

COURSE PLAN

**Institutions and Decision-Making in the EU. The
European Civil Service**

2025-2026 academic year

**Máster Universitario en
Diplomacia y Organizaciones
Internacionales**

COURSE CONTENTS

COURSE DETAILS

CODE	574411
TITLE	Institutions and Decision-Making in the EU. The European Civil Service
TYPE	Compulsory
TEACHING PERIOD	One semester. First semester: From September 25, 2025, to December 11, 2025
TEACHING HOURS	On Thursdays from 9:30h to 11:30h
LANGUAGE	English (with some sessions in Spanish)
ECTS CREDITS	3.0

COORDINATION

PHD Andrea Noferini, professor, CEI International Affairs

LECTURERS

PhD Montserrat Pi, Lecturer of Public International Law at the UAB;
 PhD Andrea Lanaia, Adjunct professor at the UAB;
 PhD Manuel Cienfuegos, Full-time professor of Public International Law and International Relations at the UPF;
 PhD Ana García Juanatey, Professor at CEI, Centro de Estudios Internacionales
 PhD Marta Konovalova, (TBC) Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Kyiv, Ukraine)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The European Union represents an advanced model of regional integration between sovereign states and a peculiar political system which involve supranational and state-level organizations and institutions. Basically, the course aims to provide students with the analytical tools and practical skills required to understand how the EU policy-making and decision-making systems do work.

The course focuses on the institutional design of the EU as a supranational institution, the relations among its main institutions and organizations, decision-making processes, the role of central governments of the Member States as well as some current debates of particular relevance such as rising populisms, the respect of the rule of law and the present and the future of the Union.

Learning outcomes

K04 - Describe the political analysis tools used in the study of international relations.

K05 - Distinguish the instruments and norms intended to maintain international peace and security.

K07 - Identify the key actors in international relations.

K10 - Explain the role of international organizations in conflict resolution.

K14 - Detail the decision-making processes of different international organizations.

K15 - Identify the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization.

K16 - Mention the most important diplomatic events in history.

K18 - Identify the organizational structure of the different institutions of the United Nations system.

H01 - Express yourself orally and in writing effectively in Spanish and English, with command of specialized languages in the field of international relations and international law.

H02 - Write rigorous documents in the field of international relations and international law.

H03 - Analyze the interests of the actors involved in each international context, including all their political, economic, and legal elements.

H04 - Use information sources critically and responsibly in diplomacy and international organizations.

K – Knowledge or content

H – Skills or abilities

C - Competences

PROGRAM

TOPIC 1 (Thursday, 2 October 2025): The EU as a political system

I. Introduction II. On the nature of the EU (not a super/state not a federal system) III. What a political system is IV. Beyond the debate on the nature of the EU

PhD Andrea Noferini

Compulsory reading:

- Simon HIX y Bjørn HØYLAND, "Introduction", in S. HIX y B. HØYLAND, *The Political System of the European Union*, 3rd ed., London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Hubert ZIMMERMANN y Andreas DÜR, "The European Union: Success of Failure", in H. ZIMMERMANN y A. DÜR ZIMMERMANN, *Key controversies in European integration*, 2nd ed., London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

TOPIC 2 (Thursday, 3 October 2025): The EU Parliament

I. The role of the Parliament in EU decision/making, II. The functions of the Parliament and its composition, III. The Parliament and the democratic deficit, IV. Criticism towards the role of the Parliament.

PhD Andrea Noferini

Compulsory reading:

- Simons HIX y Bjørn HØYLAND, "Legislative Politics", in S. HIX y B. HØYLAND, *The Political System of the European Union*, 3rd ed., London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

TOPIC 3 (Thursday, 9 October 2025): The European Council and the Council

I. The role and the functions of the Council, II. The defence of the national interest in the Council, III. Voting systems and political majorities within the Council, IV. The role of the European Council and its President.

PhD Andrea Noferini

Compulsory reading:

- Simon HIX y Bjørn HØYLAND, "Executive Politics", in S. HIX y B. HØYLAND, *The Political System of the European Union*, 3rd ed., London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 23-34.

TOPIC 4 (Thursday, 16 October 2025): The European Commission

I. The role and the functions of the Commission, II. The composition of the Commission and the role of the Commissioners, III. The Commission as "the guardian of the treaties" and "the agenda-setter" of EU policies, IV. On the nature of the Commission: political or administrative organization?

PhD Andrea Noferini

Compulsory reading:

- Simon HIX y Bjørn HØYLAND, "Executive Politics", in S. HIX y B. HØYLAND, *The Political System of the European Union*, 3rd ed., London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 34-48.

TOPIC 5 (Thursday, 23 October 2025): SEMINARIO 1: El proceso de adopción de decisiones (*in Spanish)

I. De qué manera se toman las decisiones en la UE?, II. El rol de las tres principales instituciones de la UE, III. Las dificultades de la relación interinstitucionales en el entramado de la UE.

PhD Montserrat Pi (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

TOPIC 6 (Thursday, 30 October 2025): The European Budget and the Next Generation EU: where does money come from and how are they allocated?

I. How big (or small) is the EU budget? II. Where does the money come from and where are they spent? III. The new Multiannual Financial Perspective 2021/2027, IV. An unprecedented effort: The Next Generation EU - the fund for the recovery of Europe after the pandemic caused by the COVID 19.

PhD Andrea Noferini

Compulsory reading: Material will be provided by the instructor

Recommended Materials:

- Wallace, Helen, Mark A. Pollack, Christilla Roederer-Rynning e Alasdair R. Youn, Policymaking in the European Union, Oxford University Press, seventh edition, 2015, Chapter 9 – The Budget: Who Gets What, When and How?, pages 220-242

TOPIC 7 (Thursday, 6 November 2025): The European Court of Justice and the implementation of EU law

I. The role of the European Court of Justice in the EU law, II. Composition and functions of the ECJ, III. The EJC and the judicial power in the EU

PhD Manuel Cienfuegos (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Compulsory readings:

- ABELLÁN HONRUBIA, Victoria.; VILÀ COSTA, Blanca. (dir): *Lecciones de Derecho Comunitario Europeo*, Ariel Derecho, Barcelona, 6ª ed., 2011, capítulos IV, apartados 3 y 4 (pp. 82-93), capítulo VII, apartado IV (pp. 150-172) y capítulo VII (pp. 150-219).

Complementary reading:

- Simon HIX y Bjørn HØYLAND, "Judicial Politics and the European Court of Justice", in S. HIX y B. HØYLAND, *The Political System of the European Union*, 3rd ed., London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

MID TERM EXAM (Multiple Choice Test on the first part of the course)

TOPIC 8 (Thursday, 13 November 2025): The EU as a promoter of democracy: the rise of populism(s) and nationalism(s) in the EU

I. Rising populisms and nationalisms in the EU, II. A radiography of populist movements and parties in the EU, III. Populist parties in the European Parliament, IV. The impact of nationalisms and populisms on the process of European integration.

PhD Andrea Noferini

Compulsory reading:

- *LET THE PEOPLE RULE! DEFINITIONS AND THEORIES OF POPULISM* by Diego Muro (pg.9-16)
- *POPULISM "MADE IN THE EU"*, Carme Colomina (pg.23-26) in Eckart Woertz (coord.), *POPULISM IN EUROPE: FROM SYMPTOM TO ALTERNATIVE?* CIDOB REPORT #01, Barcelona, April 2017, ISSN: 2564-9086 available here: https://www.cidob.org/en/publications/publication_series/cidob_report/cidob_report/populism_in_europe_from_symptom_to_alternative

TOPIC 9 (Thursday, 20 November 2025): The EU Green Deal and its implementation.

I. The Green Deal explained II. Environmental policies at the European level. III. The implementation stage

Prof. PhD Andrea Lanaia

TOPIC 10 (Thursday, 27 November 2025): The EU as a promoter of the rule of law: the challenge of Hungary and Poland.

PhD Ana García Juanatey

Compulsory reading:

- Jan Werner MÜLLER, "Should the EU Protect Democracy and the Rule of Law inside Member States?", *European Law Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 2, March 2015, pp. 141–160.

TOPIC 11 (Thursday, 4 December 2025): SPECIAL SESSION on EU ENLARGEMENT AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE.

PhD Andrea Noferini

Ukraine applied for EU membership in February 2022 and was granted EU candidate status in June 2022. After many years of impasse, EU enlargement has gained a new momentum for its geopolitical consequences. Ukraine has been rapidly granted the candidate state while many Balkans state have lasted years for the same reward. What extent can the EU be enlarged? And what are the consequences of enlargement processes? And, finally: Can really Ukraine join the EU? And, if yes, when?

A debate with **PhD Marta Konovalova**, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

TOPIC 12 (Thursday, 11 December 2025): Inequality, social cohesion and redistribution within the European Union: The European Cohesion Policy explained

I. Is inequality rising in the EU? II. Inequality and social exclusion revisited, III. Territorial differences among the Member States, regions and cities, IV. Does a regional policy serve for the convergence of EU territories?

PhD Andrea Noferini

Materials will be distributed before class

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

REQUIRED PREVIOUS SUBJECTS

There are no specified enrolment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Students with no previous knowledge of Public International Law and International Organizations, International relations and International Politics, Economics and International Trade must take the following mandatory complementary courses:

- Introduction to Public International Law and International Organizations (2 ECTS)
- Introduction to International Relations and International Politics (2 ECTS)
- Introduction to Economics and International Trade (2 ECTS)

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The teaching will combine the theoretical exposition of the professor with the participation of the students in the discussions and debates. For each session, a mandatory reading will be assigned.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be able to choose between continuous assessment and single assessment within the deadline set by CEI's own regulation through the registration of a form available at CEI Secretariat. Students must attend no less than 80% of the classes in order to qualify for any assessment. No single assessment test will have more than 60% of the final grade of the course.

The evaluation criteria for the continuous assessment of this course will be as it follows*:

- 35% MID TERM EXAM (multiple choice test)
- 25% Seminar during the session by Montserrat Pi
- 40% Policy Paper

**According to the number of students, the evaluation model can be adjusted. The definitive model of evaluation will be closed during the first week of the course*

REASSESSMENT

The obtention of an overall failing grade in this subject entitles the student to reassessment, consisting in a single exam worth 100% of the final grade. In case the student fails said exam, the higher grade of the two (the overall ordinary grade or the reassessment grade) will be kept.

WORKLOAD

WORKING HOURS	
TOTAL	75
CONTACT TIME	25
ACTIVITIES	25
INDEPENDENT STUDY	25

BASIC REFERENCES

- ALCAIDE FERNANDEZ, Joaquin (coord.), *Curso de Derecho de la Unión Europea*, Tecnos, Madrid, 2014
- ABELLÁN HONRUBIA, Victoria.; VILÀ COSTA, Blanca (dir): *Lecciones de Derecho Comunitario Europeo*, Ariel Derecho, Barcelona, 6^a ed., 2011.
- BAQUERO CRUZ, Julio. *What's left of the law of integration?: Decay and resistance in European Union*, 1st ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Elizabeth E. Bomberg, John Peterson, Richard Corbett, *The European Union. How does it work?*, 3rd. ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, *The ABC of the European Union Law*, Brussels: OPOCE, 2010
- FONTAINE, Pascal., *Europe in 12 lessons*, Brussels: OPOCE, 2014.
- HIX, Simon and HØYLAND, Bjørn , *The Political System of the European Union*, 3rd ed., London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Araceli Mangas Martín, Diego J. Liñán Noguerras, *Instituciones y Derecho de la Unión Europea*, Tecnos, Madrid, 2016.
- ORTEGA GÓMEZ, Marta, *La Comisión Europea y el gobierno de la Unión*, Marcial Pons, 2013.
- SARMIENTO, Daniel, *Derecho de la Unión Europea*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 2018.
- Hubert ZIMMERMANN y Andreas DÜR, A. *Key controversies in European integration*, 2nd ed., London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.