



Universität zu Köln

Institutional Reform of the European Union

Winter Semester 2021/2022

Thursdays, 12:00 - 15:30 (see course outline for seminar dates)

First meeting on October 14

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Office Hours: by online appointment

1. Course Description

The European Union is in the midst of debating its future institutional setup. In order to involve citizens, civil society, as well as politicians, a “Conference on the Future of Europe” takes place in 2021 and 2022 with the aim of exploring options for reforms to the EU’s policies and institutions. This seminar provides a forum for critically reflecting upon various aspects of the EU’s institutional architecture and its reform options on the basis of empirical political science literature, including the role of the European Commission in law-making and as guardian of the treaties, the role of Spitzenkandidaten in European Parliament elections, the possibility of gender quotas, as well as options to deepen the EU via differentiated integration. Students will join a team and participate in seminar debates, arguing for or against particular reform proposals. In addition, participants of the seminar will jointly develop a survey questionnaire to measure citizens’ preferences on institutional reform proposals in the EU. Finally, the seminar will take place in the “NRW debattiert Europa” event and debate the future of the EU with other student teams. Students will complete the seminar by writing an final empirical paper related to political representation in the European Union.

2. Course Objectives

- Develop capacity to understand and critically reflect on the main debates related to the study of the EU’s institutional framework
- Develop oral presentation and debate skills
- Develop skills to work in a team
- Learn how to write an empirical research paper

3. Course Requirements

This is a highly interactive seminar. You need to be prepared to do the readings before class and regularly contribute to the debates when we meet. Master students will be evaluated on the basis of the following components:

1. Group project (30%)

Each student will be assigned to a team during the first meeting. Each team will consist of 3 members. The task will be to argue either for or against a pre-determined reform proposal. Your responsibility as a team is to prepare, in writing, three 7-minute speeches (approx. 1,000 words each) either for or against this proposal (depending on whether you are in the pro or contra group). The three speeches need to be cumulative and build upon each other. In other words, the first speech should make an opening argument, whereas the second should elaborate on some specific aspects or provide additional arguments, while the third one should make a convincing closing argument. Each team will debate with the opposing side in class in the following format: Speech 1 Pro, followed by speech 1 Contra, followed by speech 2 Pro, speech 2 Contra, speech 3 Pro, and speech 3 Contra. Each speech cannot last longer than seven minutes. Speakers 2 and 3 can (and should) also address any arguments made by the opposing side.

2. Constructive feedback on speeches (15%)

Each team will provide three specific arguments to improve the speeches of the other teams in writing after the specific debate.

3. Participation in NRW debattiert (15%)

After each debate, the class will vote for a winning team. The three teams with the most points will represent the class during the NRW debattiert event on January 20. All other course participants are expected to be present for this event and provide oral feedback to the team during the simulation day a week prior. Please note that the NRW debattiert event takes place in German (note: you do not need to speak German to take this class and you can receive full credit).

4. Final paper (40%)

Each student will write a final paper design (Master students, 5-10 pages, PhD students: 10-15 pages), to be handed in on **February 10**. You need to hand in a draft of two pages by December 2 and each student needs to sign up for an office hour appointment to discuss the research design thereafter. There are two options for the final paper:

Option 1: Research Design: The research design should outline an empirical study related to political representation in the EU. The research design should describe the your puzzle/research question, working hypotheses, and the methods and data you would use.

Option 2: Research Paper: The paper should implement an empirical study related to political representation in the EU using a quantitative research design with an existing dataset.

4. Course Material

Readings will be available as electronic articles through Ilias.

5. Course Outline

Session 1 **Introduction**

October 14, 12-15.30

Allocation of students to debate teams

Readings:

- [Joint Declaration on the Conference of the Future of Europe](#)
 - Tsebelis, George. 2012. “From the European Convention to the Lisbon Agreement and Beyond: A Veto Player Analysis” In Finke, König, Proksch, and Tsebelis: *Reforming the European Union: Realizing the Impossible*, Princeton University Press.
 - Devuyt, Youri. 2012. “The Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties” in Jones, Menon, and Weatherill (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*.
 - König, Thomas. 2018. “Still the century of intergovernmentalism? Partisan ideology, two-level bargains and technocratic governance in the post-Maastricht era.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(6), 1240-1262.
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Session 2 **The European Commission**

October 28, 12-15.30

Part 1: The role of the European Commission

12-13.30

Debate topic: “The European Commission should give up its monopoly on legislative initiative in favor of a stronger role as guardian of the treaties.” (Team 1: Pro, Team 2: Con)

Readings:

- Laloux, Thomas and Tom Delreux. 2021. “The origins of EU legislation: agenda-setting, intra-institutional decision-making or interinstitutional negotiations?”, *West European Politics*, 44:7, 1555-1576, DOI: 10.1080/01402382.2020.1836861
- Webb, Michael, Kreppel, Amie. 2021. “The European Parliament’s role as an informal EU agenda setter: The influence of own initiative reports.” *Public Admin.* 2021; 99: 304– 320. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12692>
- Closa C. “Institutional logics and the EU’s limited sanctioning capacity under Article 7 TEU.” *International Political Science Review*. April 2020. doi:10.1177/0192512120908323
- Kelemen, R. Daniel. 2020. “The European Union’ authoritarian equilibrium.” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(3), 481–499.

Session 2 **Part 2: Election of the European Commission President**
(cont.) 14-15.30

Debate topic: “The European Council should only be allowed to propose candidates for the presidency of the Commission who have previously been elected on a transnational list in the European elections.” (Team 3: Pro, Team 4: Con)

Readings:

- de Wilde, Pieter. 2020. “The fall of the Spitzenkandidaten: Political parties and conflict in the 2019 European elections.” In *Assessing the 2019 European Parliament Elections* (pp. 37-53). Routledge.
- Gattermann, Katjana and Franziska Marquart. 2020. “Do Spitzenkandidaten really make a difference? An experiment on the effectiveness of personalized European Parliament election campaigns”, *European Union Politics*, 21(4), pp. 612–633. doi: 10.1177/1465116520938148.
- Bol, D., Harfst, P., Blais, A., Golder, S. N., Laslier, J. F., Stephenson, L. B., and Van der Straeten, K. 2016. “Addressing Europe’s democratic deficit: An experimental evaluation of the pan-European district proposal.” *European Union Politics*, 17(4), 525-545.
- Duff, Andrew. 2021. “One is enough: the case for a single presidency of the European Union”. <https://www.friendsofeurope.org/insights/one-is-enough-the-case-for-a-single-presidency-of-the-european-union/>

Session 3 **Representation and Two-Speed Europe**
November 18, 12-15.30

Part 1: Women’s Representation in the EP
12-13.30

Debate topic: “European Parliament elections should be conducted as closed-list PR elections with a mandatory gender quota on each party list in each country.” (Team 5: Pro, Team 6: Con)

Readings:

- Fortin-Rittberger, Jessica, and Berthold Rittberger. 2014. “Do electoral rules matter? Explaining national differences in women’s representation in the European Parliament.” *European Union Politics*, 15(4), 496-520.
- Golder, S., Stephenson, L., Van der Straeten, K., Blais, A., Bol, D., Harfst, P., and Laslier, J. 2017. “Votes for Women: Electoral Systems and Support for Female Candidates.” *Politics and Gender*, 13(1), 107-131. doi:10.1017/S1743923X16000684
- Aldrich, Andrea, and William Daniel. 2020. “The Consequences of Quotas: Assessing the Effect of Varied Gender Quotas on Legislator Experience in the European Parliament.” *Politics and Gender*, 16(3), 738-767.

Part 2: Two-Speed Europe?

14-15.30

Debate topic: “Formats like the Weimar Triangle have had their day! Instead, the focus should be on a two-speed Europe – with Germany and France as the engine of integration.” (Team 7: Pro, Team 8: Con)

Readings:

- Heermann, M., and Leuffen, D. 2020. “No Representation without Integration! Why Differentiated Integration Challenges the Composition of the European Parliament.” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 58: 1016– 1033.
- Schimmelfennig, Frank. 2020. “The Conference on the Future of Europe and EU Reform: Limits of Differentiated Integration.” *European Papers-A Journal on Law and Integration*, 2020(2), 989-998.
- Winzen, Thomas. 2020. “Government Euroscepticism and differentiated integration.” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(12), pp.1819-1837.

Session 4 **Popular Support for EU Institutional Reforms**

December 2

12-15.30

During this session, we will develop a questionnaire for a conjoint survey experiment to measure citizen preferences for EU institutional reforms

Readings:

- Hahm, H., Hilpert, D., and König, T. 2020. “Institutional reform and public attitudes toward EU decision making.” *European Journal of Political Research*, 59(3), 599-623.
- Bansak, K., J. Hainmueller, D. Hopkins, and T.Yamamoto. 2019. “Conjoint Survey Experiments” in Druckman, James N., and Donald P. Green, eds. *Cambridge Handbook of Advances in Experimental Political Science*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Session 5 **Simulation of NRW debattiert Europa event**
January 13
12-15.30

Session 6 **NRW debattiert Europa event**
January 20
Location and time TBD (please reserve full day)

Session 7 **Conclusion**
January 27
12-13.30
