major difficulties of operating a currency beyond the nation state. We will discuss the reasons for the crisis and the measures undertaken to solve it, and the specific role of Germany as a so-called hegemonic actor in intergovernmental politics.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hodson, Dermot. 2020. "European Monetary Union. An Enduring Experiment." In Policy-making in the European Union. 8th ed., edited by Helen Wallace, Mark A. Pollack, Christilla Roederer-Rynning and Alasdair R. Young, 152-81. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <p>Student Group Presentation 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bulmer, Simon. 2022. Germany, the Eurozone crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic: Failing forward or moving on? Comparative European Politics, 20 (2), 166-183.
Session 9	<p>Topic: Migration policy and the Migration Crisis</p> <p>European Union member states have long cooperated in overcoming borders with the Schengen agreements, and started to work together in regulating migration jointly in the 1990s. The migration crisis of 2015 and the aftermath have exposed the problems of borders, given their close relation with sovereignty. The migration crisis has contributed to the rise of right-wing populist parties that often pursue openly Eurosceptic agendas.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hill, Christopher. 2023. "Migration: The Dilemmas of External Relations." In International Relations and the European Union. Fourth Edition, edited by Christopher Hill, Michael Smith and Sophie Vanhoonacker, 327-51. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <p>Video: Does Europe really have a migration crisis? State of Europe (1/3) https://youtu.be/ldyrZLhp98s</p> <p>Input: Exam preparation: We will discuss the structure and expectations of the final exam.</p>
Session 10	<p>Topic: Climate and the Environment</p> <p>Environmental policy had not been part of the founding Treaties of the 1950s, but has – since its inception in the 1970s – become a “flagship” policy of the European Union. Since the early 1990s, the EU has been involved in the fight against climate change, also at the international level. This session will offer insights into the emergence and development of EU environmental policy – from concerns about dead fish in the river Rhine to the European Commission's “European Green Deal” announced in 2019. It will examine, how environmental policy works, will take a critical look at the role of the Commission and climate obstructionism, and discuss in a pro-con confrontation the prospects for EU climate change policy in a period of multiple crises crowding out the climate issue.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rosamond, Jeffrey. 2023. "The slow-burning climate emergence and the European Green Deal: prospects and pitfalls in the polycrisis era." In The EU under Strain? Current Crises Shaping European Union Politics, edited by Mechthild Roos and Daniel Schade, 275-92. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. <p>Group Presentation 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haas, Tobias, Dieter Plehwe, and Moritz Neujewski. 2024. "Climate Obstruction in the European Union." In <i>Climate Obstruction across Europe</i>, edited by Robert J. Brulle, J. Timmons Roberts and Miranda C. Spencer, 320-46. Oxford: Oxford UP. <p>Assignment: Pro-Con Discussion</p>

	Prepare your arguments (for/against) the claim: In an era of multiple crisis, the EU's efforts to tackle climate change, are bound to fail or fade.
Session 11	<p>Topic: Brexit</p> <p>The United Kingdom had long been an “awkward partner” within the European Union, after having joined only in 1973. Nevertheless, Brexit was not a foregone conclusion. The session examines the role of the UK within the EU before the 2016 referendum, the short and long-term reasons for Brexit, the long-drawn negotiations, their domestic impact, and the longer-term implications. Brexit may be “done”, but its after-effects will remain with us for considerable time. The group presentation will look at the sentiments and ideas underlying Brexit.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bulmer, Simon and Lucia Quaglia. 2018. “The politics and economics of Brexit.” <i>Journal of European Public Policy</i> 25 (8): 1089-1098. <p>Documentary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brexit: The Clock is ticking: https://youtu.be/DT1FSmlSCGw <p>Group Presentation 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dennison, James. 2023. "Why did the UK leave the EU? The state of the science of explaining Brexit." In <i>Handbook on the European Union and Brexit</i> edited by John Erik Fossum and Christopher Lord, 26-41. Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
Session 12	<p>Topic: The ultimate crisis? The EU peace project in the face of the Russian war against Ukraine</p> <p>This last session is devoted to a crisis that took many Europeans by surprise. It challenged some of the fundamental assumptions of the internal order in Europe and the aims and objectives of international cooperation for peace and prosperity. We will explore the origins and ideas underlying Russian aggression and discuss the implications for the European Union.</p> <p>The session also offers an opportunity for feedback and final questions with a view to the exam.</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Börzel, Tanja A. 2023. European Integration and the War in Ukraine: Just Another Crisis? <i>JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies</i>, 61 (S1), 14-30. Steiner, Nils D., Ruxanda Berlinschi, Etienne Farvaque, Jan Fidrmuc, Philipp Harms, Alexander Mihailov, Michael Neugart, and Piotr Stanek 2023. "Rallying around the EU flag: Russia's invasion of Ukraine and attitudes toward European integration." <i>JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies</i> advance online doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13449. <p>Group Presentation 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kuzio, Taras. 2022. "Imperial nationalism as the driver behind Russia's invasion of Ukraine." <i>Nations and Nationalism</i> advance online. doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12875.
Session 13	FINAL EXAM