

European Political Economy—An Integrated, Hands-on Introduction Using R

M5: European Union and Europeanisation

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Course Description

This course offers an *integrated* and *hands-on* introduction to European Political Economy (EPE) *and* R - no prior knowledge of either is required. EPE is a subfield of political science at the intersection of comparative and international political economy and European Union studies. R is a free and open-source programming language for statistical computing and graphics. The point behind teaching both in one course is to allow students to get the best of both worlds. On the one hand, they will get a good sense for how to actually do European political economy research: how to get data, how to bring them in the right shape, how to visualize them, and how to analyze them in basic ways. On the other hand, students will get a practical but also substantively interesting introduction to R. After basic introductions to both EPE and R, we will have 2 substantive blocks on the political economy of climate change and economic security respectively. In both blocks, we will first read general political economy scholarship, then discuss related work on the EU specifically, and finally, in third session, try to redo some of analyses in the papers in R or learn about new things in R using similar data or approaches. The goal is not full replication, but learning, *in principle*, how to get EPE data, transform them, and use them to address substantively important questions. The course concludes with a basic introduction to **Quarto** which helps prepare students for writing their final papers.

Learning Outcomes

The course aims to equip students with basic knowledge of EPE and R. At the end of the course, students should be able to

- describe and summarize key arguments and debates in EPE;
- understand basic concepts of data science and their implementation in the R tidyverse;
- critically assess key arguments from the substantive areas of EPE research covered in the course;
- apply insights from EPE and basic knowledge of R operations to develop and start answering research questions of their own.

Requirements

Students are required to attend classes and come prepared. Three assignments will make up their final grade (there will be no student presentations). The first assignment needs to be done by every student themselves, whereas the second and third assignment can also be done in groups of two.

- The first assignment consists of two in-depth response papers on two of the three main substantive sessions (week 3, week 5, week 8). These reflection papers should be between 600 and 800 words and will make up 20% of the overall grade. These response papers are not meant to be summaries of the texts. Instead, students should reflect on how the theories, arguments, or approaches discussed in the readings could inform their own final term paper.
- The second assignment consists of 3 short and basic coding tasks (week 4, week 7, week 10) that requires students to import, transform, and visualize data related to the various substantive areas we cover. This, too, will make up 20% of their overall grade. Assignments will be administered through Posit Cloud (formerly RStudio Cloud).
- The third assignment will be a final research paper that independently develops a EPE-related research questions and *starts* elaborating and answering it with data. Elaborating means that students use R to set up an empirical puzzle or potentially interesting question (e.g. by showing an interesting correlation or descriptive statistics). Answering means

using visualization, descriptive analysis, or basic inferential statistics to sketch an answer or possible ways of going about answering the question more systematically. The emphasis here is less on having a fully-fledged, well-polished final paper than on demonstrating that you have understood how one would could, in principle, go about developing, theoretically grounding, and answering a EPE-related research question. Ideally, you can build on your reflection papers and coding experience from the first two assignments; and perhaps you can even build on your research paper in your M.A. thesis. This final research paper will make up *60%* of your overall grade. It is meant to be between 4000-5000 words long (if you decide to write the paper with a fellow student, it should be between 7500-9000 words long). The deadline for the paper will be **Wednesday, Feb 19, 2025**.

Prerequisites

Students need only limited prior knowledge to successfully participate in this course: on the one hand, they should be familiar with basic (!) concepts of political science research; on the other hand, they should have, again, basic (!) knowledge of statistical concepts.

Students do **not** need any prior knowledge of R or programming. They should, however, have created a free account with [Posit Cloud](#). In addition, students are strongly encouraged to set up an R environment on their own computers. To do so, they need to install a recent version of R itself as well as a suitable IDE (integrated development environment). I recommend using RStudio Desktop. [This](#) guide walks you through these two steps and includes links to the most recent versions of both R and RStudio Desktop. If you have any problems, feel free to reach out to me.

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 and look at the syllabus to see what is actually expected from you; and 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 write a paper that you yourself would like to read. 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.

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 response paper/coding assignment/term 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.¹ 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 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.

¹For 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.

Course Outline

Week 1, October 10, 2024: Introduction

No readings for this session

Week 2, October 17, 2024: R: Setup & Basics

<https://education.rstudio.com/learn/beginner/>

Week 3, October 24, 2024: What is EPE?

Moschella, M., Quaglia, L., & Spendzharova, A. (2023). Introductory Chapter—European Political Economy: Mapping the Research Field. In M. Moschella, L. Quaglia, & A. Spendzharova (Eds.), European Political Economy: Theoretical Approaches and Policy Issues (pp. 1–22). Oxford University Press.

Copelovitch, M., & Walter, S. (2023). European Open Economy Politics. In M. Moschella, L. Quaglia, & A. Spendzharova (Eds.), European Political Economy: Theoretical Approaches and Policy Issues (pp. 25–46). Oxford University Press.

Johnston, A., & Regan, A. (2023). Growth Models and European Political Economy. In M. Moschella, L. Quaglia, & A. Spendzharova (Eds.), European Political Economy: Theoretical Approaches and Policy Issues (pp. 47–70). Oxford University Press.

Week 4, November 8, 2024: Introductory Workshop: Basics of Importing, Transforming, and Visualizing Data

This will be a 5 hour block session (13:15 bis 18:15) with a joint dinner after. It will take place in Hörsaal 3 (H3), NIG 2. Stock D0212

Week 5, November 14, 2024: Europe in a Geopolitical World

Lavery, S. (2024). Rebuilding the fortress? Europe in a changing world economy. *Review of International Political Economy*, 31(1), 330–353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2023.2211281>

McNamara, K. R. (2024). Transforming Europe? The EU's industrial policy and geopolitical turn. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 31(9), 2371–2396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2023.2230247>

Optional Readings:

Lavery, S., & Schmid, D. (2021). European Integration and the New Global Disorder *. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13184>

Posner, E. (2023). European Political Economy and Interdependence. In M. Moschella, L. Quaglia, & A. Spendzharova (Eds.), *European Political Economy: Theoretical Approaches and Policy Issues* (pp. 222–242). Oxford University Press.

Seidl, T., & Schmitz, L. (2024). Moving on to not fall behind? Technological sovereignty and the 'geo-dirigiste' turn in EU industrial policy. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 31(8), 2147–2174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2023.2248204>

Week 6, November 21, 2024: The (Geo-)Political Economy of Technological Sovereignty

Schneider, E. (2023). Germany's Industrial strategy 2030, EU competition policy and the Crisis of New Constitutionalism. (Geo-)political economy of a contested paradigm shift. *New Political Economy*, 28(2), 241–258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2022.2091535>

Week 7, November 28, 2024: The Return of EU Industrial Policy in Data

Di Carlo, D., Eisl, A., & Zurstrassen, D. (2024). Together we trade, divided we aid: EU industrial policy, state aid, and the loosening of the EU competition regime. In *Luiss Hub for New Industrial Policy and Economic Governance, EU Industrial Policy Report 2024* (pp. 54–80). https://leap.luiss.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/20240919_Luiss_Rapporto-LUHNIP_v6.pdf

Week 8, December 5, 2024: Political Economy of Climate Change

Aklin, M., & Mildenberger, M. (2020). Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change. *Global Environmental Politics*, 20(4), 4–27. https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00578

Meckling, J., & Nahm, J. (2022). Strategic State Capacity: How States Counter Opposition to Climate Policy. *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(3), 493–523. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140211024308>

Optional Readings:

Burns, C., & Carter, N. (2023). Environment. In M. Moschella, L. Quaglia, & A. Spendzharova (Eds.), *European Political Economy: Theoretical Approaches and Policy Issues* (pp. 262–283). Oxford University Press.

Colgan, J. D., Green, J. F., & Hale, T. N. (2021). Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change. *International Organization*, 75(2), 586–610. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000296>

Kupzok, N., & Nahm, J. (2024). The Decarbonization Bargain: How the Decarbonizable Sector Shapes Climate Politics. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/26frk>

Week 9, December 12, 2024: The Institutional Foundations of Strategic State Capacity

Finnegan, J. J. (2022). Institutions, Climate Change, and the Foundations of Long-Term Policymaking. *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(7), 1198–1235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140211047416>

Week 10, January 16, 2025: Green Growth Models

Nahm, J. (2022). Green Growth Models. In L. Baccaro, M. Blyth, & J. Pontusson (Eds.), *Diminishing returns: The new politics of growth and stagnation* (pp. 443–463). Oxford University Press.

Week 11, January 23, 2025: Introduction to Quarto

Optional Readings:

<https://quarto.org/docs/output-formats/pdf-basics.html>

<https://quarto.org/docs/output-formats/html-basics.html>

Detailed Grading Scheme—Term Paper²

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.*
- **71-80:** *Provides an adequate review of the theoretical framework and engages reasonably with relevant literature. The research demonstrates a sufficient depth and breadth, iden-*

²Specific aspects described in the Requirements section will be important above and beyond the general grading scheme outlined below. For example, in this course, an empirical focus is essential and methodological and research design considerations will therefore play a more important role.

tifying 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 CLARITY³

- **91-100:** Exceptional writing. Fluent, clear, and elegant.
- **81-90:** Very good writing. Mostly clear with very few errors.
- **71-80:** Good writing. Generally clear but with some errors.
- **61-70:** Adequate writing. Understandable but often awkward and with noticeable errors.

³I 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.

- **< 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.*
- **61-70:** *Adequate adherence but with noticeable errors.*
- **< 61:** *Poor adherence to citation and formatting. Major errors or ethical issues.*