Key Controversies in European Integration

EC: EU institutions and decision-making

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Office hours: *by appointment*	Class hours: *Thursday, 9:45-11:15*
Office: *online/after class*	Web: *moodle*

Course Description

Does the EU have a democratic deficit? Does it need - or will it have - a common army? Is Brexit good or bad for European integration? Are business lobbyists too powerful in Europe? Is the EU's agricultural policy as bad as its reputation? These and other questions are intensely debated among scholars, policymakers, as well as the wider public. In this course, we will use these 'key controversies in European integration' as a lens through which to look at the political science research on European integration. In other words, instead of talking about abstract theories or policy fields, we will - after having covered some foundations - try to better understand these important theories and policy fields through engaging with central debates in European integration.

Literature

The course reading will largely draw on Zimmermann, H. and Dür, A. (2021) Key controversies in European integration. London: Macmillan. Third Edition. I made sure the book is available online through the library, but to save you the trouble, I also uploaded the required chapters on moodle. If you're interested in buying the book, make sure to buy the *third* edition.

Learning Outcomes

The course aims to familiarize students with key debates on the merits and flaws of European integration. At the end of the course, students should be able to

- identify and describe the nature and dynamics of key controversies in European integration;

- summarize and critically assess central theoretical and empirical insights of the political science research on various aspects of these controversies;

- have the ability to independently formulate their own thoughts on and criticisms of different sides of key controversies of European integration.

Requirements

Students are required to attend classes and come prepared (i.e., having done and thought a bit about the readings). In addition, there will be three types of assignments that together make up the final grade.

- First, students need to deliver a very short presentation, either summarizing key points of the text (in Part I) or making the case for one side of a key controversy (in Part II). The point is *not* to comprehensively summarize the reading; this is usually boring for most people involved. Rather, it is to identify key points of the reading and spin them further, for example by connecting them to other things you've read, real-world examples, or something you've seen in the news recently. For the presentations in Part 2 it is particularly important to actually make the case for whichever side of a controversy you were assigned to - a bit like in a debating class.[1] Presentations can be really short, perhaps 4 and not longer than 6 minutes per person. It's more important that you independently think about the reading and about how to make it interesting for the class. For example, when we discuss whether the EU should have a common army, maybe you find a survey about what Europeans actually think about this topic. Students are required to kick off the discussion after their presentations. This can, for example, be a controversial claim or a discussion question (not too broad, not too specific). The

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[1]Practically, groups will be assigned to sessions and can then decide for themselves who wants to argue which side. For example, if there are two students assigned to a session, one will make a case for one side of a given controversy, and the other student will make the case for the other side.

presentation will make up *30%* of your grade. If the group is very large and there won't be enough presentation slots, there will be an alternative assignment in the form of a book review. The book should be a recent book (published in the last 1-2 years) and be clearly related to the themes of the course. The book review should be between 750-1000 words, briefly summarize the book, critically engage with its key arguments and/or situate them in broader academic or political debates.

- Second, there is a short exam towards the end of the seminar that tests whether students remember key arguments from the readings and the sessions. The test ensures that students actually do the readings and pay attention in class. It will consist of around 15 short questions, most of them in multiple choice format. The test will take place in the first 10-15 minutes of the last session. There will be a reading week before as well, so you'll have enough time over the break to go over slides and readings again. This will make up *20%* of your grade.

- Lastly, you need to write a relatively short term paper, which will make up *50%* of your grade. The term paper is actually a collection of two short papers of around 1000-1500 words each, held together by a short introduction. The two papers will focus on one key controversy of European integration (not necessarily one covered in the course). One paper is supposed to use the scientific (and policy) literature to make the case for one side of such a controversy (e.g. the Euro is good for Europe); the other paper is meant to take the opposing side on the *same controversy*. The idea is to encourage you to think as hard as you can about both sides of an issue, even if you have a personal preference. If you just make good arguments for your favored side, but bad ones for the 'other side', this will be reflected in your overall grade. The deadline for the term paper will be **Sunday, Feb 18 2024**.

Prerequisites

Students need no prior knowledge to successfully participate in this course - teaching you the basics of European integration is the whole point after all. A general interest in the topic, basic (!) English language skills, and a broad familiarity with the European Union are sufficient.

Course Policy

Basically, don't cheat and try to learn stuff, some more details follow below.

Grading Policy

You need to submit all the required assignments to pass the course. Your final grade will be the weighted average of these assignments. What is important to me when it comes to grading are two things. First, stick to the task at hand. If your presentation is meant to be 5 minutes, make it no more than 6. It's almost a dad thing to say, but these skills are important not just at a university, but pretty much everywhere you want to end up at. Second, put a bit of effort into it, or at least make it look that way. Have some decent formatting on papers, but also and more importantly: try to be clear and crisp, which is often harder than writing long and convoluted sentences. Try to prepare a presentation that you yourself would like to listen to. Short, simple points, and make it clear when you found something unclear. You don't need to understand everything, have read a ton of additional literature, or write in a fancy way to get a very good grade. Just stick to the task and try to make sense. I have also collected general advise for how to write a good term paper on my website - check it out if you want to improve your chances of getting a very good grade.

Feedback Policy

I want to give you as much feedback as you want - but I also don't want to waste my time writing more detailed feedback if you don't even care. So while by default you will only receive your grade, you can easily request written feedback by simply adding a brief note to your paper (e.g., 'I want to receive written feedback on this paper.').

E-mail Policy

You can always email me if you have an idea for a term paper, if you want to learn more about a certain topic and don't know where to start, or if you have a question that you really don't want to ask in class. Please don't email me with questions that you could easily find the answer to in the syllabus or in my previous emails. I might take it badly.

Attendance Policy

You are required to attend each session, and I encourage you to prepare for and actively participate in them. However, if you really can't make it, just reach out to me, these things happen once or twice a term.

A.I. Policy

I encourage you to use large language models like *ChatGPT* to improve, speed up, or challenge your writing (be that of text of code) - I regularly do so myself. However, not only do I expect you do make this use very (!) transparent. I also want you to reflect on two things: First, current large language models are not very useful if it's really important to get things right. If you see yourself working in an area where this matters, you will have to learn how to get things right. Second, current large language models are much more useful if you actually know what you're doing - much like a cheat code in a video game is much more useful to someone who is actually good at the game. So if you want to be augmented instead of replaced by large language models, keep learning stuff.

Course Outline

Week 1, October 12, 2023: Introduction

No readings for this session

Part I: Foundations

Week 2, October 19, 2023: The Institutions of the European Union

Lelieveldt, H. and Princen, S. (2011) The Politics of the European Union. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 51-78.

Week 3, November 9, 2023: Theories of EU Integration and Policymaking

Lelieveldt, H. and Princen, S. (2011) The Politics of the European Union. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 31-50.

Part II: Controversies

Week 4, November 16, 2023: Can there be a common European identity?

Zimmermann, H. and Dür, A. (2021) Key controversies in European integration. London: Macmillan, pp. 67-81.

Week 5, November 23, 2023: How democratic is the EU?

Zimmermann, H. and Dür, A. (2021) Key controversies in European integration. London: Macmillan, pp. 36-49.

Week 6, November 30, 2023: How much power for big business?

Zimmermann, H. and Dür, A. (2021) Key controversies in European integration. London: Macmillan, pp. 82-92.

Week 7, December 7, 2023: The Big Waste? The Common Agricultural Policy

Zimmermann, H. and Dür, A. (2021) Key controversies in European integration. London: Macmillan, pp. 123-137.

Week 8, December 14, 2023: Towards a Common European Army?

Zimmermann, H. and Dür, A. (2021) Key controversies in European integration. London: Macmillan, pp. 165-179.

Week 9, January 11, 2024

This will be a joint session with the EC: The EU and Global Governance. This session will take place online.

Week 10, January 18, 2024: Britain's Decision to Leave the EU: Good or Bad?

Zimmermann, H. and Dür, A. (2021) Key controversies in European integration. London: Macmillan, pp. 180-192.

Week 11, January 25, 2024: The European Union: Success or Failure?

In this session, we will have a short test on the readings and slides!

Zimmermann, H. and Dür, A. (2021) Key controversies in European integration. London: Macmillan, pp. 1-17.