

Introductory Course Political Science II B

The Political System of the EU

Friday, 10h15-11h45

Summer term 2021

Dr. Mechthild Roos

I. Course contents & desired learning outcomes

The first-year students of the B.A. in Social Sciences may choose between different sub-disciplinary introductory courses to political science. During the summer term, three introductory courses are on offer:

- a) Political Theory and History of Political Ideas,*
- b) Comparative Politics, and*
- c) International Relations.*

All introductory courses are independent from the lecture 'Introduction to International Politics'.

This introductory course forms part of the Comparative Politics track. It offers an introduction to the political system of the European Union, and to key events and developments in the larger process of European integration. The course provides insight in EU legislation and decision-making procedures and presents students with an overview of the most important actors, their respective roles and competences in the EU multilevel-governance system. On this basis, participants of the course develop a fundamental understanding of the functioning of EU policy-making. They furthermore gather skills in researching, accessing, extending and communicating information/expertise on the complex nexus of processes and actors in European politics.

II. Reading guidance

The reading material for the preparation of each unit is accessible via Digicampus. The contents of each unit build on the knowledge provided by the respective reading material. It is therefore expected that every student reads the respective texts for each unit and actively engages with them, as we will also do during the course sessions. Students may also use the reading material as basis for the unit tasks.

III. Requirements for successful completion of the course

Within the scope of this course, the following is asked of the participating students:

- a) Active course participation in both synchronous and asynchronous elements of the course,
- b) Active engagement with the reading material (see below and on Digicampus),
- c) Individual tasks within each unit (see below and on Digicampus),

- d) Active participation in the simulation game: EU decision-making procedures (see below and on Digicampus).

IV. Access to the virtual sessions via Zoom

You can access the virtual seminar sessions via the following Zoom link:

[Link deleted]

V. Class Policies

Please make sure to actively participate in all units, including both the respective synchronous and asynchronous elements. This is a precondition for passing the course, since you need to complete every unit in order not only to reach all learning goals, but to complete all required tasks. In case of questions or concerns, or if you are in need of any information not included in this syllabus, please contact the teacher directly before or after the course sessions, via e-mail or via Digicampus. Due to the pandemic, office hours take place virtually (Zoom) or by phone, either directly before or after the sessions, or on individually agreed dates.

VI. Syllabus

Unit 0 (virtual session on 16.04.): Introduction

Unit 1 (virtual session on 23.04.): The European Commission & Political Competences of the EU

*Assigned reading: Europäische Kommission (2019): Die Europäische Union. Was sie ist und was sie tut. Luxemburg: Amt für Veröffentlichungen der Europäischen Union. **To read: Chapter 2 „Was die Europäische Union tut“ (pp. 13-48).***

Assignment: A group of course participants are given the task (in the introductory session on 16.04.) to create an overview of the essential structure, election, main tasks and competences of the European Commission for their classmates. You find helpful literature in the form of two handbooks on Digicampus, with full access via the university's library/OPAC.

Please upload your overviews on Digicampus by 22 April. The group of 'experts' on the European Commission will be asked to brief their fellow classmates at the beginning of the virtual session on 23 April; feel free to prepare for a short and concise five-minute presentation as well.

Unit 2 (virtual session on 14.05.): The European Parliament and the Councils & Legislation processes

*Assigned reading: Werner Weidenfeld (2020): Die Europäische Union. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink. **To read: Chapter 6 „Rechtsetzung und Entscheidungsverfahren“ (pp. 158-177).** (An overview on EU legislation procedures – provided by the European Parliament – can furthermore be accessed here: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/germany/de/europa_und_sie/das_ep/gesetzgebungsverfahren.html.)*

Assignment: Those participants who have not drafted an overview of the European Commission's competences for the previous unit are now asked to provide a similar overview regarding structure, elections, main tasks and competences on the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, and the

European Council. Participants will form small groups to this end during the virtual session on 23.04. You find once again helpful literature in the form of two handbooks on Digicampus, with full access via the university's library/OPAC.

Please upload your overview on Digicampus by 13 May. The group of 'experts' on the respective institutions will be asked to brief their fellow classmates at the beginning of the virtual session on 14 May; feel free to prepare for a short and concise five-minute presentation as well.

Unit 3 (virtual session on 28.05.): The genesis of an idea: Concepts of European integration
Assigned reading: [Different source texts – distribution during the virtual session on 07.05.]

Assignment: Read carefully one of the source texts on historical ideas of (institutionalized) European integration, and conduct some research on their respective authors, their biographies, contemporary context and motives for drafting their respective integration blueprints. Write then a short briefing (ca. 500 words) on the respective author and their idea of an integrated Europe.

We distribute the source texts during the virtual session on 14 May. Please upload your briefing on Digicampus by 10 June.

Unit 4 (virtual session on 11.06.): The history of European integration (with a focus on the history of the EU)

Assigned reading: Werner Weidenfeld (2020): *Die Europäische Union*. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink. **To read: Chapter 3 „Geschichte der europäischen Integration“ (pp. 69-112).**

Assignment: Draft a short comment/caricature/poem/podcast/GIF/[whatever creative format suits you best] on a current challenge to a specific area of (complete or incomplete) EU political competence, such as environmental policy, health policy, migration policy, foreign affairs, or whatever other area interests you particularly.

Please upload your piece of creative engagement with EU politics on Digicampus by 1 July.

Unit 5 (virtual session on 02.07.): Simulation game: EU decision-making procedures

Assigned reading: Own research, according to the respective institutional actor's role, positions and competences.

Assignment: For the final thematic unit of the course, you as course participants have the choice between two possibilities of turning acquired expertise into practical knowledge:

- a) In a classic simulation game of the genesis of an EU legislative act (on a policy issue chosen by the participants); or
- b) In the form of concrete contributions to the online citizens' platform of the Conference on the Future of the EU (with concrete ideas for future EU political engagement and political change).

We will discuss these two options and decide for one during the previous virtual sessions. According to your decision, we will distribute actor roles and discuss further preparatory steps for this unit, specifically for the virtual session on 2 July.

Unit 6 (virtual session on 09.07.): Concluding discussion