

ECON/IREL 327 | Europe Today: Winter is Coming Spring 2025

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Course Description

The goals of this course are threefold:

- to acquire knowledge of the policies, actions and accomplishments that have made the European Union a unique zone of economic prosperity, political stability, and social progress.
- to compare and contrast the principal differences between the United States and the European Union in terms of political culture, social priorities and economic vision through a variety of case studies.
- to evaluate the domestic and external challenges that the Union is currently facing.
- to explore the changing role of Europe in the world and evaluate the new and ever-changing geopolitical complexities.

The course is structured into three thematic units.

The first part of the course will be devoted to analyzing the accomplishments and distinctiveness of the European Union as an institution, focusing on achievements such as the single market (that allows citizens to live, study, work and retire in any state of the Union), the development of a "social Europe" (with universal healthcare, public higher education and strong welfare states), and the commitment to the promotion of democracy, human rights and gender equality. The focus will be on appreciating how the European Union has been the driver of an unprecedented "peace project" that has made allies out of former enemies and has helped avert war on the continent for 70 years, after centuries of wars and bloodshed. When the contributions of the European Union are evaluated, the Peace dividend is often taken for granted.

The second part will focus on new and ongoing challenges facing Europe, including the deep repercussions of the departure of the United Kingdom from the Union, the impact of the refugee/ migration crisis, the growth of Euroscepticism and authoritarianism, the rise of radical Islam and the perceived "clash of civilizations". The Covid 19 crisis, which had a profoundly detrimental impact on the economic, political, and social systems of all EU countries and tested European solidarity, will also be examined.

The third part will address the European Union's place in the world by examining new and evolving geopolitical linkages, traditional alliances and rivalries, and evolving bilateral relationships with Russia, the United States, China et al. Special attention will be given to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and Russia's increasingly aggressive and destabilizing policies, as well as the escalating instability in the immediate neighborhood, particularly the Middle East, but also Turkey, the Mediterranean basin, and the Western Balkans.

Finally, at the end of the semester the students participate in a role-playing simulation game where they apply the knowledge they have gained about the policies and international relations of the European Union and their global context. Specifically, the students will debate the war in Ukraine within the context of the United Nations Security Council: students will represent delegates from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the United States, and the European Union. Through this structured debate students will not only apply the material they have learned throughout the semester, but will also sharpen their knowledge of current affairs, geopolitical issues, will practice Q&A with the other delegates and will learn how to interact with actors on the other side of the issue under discussion.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Evaluate the policies, actions and accomplishments that have made the European Union a unique zone of economic prosperity and social progress.
- Compare and contrast the principal differences between the United States and the European Union in terms of political culture, social priorities, and economic vision.
- Analyze and evaluate the complex new realities that are challenging the European Union's accomplishments.
- Critically assess Europe's changing role in the world and the shifting global geo-dynamics.

- Simulate the complex process through which the European Union might respond to an international crisis affecting the stability and security within its jurisdiction or in its broader neighborhood.

The material will be explored through a combination of lectures, critical analysis in class discussions, students' written work/ independent research, class debates, and student group presentations. The readings will include academic articles, reports from international organizations, case studies, and videos. Due to the rapidly changing nature of the topics covered in the course, readings and class material will be constantly updated according to current events.

Course Requirements/Assessment

The **breakdown of the final grade** is as follows:

Class participation: 20%

This course addresses very important current international, geopolitical, and geostrategic issues, and lively class discussions are an essential part of the class dynamic. **Class participation is therefore considered essential.** This includes consistent physical and mental presence in the classroom, no distraction from inappropriate use of laptops, punctuality, preparation (having done all the assigned readings), and participation in class discussions / debates through thoughtful comments and questions. Reading assignments / response papers are to be completed before each class session. If you are extremely uncomfortable speaking in front of a large group of students, you may send your opinions or afterthoughts in writing via email. If you never participate in class and do not send any thoughts by email, your contribution grade will be low.

Mid-term exam: 30%

A combination of short answers and a choice of essay.

Group presentations / class activities: 20%.

Throughout the semester we have a variety of class activities in which students present (in groups) their research / insights on a variety of topics and current events relating to the European Union. These presentations serve as a basis for dynamic class discussion and include topics such as comparing the US and the EU on issues such as healthcare and gun culture, ongoing Brexit challenges such as the quest for Scottish independence, democratic backsliding in Hungary and other countries, and the UN Security Council debate on the war in Ukraine. At the end of the semester the students will present a final group presentation on the topic of their choice.

Final Exam: 30%

Same format as the Midterm. The Final exam will cover material from the entire semester.

CYA Policies and Regulations

Academic Accommodations:

If academic accommodations are requested, students must submit an official letter from the appropriate office at their home institution. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester so we can discuss how these accommodations can be implemented in this course.

Use of Laptops

In-class use of laptops is permitted **ONLY** when this facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up information and references, etc. Abuse of laptop use in class (watching videos, online shopping, booking tickets etc) is extremely distracting, disrespectful, and detrimental to the class dynamic: therefore, **laptop privileges will be suspended if they are not used for class-related work.**

ePolicy on Original Work

Plagiarism is literary theft. As such, it is a serious offense which will not be tolerated either at your home institution or at CYA. Plagiarism on an examination or in a paper will result in an F for the course. You must cite the author of any and all ideas that you use that is neither common knowledge nor your own idea. If you are in doubt, it is safest to cite the source. Your work should be original and reflect your own ideas and thoughts. If you are unsure about what counts as original work, please consult your professor and check the Student Handbook.

Class Schedule

This is a preliminary schedule of lectures. Part of the order may change, and some topics may be replaced by others, depending on current developments in the European Union and/or the world during the course.

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- 1 **Introduction to the topic, introduction to course objectives**
- Loukas Tsoukalis, *In Defense of Europe*, Ch. 1 ("High Stakes").
- I. What makes the European Union so unique, and how has it changed the lives of Europeans?**
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- 2 **The European Union as a "Peace Project":**
 Making friends of enemies, keeping the peace on the continent for an unprecedented 70 years.
- Video: Europe, from War to Peace <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjL0nTyeR4o>
 - Video: A brief History of the European Union
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgnXwrsMBUs>
 - Dinan, Ch. 1
 - How did Europe construct its longest peacetime ever, Brussels Times
 - Schuman Declaration 70 years on, European Parliament
 - Nobel Peace Prize Awarded to the EU, BBC Report
 - Nobel Peace Prize Award Ceremony Speech
 - Extra Reading: McCormick, Ch. 3
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- 3 **Social Europe and Democracy Promotion:**
 The right to live, work, study, travel freely within the Union;
 Universal Health care/ Education/ Social Security / welfare state
 Protection of Human Rights / Gender Equality/ LBGT rights
- **Assignment: Watch videos and write a brief response paper discussing one of them**
- Video: What do Americans think of socialised medicine
 - Video: What does US healthcare look like from abroad?
 - Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, Europa.eu
 - Healthcare systems in the USA and Europe,
 - "The European Story", European Political Strategy Centre.
 - "Goals and Values of the EU", Europa.eu
 - "From Erasmus to Erasmus +: a Story of 30 years", Europa.eu
 - Borderless Europe: Seven Decades of Free Movement, Migration Policy Institute
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- 4 **Environment and Consumer Protection:** the EU in the forefront of international climate policies / 'European Green Deal'
- "EU Commission unveils Green Deal: Key Points" euractiv December 2019
 - "Here's how Europe plans to be the first carbon neutral continent", World Economic Forum, February 2020.
 - EU trumpets Green Deal as its "Man on the moon" moment, World Economic Forum, December 2019.
 - US cosmetics are full of chemicals banned by Europe-Why? The Guardian
 - The US lags behind the EU in food safety regulations
 - The American Food Supply: not fit for European consumption.
 - Why these food additives are banned in Europe but not in the USA.
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- 5 **Class Activity**
The concept of Europe: The American way vs the European way (Case studies including attitudes to government, gun culture, capital punishment, welfare state, gender equality).
- These are the Real Differences between Americans and Europeans (World Economic Forum)
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- 6 **Class Activity**
The concept of Europe (II): the American way vs the European way
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- 7 **Film Viewing:** "Where to Invade Next"
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- 8 **One Currency: Economic and Monetary Union and the Creation of the Euro**
- Video: History of the euro
 - Video: European Monetary Union Explained
 - Part I & Part II
 - Cini, Ch. 23
 - McCormick, Ch. 7 (pp.158-168)
 - Why was the euro created? (I. Chapple)
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- 9 **Solidarity: Surviving the eurozone crisis**
- Video: Imperfect Union: The Eurozone in Crisis
 - Video: Europe marks twentieth anniversary of the Euro
 - Cini, *European Union Politics*, Ch. 26 ("The Euro Crisis and European Integration")
 - Tsoukalis, *In Defense of Europe*, Ch. 3 ("Reality Strikes Back"), and Ch. 4 ("Whose Rules and whose Adjustment?")
 - The eurozone crisis by numbers (DW)
 - A very short history of the crisis (The Economist)
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- Staring into the abyss (Economist)
- What austerity looks like inside Greece (New Yorker)
- Austerity vs Democracy in Greece (Foreign Affairs)

II. New Challenges to Europe and European Cohesion

- 10 **Brexit, or the European Union without the UK**
Assignment: Watch two of the following videos and write a brief response paper discussing one of them
- Video: What led to Brexit?
 - Video: Aftershock of Brexit
 - Video: How Brexit changed Britain
 - Video: How Brexit is changing Europe
 - Cini, *European Union Politics*, Ch. 27 ("Brexit")
 - The roots of Euroscepticism (The Economist)
 - The start of the Breakup: Britain and Europe (The Economist)
 - Boris Johnson may have saved the EU (FT)
 - Economic implications of Brexit (Brookings Institution)
 - 10 key details in the UK-EU trade deal, Politico, December 27, 2020.
 - Optional Video: The inside story of how the Leave campaign won
 - Guest Speaker
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- 11 **Mid-term exam**
- 12 ***Class activity***
Ongoing Brexit Challenges: How is Brexit impacting these core issues?
- Ireland**
- Video: The invisible 310-mile barrier to a Brexit deal
 - Video: The Irish border: where Brexit meets reality
 - Brexit and Irish border (The Conversation)
 - What will happen to Northern Ireland after Brexit, The Independent, 23 December 2020.
 - Brexit has Northern Ireland's very future hanging in the balance, Newsweek, 15 December 2020.
 - Northern Ireland after Brexit: five prospects, Barron's, November 15, 2020.
 - How Brexiters are destabilizing Ireland's Fragile Peace (Carnegie Europe)
- Scotland**
- Video: Could Scotland back independence to stay in the EU?
 - Video: Nicola Sturgeon: Independence best for Scotland post-Brexit
 - The EU's Scottish question, European Policy Centre, 18 June 2019.
 - Brexit might break Britain: what will Scotland do? Foreign Policy, September 21, 2020
- The Next Generation**
- Video: Life after Brexit: the political awakening of British youth
 - Video: Brexit teens: Coming of age during political chaos
 - Video: Brexit blow for British Universities
 - Brexit and British youth (The Guardian)
- Should (could) Brexit be reversed??**
- Video: Brexit branded a huge mistake as protestors march in London to rejoin the EU
 - Video: Pro-EU supporters march for Britain to rejoin the EU
- The role of fake news in Brexit**
- Video: Facebook's Role in Brexit, and the Threat to Democracy
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- 13 **The Refugee Crisis and its impact on Europe and EU Policy**
Assignment: Watch "4.1 Miles" and write a brief response paper discussing it
- Video: 4.1 Miles
 - Video: Migrants flood Greek island of Lesbos
 - Desperate journeys / Refugee crisis in Europe (UNHCR)
 - 2015: The Year of Europe's Refugee Crisis (UNHCR)
 - Greece left alone in the Refugee Crisis (DW)
 - Greeks mourn hero of Aegean who saved thousands of refugees (Reuters)
 - Greece managed refugee crisis with dignity (ekathimerini)
 - How is the Migrant Crisis dividing EU countries? (BBC report)
 - Refugees at the Gate of Europe, Angeliki Dimitriadi
 - Is Migration Europe's Achilles Heel? Carnegie Europe
 - Europe's migration policies in crisis as arrivals surge (BBC Report)
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- 14 **The spectre of Terrorism in Europe**
Assignment: Watch the following videos and write a brief response paper discussing one of them
- Video: What's happening with terrorism in Europe
 - Video: Terrorist Attacks: Why France?
 - Video: Belgium, the fight against terror

- Charlie Hebdo Shooting, Paris 2015, Britannica
- Terrorism in Europe, Congressional Research Service, February 10, 2021
- The new normal (The Economist)
- These 5 facts explain why Europe is ground zero for terrorism (The Economist)
- Terrorist atrocities in Western Europe (Economist)
- Islamic terror could drive Europe into the arms of the far right
- Why Belgium is front line in war on terror (CNN)
- Terror in France reignites a national debate on right to offend, CNN report, October 30, 2020.

15 ***Class activity***

Rise of far-right / Authoritarianism and Democratic Backsliding in Europe

- The Antidemocratic Turn, Freedom House
- Populism is a symptom of real policy failure (Chatham house)
- Towards a New EU Democracy strategy (Carnegie Europe)
- Rising fear of terrorism pushes Europeans to rethink approach to right wing parties.
- The Rise of the Far Right (Harvard Political Review)
- The Rise of Europe’s antipopulists (Carnegie Europe)
- Countering a regressive and Illiberal Europe (EPC)
- From Sweden to Brexit, Immigration is the Issue dividing Europe (The Guardian)
- Migration and Security: Snapshots across a Divided Europe (euractiv)
- Democracy in Europe has declined (euronews)
- A new Wave of euroscepticism in the Heart of Europe

16 **Guest Speaker**

17 **DELPHI ECONOMIC FORUM**

**III. Europe and the World:
Alliances, Rivalries and New Geopolitical Linkages**

18 **Russia’s War in Ukraine: Background, Causes, Possible Outcomes**

Russia and Ukraine: The Tangled History that connects – and divides – them, Eve Conant, National Geographic, February 2022

Russia’s War in Ukraine: Identity, History and Conflict, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, April 2022

Was it inevitable? A short history of Russia’s war on Ukraine, Keith Gessen, The Guardian, March 2022

- The contribution of energy exports to the Russian budget, Eliamep Report

19 **Russia’s War in Ukraine: Impact on Europe and the Energy Crisis**

- Video: Lessons Learned from the war in Ukraine
- How much will Europe’s GDP fall if Russia cuts off gas supplies, Eliamep Report
- Food crisis: wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine, Eliamep Report
- Asymmetric trade and energy exposure of EU member states to Russia, Eliamep Report

20 ***Class Activity.***

UN Security Council Simulation: Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine

Student Teams Representing Russia, Ukraine, the European Union, and the United States (plus one Moderator)

21 **Western Balkans: so close and yet so far**

- The EU and the Western Balkans: Challenges Changing Shape, September 2020.
- The Western Balkans and Europe’s geopolitical challenges, Carnegie Europe, November 1, 2020.
- The Western Balkans, Geopolitical Intelligence Services
- Ritsa Panagiotou (2021): “The Western Balkans between Russia and the European Union: Perceptions, Reality and Impact on Enlargement” (2021): Journal of Contemporary European Studies
- Dimitar Bechev (2019): “Russia’s strategic interests and tools of influence in the Western Balkans”, Atlantic Council.
- Vaccination Geopolitics and the EU’s ailing credibility in the Western Balkans, Carnegie Europe, July 8, 2021

22 **Turkey at the gates**

- Video: EU leaders worried about human rights in Turkey
- Option for the EU-Turkey relationship, Carnegie Europe, May 3, 2019
- Turkey and Europe: Growing tensions and a Hot summer in the Mediterranean, European Council on Foreign Relations, 23 July 2020.
- Turkey’s neo-Ottoman designs knock on Europe’s door, Greek Reporter, May 20, 2021
- World Report 2022; Turkey Human Rights Watch
- Amnesty International, Human Rights in Turkey 2022
- Human Rights Watch reports Turkey’s alarming abuse against women, January 15, 2021.
- Turkey seeking better EU ties as journalists await prison (EUobserver)

23 **Student Final Group presentations**

24 **Student Final Group presentations**

25 **Final exam**

Books, Course Materials, Moodle

Core Readings:

Cini, Michelle (ed.) *European Union Politics*, Oxford University Press, 6th edition, 2019.

Tsoukalis, Loukas. *Europe's Coming of Age*, Oxford University Press, 2022.

Tsoukalis, Loukas. *In Defense of Europe: Can the European Project be Saved?* Oxford University Press, 2016.

Class handouts, including a broad compilation of current articles, surveys and reports concerning the crisis. All class handouts will be uploaded and available on Moodle.

Periodicals and Websites

Since the course will be closely following current events (literally day-to-day), reading daily/weekly online newspapers and magazines is **HIGHLY** recommended. Sources such as the BBC (<http://www.bbc.co.uk>), the Economist (<http://www.economist.com>), the Financial Times (<http://www.ft.com>), and the International Herald Tribune (<http://www.iht.com>) are particularly helpful.

A wide range of material on the EU is available on-line, and students are encouraged to consult the official EU website (Gateway to the EU: <http://europa.eu>) as part of their weekly preparation. Other websites with relevant material are <http://euobserver.com> and <http://www.euractiv.com/en>