

Second year of the Executive Master in EU Studies

Advanced course Political Science

Topic:	Explaining the Institutional Evolution of the EU: Drivers and Barriers
Experts:	Prof. Wolfgang Wessels , University of Cologne, Jean Monnet Chair ad personam / CETEUS Mr Thomas Traguth , MA (oxon), MA (College of Europe)
Character:	Compulsory , Advanced Course
ECTS-Credits:	5 ECTS
Teaching methods:	Lecture and course material online, seminar and discussion at the presence workshops, webinars, guided forum
Assessment methods:	Final exam at the end of the term, two assignments, active participation in workshop and forum discussion
Skills and competences:	Participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• study the major theories of EU integration• examine the key drivers and barriers of EU institutional evolution• develop competing explanations for the dynamics of development• compare different scenarios of further EU integration• explain complexity and differentiation in the EU• evaluate different strategies for EU development More generally, participants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• refine their methods of academic research and writing, develop practical policy strategies in a policy brief• take part in a formal debating exercise (together with Economics)

Learning outcomes, methods and course content:

The EU institutional system has been shaped by major event and forces, such as strategic political decision-making, responses to unexpected crises as well as continuous incremental adaptations for more than 60 years. This course builds on the knowledge of the EU institutional architecture provided by the first year of the programme. In this follow-up, students will look for the key driving (and restraining) forces of the EU's institutional evolution. Participants learn to identify, analyze and explain "milestones" and "watersheds" in EU history by applying the major theories and approaches of EU integration. They will be able to identify the fundamental patterns of how and why the political system of the European Union has been shaped by its drivers and barriers.

The course will introduce the most influential theories and approaches to explaining the EU, namely

- (Neo-) Federalism,
- (Neo-) Realism / Intergovernmentalism and
- (Neo-) Functionalism
- and newer approaches, e.g. neo-institutionalism.

With these conceptual tools, students will be equipped to develop competing explanations for the dynamics, driving and limiting forces of this change and possible scenarios for the future. They will further compare and evaluate the different strategies for the EU's future.

The course contents are structured in such a way to make these different perspectives comparable and their application interchangeable. Participants will thus develop academic rigour in small working groups, oral presentations, written assignments including the drafting of a policy brief, participating in debate and intensive discussions with their peers and the professors of the programme. These transferrable skills are useful in the EU-related labour market and contribute to improving employability prospects in this field.

Bibliographical advice and links:

European Commission (2017): *White paper on the future of Europe – Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025*

Nelsen, Brent F. and Alexander Stubb (2014): *The European Union. Readings on the Theory and Practice of European Integration*. 4th edition, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Saurugger, Sabine (2013): *Theoretical Approaches to European Integration*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wiener, A. and Diez, T., eds., 2009. *European Integration Theory*. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Mette (2006): *Debates About European Integration. A Reader*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.