

POLS 3389: European Union Politics

University of Houston

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Class Hours: Tu/Th 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Class Room: *online*

Course Description

What is the European Union? Where is it coming from? Where is it headed? This course will touch on these questions and others, providing a broad survey of some of the most important topics in European Union politics. During the course, students will learn the story of European integration, the key elements of the theoretical approaches to the European integration, and the European institutions; the Commission, the European Council, the EU Council, the European Parliament and the Court of Justice of the EU.

The course also covers a sample of European policies such as external economic policy, Single Market, enlargement, foreign, security and defense policy, and others. Finally, the course concludes with contemporary issues in EU politics, particularly focusing on post-2008 economic crisis and Brexit.

This course is being offered in the Synchronous Online format. Synchronous online class meetings will take place according to the class schedule. There is no face-to-face component to this course. In between synchronous class meetings, there may also be asynchronous activities to complete (e.g., discussion forums and assignments).

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to account for:

1. Story of European Integration & Past and Contemporary Theoretical Approaches
2. EU Institutions & Decision-making Processes
3. Key Policy Areas within the EU
4. Current Issues in EU politics

Technical Requirements

The online sessions will be held via Microsoft Teams. Students need to login to Microsoft Office 365 using their CougarNet account usernames and passwords.

See how to login to Microsoft Office 365: [UH Info-Tech](#)

Access to a webcam is required for students participating remotely in this course. Webcams must be turned on during the lectures.

University Information Technology has a limited number of laptops available for student check-out. If you do not have a computer to use, you may check one out for use at home. For more information, visit <https://uh.edu/infotech/about/planning/off-campus/>

Excused Absence Policy

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Recording of Class

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Center for Students with DisABILITIES](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Syllabus Changes

Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through Blackboard.

Required Readings

Cini, Michelle and Borragán, Nieves Pérez-Solórzano (2019). *European Union Politics (6th Edition)*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Olsen, Jonathan (2020). *The European Union: Politics and Policies (7th Edition)*. New York, NY: Routledge (*Recommended*)

Grading Policy

Evaluations of student performance will be based on class participation, country presentations, one exam and a group project, to be presented at the end of the semester. The mid-term exam is scheduled to be on March 11, 2021. Students should notify me in advance if they think they will not be able to make it to the exam. Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- **Participation (10%):** Students are expected to do the readings and play an active role through attending the discussions.
- **Country Presentations (20%):** At the beginning of each class, there will be EU country presentations. Each student is expected to present *one EU country*, not longer than 10 minutes. In the presentations, students should introduce the following:
 - General information about the country (is the country in Schengen or using Euro?)
 - Country's EU journey (when did it become a member?)
 - Important political events, recent elections and outcomes
 - EU institutions you can see in this country (if there is any)
 - Country's role in the EU Parliament (the number of seats it has)
- **Mid-term Exam (35%):** In the the open-book exam, students are expected to answer three essay questions out of five questions. Students will have 12 hours to submit their answers on Blackboard.
- **Group Project & Final Presentations (35%):** Students will be assigned to groups, and will prepare a presentation to be given during the last week of class. The presentation will be prepared jointly, but each member of the group is expected to take part, individually presenting on a chosen sub-topic. Each group member will give a short (3–4 minute) presentation, and groups are expected to rehearse their presentations together. In addition to the class presentation, each student will write a short essay (4–6 pages) on his or her sub-topic. Students will be evaluated individually, and grades will be derived jointly from the quality of the presentation and the essay. The final paper is due on the last day of class (Thursday, April 29). See my explanation for the group project below.

You will receive a final grade on a 100-point scale, which will be converted to a letter grade in the following way:

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	<60%

The Group Project: Each year, the Commission publishes *Progress Reports*, the annual assessment of the state of play in each candidate country and potential candidate, what has been achieved over the last year. These assessments are accompanied by recommendations and guidance on the reform priorities, and should be followed by the candidate countries on their journey to full-membership to the EU. There are currently seven candidate countries.

Visit https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/package_en to see the progress reports published yearly for all candidate countries. These reports have 33 chapters, each of which includes assessments on different policy areas.

- 1 Groups choose one candidate country and briefly introduce the country.
- 2 After deciding the country, groups analyze three progress reports (belonging to the same country). For example, Turkey-2002 (when Turkey was a potential candidate), Turkey-2005 (when Turkey gained its candidacy status), and Turkey-2018.
- 3 Then, each student in the group chooses three policy areas (chapters), and analyzes the progress of the country in these particular policy fields. The student informs the class whether these chapters are completed or still in progress, and presents his/her analyses.
- 4 The groups speculate about country's expected full-membership, based on country's progress analyzed in three different time points.

Course Outline

Week 01: Introduction to course and review of syllabus

Jan. 19 — Syllabus Day

- What do you know about the EU?

Jan. 21 — Introduction & *Map Game*

- EU country of the day: Portugal
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 1, pp. 1-9
- Olsen, Chapter 1, pp. 11-26 (suggested)
- [Goals and values of the EU](#)

Week 02: The historical context

Jan. 26 — Establishment and development

- EU country of the day: Italy
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 2, pp. 9-31
- Olsen, Chapter 2, pp. 27-41 (suggested)
- [The History of the European Union](#)

Jan. 28 — Treaty of Lisbon and beyond

- EU Country of the day: Latvia
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 3, pp. 31-53
- Olsen, Chapter 4, pp. 59-75 (suggested)
- [Chronology of EU treaties](#)
- [The Lisbon Treaty](#)

Week 03: Theories

Feb. 2 — Neo-functionalism

- EU Country of the day: Poland
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 4, pp. 53-68

Feb. 4 — Intergovernmentalism

- EU Country of the day: Malta
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 5, pp. 59-83
- Wolfe, J.D. (2011). 'Who rules the EU? Pragmatism and power in European integration theory'. *Journal of Political Power*, 4/1: 127-44.

Week 04: Conceptual Approaches

Feb. 9 — Theorizing the EU & Governance in the EU

- EU Country of the day: Ireland
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 6-7, pp. 83-114

Feb. 11 — Europeanization

- EU Country of the day: Finland
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 8, pp. 115-126

Week 05: Institutions & Actors

Feb. 16 — Democracy and Legitimacy

- EU Country of the day: Belgium
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 9, pp. 127-140

Feb. 18 — The European Commission

- EU Country of the day: Sweden
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 10, pp. 141-156
- [What does the Commission do?](#)

Week 06: Institutions & Actors

Feb. 23 — The European Council and the Council of the EU

- EU Country of the day: France
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 11, pp. 157-175
- Niemann, A. and Zaun, N. (2018). 'EU Refugee Policies and Politics in Times of Crisis'. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56/1, January.
- [What does the European Council do?](#)
- [What does the Council do?](#)

Feb. 25 — The European Parliament & The Court of Justice of the EU

- EU Country of the day: Luxembourg
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 12-13, pp. 176-200
- Hix, S. and Høyland, B. (2013). 'Empowerment of the European Parliament'. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16(1), 171-89.
- [What does the Parliament do?](#)
- [What does the CJEU do?](#)

Week 07: Interest Groups and Policy-making

Mar. 2 — Interest groups and public opinion

- EU Country of the day: Lithuania
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 14-15, pp. 201-232
- Eising, R., Rasch D., and Rozbicka, P. (2017). 'Multilevel Interest Representation in the European Union: The Role of National Interest Organizations'. *West European Politics*, Special Issue 40/5, 939-1152.

Mar. 4 — Policy making in the EU

- EU Country of the day: Hungary
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 16, pp. 235-252
- [Decision-making in the EU](#)

Week 08: Policies I and Midterm Exam

Mar. 9 — Trade and Development Policies

- EU Country of the day: the Netherlands & Romania
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 17, pp. 253-265
- Bartels, L. (2007). 'The trade and development policy of the European Union'. *European Journal of International Law*, 18(4), 715-756.

Mar. 11 — Mid-term exam

Week 09: Spring break

Week 10: Policies II

Mar. 23 — Enlargement

- EU Country of the day: Austria
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 18, pp. 266-280
- Börzel, T.A., Dimitrova, A., and Schimmelfennig, F. (2017). 'European Union Enlargement and Integration Capacity'. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Special Issue 24/2, 157-315.

Mar. 25 — EU's Foreign, Security and Defence Policies

- EU Country of the day: Spain
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 19, pp. 281-294

Week 11: Policies III

Mar. 30 — The Single Market

- EU Country of the day: Greece
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 20, pp. 295-309
- Egan, M. and Guimareas M.H. (2017). 'The Single Market: Trade Barriers and Trade Remedies'. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 55/2: 294-311.

Apr. 1 — The EU's Social Dimension

- EU Country of the day: Denmark
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 21, pp. 310-322
- de la Porte, C. and Heins, E. Elke (2015). 'The Sovereign Debt Crisis, the EU and Welfare State Reform'. Special issue of *Comparative European Politics*, 13/1.

Week 12: Policies IV

Apr. 6 — The Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice

- EU Country of the day: Cyprus
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 22, pp. 323-342
- Jeney, P. (2016). 'The European Union's Area of Freedom, Security and Justice without the United Kingdom-Legal and Practical Consequences of Brexit'. *ELTE LJ*, 117 (suggested).

Apr. 8 — Economic and Monetary Union

- EU Country of the day: Germany
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 23, pp. 343-357
- Târlea, S., et al. (2019). Explaining governmental preferences on economic and monetary union reform. *European Union Politics*, 20(1), 24-44.

Week 13: Policies V

Apr. 13 — The Common Agricultural Policy

- EU Country of the day: Bulgaria & UK
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 24, pp. 358-372

Apr. 15 — Environmental Policy

- EU Country of the day: Estonia
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 25, pp. 373-386

Week 14: Issues and Debates

Apr. 20 — The Euro crisis and European integration

- EU Country of the day: Croatia
- Cini and Borragán, Chapter 26, pp. 389-405
- Puetter, U. (2012). 'Europe's deliberative intergovernmentalism: the role of the Council and European Council in EU economic governance'. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 19/2: 161-78.

Apr. 22 — Brexit and the Future of the EU

- EU Country of the day: Slovenia
- Cini and Borragán, Chapters 27-28, pp. 406-436
- Krastev, I. (2012). 'European disintegration? A fraying Union'. *Journal of Democracy*, 23/4: 23-30.
- Paterson, W.E. (2011). 'The reluctant hegemon? Germany moves centre stage in the European Union'. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49/1: 57-75.

Week 15: End of course

Apr. 27 — Group presentations

Apr. 29 — Group presentations

- Final paper due today at 12.59 PM