

Key Controversies in European Integration

EC: EU institutions and decision-making

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Room: *Seminarraum 1 (S1), NIG 2. Stock A0228*

Class hours: *Thursday, 9:45-11:15*

Web: *moodle*

Course Description

Does the EU have a democratic deficit? Has the EU become too large? Is Brexit good or bad for European integration? Should the EU have a common army? 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

¹Practically, 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 **Friday, Aug 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. However, in exceptional circumstances, alternative assignments may be permitted as a substitute. Your final grade will be a weighted average of the above-described assignments. The grading scale used ranges from 0-100 points (used for all assignments). A passing grade requires you to obtain an weighted average of 61 points or higher. The grading scale translated into the university grading scale as follows:

- **91-100** = 1 (*very good*)
- **81-90** = 2 (*good*)
- **71-80** = 3 (*satisfactory*)
- **61-70** = 4 (*sufficient*)
- **< 61** = 5 (*not sufficient*)

Generally, 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. Detailed grading schemes for individual assignment types can be found at the end of the syllabus.

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. Two more things that make my life easier: First, please make sure to mention the course title in the subject line of your email. Second, please reply to previous email conversations with me instead of starting a new email, especially if it’s about the same topic.

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 or code) - I regularly do so myself. However, not only do I expect you do make this use very (!) transparent.² I also want you to reflect on three 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. Lastly, by routinely relying on AI shortcuts you relinquish, as English professor Thomas Pfau [puts](#) it, ‘the experience of intellectual achievement and growth, which can only ever be the fruit of *sustained* personal

²For example, if you used an LLM to help you rephrase a certain sentence, add a footnote saying something like ‘I used GPT-4 to help me improve the phrasing of this sentence.’ If you use an LLM to come up with potential criticisms of your main argument, add a footnote at the start of the paper where you briefly explain how you used this criticism to improve your paper.

effort'. Your time at university will become 'a relentless series of logistical challenges', rather than 'a process of learning and intellectual and personal growth'. So think very clearly about what you are giving up—and risking—when trying to save some time.

Course Outline

Week 1, March 7, 2024: Introduction

No readings for this session

Part I: Foundations

Week 2, March 14, 2024: 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, March 21, 2024: 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, April 11, 2024: 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, April 18, 2024: How democratic is the EU?

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

Week 6, April 25, 2024: How much power for big business?

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

Week 7, May 2, 2024: 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, May 16, 2024: Towards a Common European Army?

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

Week 9, May 23, 2024: Has EU Enlargement Gone Too Far?

Zimmermann, H. and Dür, A. (2021) Key controversies in European integration. London: Macmillan, pp. 151-164.

Week 10, June 6, 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, June 13, 2024:

Reading Week

Week 12, June 20, 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.

Detailed Grading Schemes³

Term paper

STRENGTH AND ORIGINALITY OF ARGUMENT

- **91-100:** *The argument is exceptionally clear, compelling, and thoroughly grounded in critical thinking, showcasing a high degree of originality. It demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the topic, integrating novel insights or approaches with persuasive and well-substantiated reasoning.*
- **81-90:** *The argument is strong and well-founded, displaying a good level of original thinking and critical engagement with the subject matter. It presents a coherent and convincing case, supported by evidence, with some innovative perspectives or methods.*
- **71-80:** *The work shows an adequate argument that is reasonably clear and supported, featuring some degree of originality. The argument has merit and is founded on appropriate reasoning, though it may occasionally lack depth or fail to fully persuade.*
- **61-70:** *There is an attempt at arguing a thesis, but the argument often lacks clarity, depth, and convincing evidence. Originality is limited, with the work showing minimal innovation in thought or approach. The argument is weak and not particularly persuasive.*
- **< 61:** *The argument is poorly structured, unclear, or largely absent, with no evidence of original thinking or critical engagement. It fails to make a convincing case, lacking both in strength and in the presentation of any novel insights or perspectives.*

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE ENGAGEMENT

- **91-100:** *Demonstrates an exceptional understanding and engagement with the theoretical framework and relevant literature. The research is characterized by extensive depth and breadth, critically engaging with a wide range of sources to offer new insights or interpretations. It reflects a sophisticated integration of theory with the research topic.*
- **81-90:** *Shows a thorough understanding of the theoretical framework with a very good engagement with pertinent literature. The research covers a broad spectrum of sources, providing a solid grounding in the field and contributing to the topic with some new perspectives or critical reflections.*

³It may be that not all of these categories apply (to the same extent) to each individual assignment. Moreover, specific aspects described in the Requirements section will be important above and beyond the general grading scheme outlined below. For example, in this course, the importance of a controversy framing or structure is an additional criterion that will affect your grade.

- **71-80:** *Provides an adequate review of the theoretical framework and engages reasonably with relevant literature. The research demonstrates a sufficient depth and breadth, identifying key theories and sources, though it may lack in offering substantial new insights or critical analysis.*
- **61-70:** *Exhibits a basic understanding of the theoretical framework with a limited engagement with relevant literature. The research scope is somewhat narrow, with gaps in the depth and breadth of literature reviewed, offering minimal new interpretations or critical engagement with existing theories.*
- **< 61:** *Shows poor understanding and engagement with the theoretical framework and literature. The research is significantly lacking in depth and breadth, with little to no critical engagement with relevant sources or theories, failing to adequately support or contextualize the research topic.*

METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

- **91-100:** *The methodology is excellently chosen, well-executed, and thoroughly justified, with empirical evidence used effectively to support the argument. Evidence is highly relevant, accurately interpreted, and integrated seamlessly into the research, enhancing the strength and credibility of the findings.*
- **81-90:** *The methodology is mostly appropriate and well-executed, with good use of empirical evidence that supports the main argument. While mostly relevant and well-integrated, there may be minor issues in execution or interpretation that do not significantly detract from the overall strength of the research.*
- **71-80:** *The methodology is adequate, with some issues in choice or execution. Empirical evidence is used, with some relevance and support for the argument, but the integration and interpretation of data could be improved to strengthen the research outcomes.*
- **61-70:** *The methodology shows a basic level of appropriateness and execution, but lacks in thoroughness or precision. Empirical evidence is present but limited or flawed, with issues in relevance or integration that weaken the argument and research findings.*
- **< 61:** *The methodology is poor or inappropriate, with significant flaws in execution. Empirical evidence is poorly used, irrelevant, or largely absent, offering little to no support for the argument or findings. This level reflects a fundamental misunderstanding or neglect of sound research practices.*

TOPICALITY AND ACADEMIC OR PRACTICAL RELEVANCE

- **91-100:** *The research is exceptionally topical, engaging deeply with current questions*

or themes within the field. It demonstrates a high degree of academic relevance, providing insightful analysis that could inform theoretical frameworks, discussions, or future research. The paper offers thoughtful reflections on potential practical insights or implications, acknowledging its broader significance without overemphasizing direct policy applications.

- **81-90:** Shows strong topicality and relevance, connecting well with contemporary scholarly debates or issues. It makes a notable academic contribution, with implications that suggest possible avenues for further investigation, theoretical development, or practical considerations in a more general sense. Practical insights are offered in a way that enriches the academic discourse.
- **71-80:** Adequately addresses current topics and demonstrates relevance to ongoing academic conversations. It offers some practical insights, presenting a grounded perspective on how the findings might be applied or considered in broader contexts. The paper contributes to academic understanding, albeit with more limited scope or depth.
- **61-70:** Exhibits basic engagement with topical issues, with some relevance to the academic field. It hints at practical insights or implications, though these are not fully developed or are only tangentially addressed. The work provides a modest contribution, with potential areas for further exploration identified but not deeply explored.
- **< 61:** Lacks significant topicality or relevance, with minimal engagement with current academic or practical concerns. The paper offers little in the way of practical insights, failing to connect findings to broader discussions, potential applications, or theoretical implications.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

- **91-100:** Excellently structured. Outstanding organization and clarity.
- **81-90:** Very well-structured. Good organization that supports content.
- **71-80:** Adequately structured. Generally clear with some organizational issues.
- **61-70:** Poorly structured. Some effort at organization but lacks clarity.
- **< 61:** Very poorly structured. Disorganized and difficult to follow.

WRITING QUALITY AND CLARITY⁴

- **91-100:** Exceptional writing. Fluent, clear, and elegant.
- **81-90:** Very good writing. Mostly clear with very few errors.

⁴I have also collected general advice 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.

- **71-80:** *Good writing. Generally clear but with some errors.*
- **61-70:** *Adequate writing. Understandable but often awkward and with noticeable errors.*
- **< 61:** *Poor writing. Frequent errors and difficult to understand.*

CITATION AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- **91-100:** *Perfect or near-perfect adherence to citation and formatting guidelines. High academic integrity.*
- **81-90:** *Minor errors in citation or formatting. Generally adheres to academic standards.*
- **71-80:** *Some errors in citation or formatting, but generally correct.*
- **61-700:** *Adequate adherence but with noticeable errors.*
- **< 61:** *Poor adherence to citation and formatting. Major errors or ethical issues.*

Presentation

CLARITY AND ORGANIZATION OF PRESENTATION

- **91-100:** *The presentation is exceptionally clear and well-organized, with a logical flow that enhances understanding. The speaker demonstrates outstanding command of the material, using visual aids effectively to underscore key points.*
- **81-90:** *The presentation is very clear and generally well-organized. The structure supports the content, and visual aids are used effectively to highlight important information.*
- **71-80:** *The presentation is clear with a reasonable structure. There may be some minor issues with the flow or effectiveness of visual aids, but these do not significantly detract from the overall understanding.*
- **61-700:** *The presentation has a basic level of clarity and organization, but lacks polish. Visual aids and the presentation's structure are adequate but could be improved to better support the content.*
- **< 61:** *The presentation lacks clarity and organization. The flow of information is difficult to follow, and visual aids are poorly utilized or detract from the content.*

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- **91-100:** *The speaker engages the audience exceptionally well, with excellent verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Questions are handled with insight and confidence.*
- **81-90:** *The speaker effectively engages the audience, with very good communication skills. Questions are answered competently, demonstrating a good understanding of the topic.*

- **71-80:** *The speaker shows adequate engagement with the audience and reasonable communication skills. Responses to questions indicate a fair understanding of the topic.*
- **61-700:** *The speaker's engagement with the audience and communication skills are basic. There are noticeable difficulties in effectively addressing questions or in maintaining audience interest.*
- **< 61:** *The speaker struggles significantly with audience engagement and communication. Questions are poorly addressed, indicating a lack of preparation or understanding.*

STRENGTH AND ORIGINALITY OF ARGUMENT

- **91-100:** *The argument presented is exceptionally clear, compelling, and original. It demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the topic, integrating novel insights with persuasive reasoning.*
- **81-90:** *The argument is strong and well-founded, with a good level of original thinking. It presents a coherent case, supported by evidence, with some innovative perspectives.*
- **71-80:** *The argument is adequate, reasonably clear, and supported. It features some degree of originality but may lack depth or full persuasiveness.*
- **61-700:** *The argument often lacks clarity, depth, and convincing evidence. Originality is limited, with minimal innovation in thought or approach.*
- **< 61:** *The argument is poorly structured, unclear, or largely absent, with no evidence of original thinking. It fails to make a convincing case.*

RELEVANCE AND ENGAGEMENT WITH LITERATURE

- **91-100:** *The presentation demonstrates an exceptional engagement with relevant literature and theoretical frameworks, situating the topic within broader scholarly debates effectively..*
- **81-90:** *Shows thorough engagement with pertinent literature, providing solid grounding in the field and contributing insights.*
- **71-80:** *Provides an adequate review of relevant literature, though it may lack substantial new insights or critical analysis.*
- **61-700:** *Exhibits a basic understanding and engagement with relevant literature but has gaps in depth and breadth.*
- **< 61:** *Shows poor understanding and engagement with the literature, significantly lacking in depth and breadth.*