The Twin Transitions: The EU's Climate and Digital Policies
Winter Semester 2023/2024

Timo Seidl

E-mail: timo.seidl@univie.ac.at

Office hours: *by appointment*

Office: *online/after class*

Room: *Hörsaal 1 (H1), NIG 2.Stock*

Class hours: *Thursday, 13:15-14:45*

Web: *moodle*

Course Description

Climate change and digitalization undoubtedly pose two of the most important challenges for the European Union. They will, as Commission President von der Leyen put it, "affect us all, wherever we live, whatever we do". Global warming is expected to cause (and is already causing) unprecedented disruptions to the earth's climate and may ultimately render parts of the globe inhospitable to human life. Digitalization, meanwhile, is transforming the ways we work, dwell, travel, consume, communicate, and inform ourselves; and promises - or threatens - to usher in even more fundamental changes. The EU has reacted to these challenges with a slew of policies and policy initiatives. The European Green Deal wants to make Europe climate neutral until 2050; the General Data Protection Regulation is meant to push back against 'surveillance capitalism' and make EU law the gold standard for data protection globally; and the Digital Services and Markets Acts are meant to rein in Big Tech. In this course, we will take a closer look at the EU's digital and environmental policies with a particular focus on the role of member states and especially Austria therein. After familiarizing ourselves with how the EU works, we will discuss recent political science research on the challenges of digitalization and climate change and on how the EU reacts to them. As part of this course, we will also visit the representation of the European Union in Austria to learn more about the multilevel dynamics of Austria in the European Union.

Learning Outcomes

The course aims to familiarize students with developments in the EU's climate and digital policy. At the end of the course, students should be able to

- identify and describe the nature of and policy dynamics of the 'twin transition';

- summarize and critically assess central theoretical and empirical insights of the political science research on the EU's digital and environmental policies;

- apply these insights to make sense of the politics of (EU) policymaking and the role of various political actors (including Austria) therein.

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 four types of assignments that together make up the final grade.

- First, for **one** sessions of their choosing, students need to write short response papers (half a page) that reflect on the readings. This will make up *10%* of their grade. The response papers are NOT meant to summarize the reading but pick up on of or two key arguments and critically reflect on them. This can be done by connecting them to other readings, recent events in the news, or by criticizing their assumptions or conclusions.

- 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 our last sessions - so you will have enough time to go over slides and readings again. This will make up *20%* of your grade.

- Third, students are required to deliver a very short input presentation (around 5 minutes) for **one** session as well as prepare one or several discussion points to kick off the discussion (e.g., questions, provocative arguments). This will also make up *20%* of their grade. Remember, the input presentation is not meant to be a comprehensive summary of the text (or the section of the text you were assigned within your presentation group). Rather, it is meant to pick up on key arguments, present and ideally discuss them critically, and connect them to real-world examples or theoretical debates.

And again, the presentations can be really short, they don't need to be (and shouldn't be) longer than 5 minutes per person. The goal is to not have more than 3 presentation per session. 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.

- Lastly, students need to write a relatively short term paper on a topic related to the course (2000-3000 words). This will make up *50%* of their grade. The paper can be theoretical or empirical and is meant to hone in on one particular question that the students can pick themselves (although they should briefly discuss this with me in advance). 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 strongly 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 to make 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

4

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, Oct 12, 2023: Introduction

No readings for this session

Part I: Foundations of EU Policymaking

Week 2, Oct 19, 2022: 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, Nov 9, 2022: 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.

Week 4, Nov 16, 2023: Visit of the Representation of the European Commission in Austria

Note: This will not take place in the seminar room but rather in the 'Haus der Europäischen Union' (Wipplingerstraße 35, A-1010 Wien)

Part III: Climate Policy

Week 5, Nov 23, 2023: Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma

Aklin, Michaël, and Matto Mildenberger. 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.

Optional Reading:

Cullenward, D., & Victor, D. G. (2020). Making climate policy work. Polity Press.

Week 6, Nov 30, 2023: Strategic State Capacities

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 Reading:

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

Meckling, J., Lipscy, P. Y., Finnegan, J. J., & Metz, F. (2022). Why nations lead or lag in energy transitions. Science, 378(6615), 31–33. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adc9973

Week 7, Dec 7, 2023: Green Industrial Policy

Allan, Bentley, Joanna I. Lewis, and Thomas Oatley. 2021. "Green Industrial Policy and the Global Transformation of Climate Politics." Global Environmental Politics 21 (4): 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00640.

Optional Reading:

European Commission. (2023). A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age. https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/COM_2023_62_2_EN_ACT_A%20Green%20Deal%20Industrial%20Plan%20for%20the%20Net-Zero%20Age.pdf

Rodrik, D. (2014). Green industrial policy. Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 30(3), 469–491. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxrep/gru025

Week 8, Dec 14, 2023: EU Mission Economy

Excerpts from Mazzucato, Mariana. 2021. Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism. London: Penguin Books.

Part II: Digital Policy

Week 9, Jan 11, 2024: The Politics of Data Protection

Jang, W., & Newman, A. L. (2022). Enforcing European Privacy Regulations from Below: Transnational Fire Alarms and the General Data Protection Regulation. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 60(2), 283–300. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13215

Optional Reading:

Kalyanpur, N. and Newman, A.L. (2019) 'The MNC-Coalition Paradox: Issue Salience, Foreign Firms and the General Data Protection Regulation', Journal of Common Market Studies, 57(3), pp. 448–467.

Week 10, Jan 18, 2024: Artificial Intelligence

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

Roberts, Huw, Josh Cowls, Emmie Hine, Francesca Mazzi, Andreas Tsamados, Mariarosaria Taddeo, and Luciano Floridi. 2021. "Achieving a 'Good AI Society': Comparing the Aims and Progress of the EU and the US." Science and Engineering Ethics 27(6): 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-021-00340-7.

Optional Reading:

Veale, M., Matus, K., & Gorwa, R. (2023). AI and Global Governance: Modalities, Rationales, Tensions. Annual Review of Law and Social Science, 19(1), annurev-lawsocsci-020223-040749. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-020223-040749

Week 11, Jan 27, 2024: Platform Governance

Gorwa, Robert. 2019. What Is Platform Governance? Information, Communication & Society 22(6): 854-871. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1573914.

Optional Reading:

Klonick, K. (2021, February 12). Inside the Making of Facebook's Supreme Court. The New Yorker. https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/inside-the-making-of-facebooks-supreme-court