



# Institutional Reform of the European Union

Winter Semester 2022/2023

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Thursdays, 12:00 - 15:30 (Seminar room S100 (IBW building), see course outline for seminar dates)

First meeting on October 20

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Office Hours: by online appointment

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## 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” took place in 2021 and 2022 with the aim of exploring options for reforms to the EU’s policies and institutions. At the same time, the EU faces unprecedented challenges in view of Russia’s attack on Ukraine. 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 changing the rules to European elections, the possibility of gender quotas, as well as options for future enlargement and climate change policy. The seminar is interactive: students will join a team and participate in seminar debates, arguing for or against a particular reform proposal. 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 a short final paper related to politics 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 academic 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 (35%)

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. Each group will furthermore receive credits for participating with questions/interruptions in the other debates.

#### 2. Constructive feedback on speeches (15%)

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

#### 3. Participation in NRW debattiert (20%)

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 in Duisburg. The teams that will debate will prepare by simulating the debate one week prior in class. All \*other\* course participants will be assigned to one of the three teams and help re-write the speeches. Everyone is expected to participate in the NRW debate even itself. 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 (30%)

Each student will write a final paper (Master students, 5-10 pages), to be handed in on **February 10**. You need to hand in a draft of two pages by December 8 and each student needs to sign up for an office hour appointment to discuss the draft thereafter. There are two options for the final paper:

Option 1: Research Design: For first year students, I would strongly recommend this option. The research design should outline an empirical study related to politics in the EU. The research design should describe your puzzle/research question, working hypotheses, state of the art, and the methods and data you would collect and use. For instance, you could conceive of a research design which aims a replication and extension of one of the studies in the reading list (published in a peer-reviewed journal).

Option 2: Empirical Paper: If you have a dataset that you would like to analyze, your paper could implement an empirical study related to politics in the EU using a quantitative research design with this existing dataset. An actual replication and extension of an existing study is a possible option.

#### **4. Course Material**

Readings will be available as electronic articles through Ilias.

## 5. Course Outline

### Session 1 Introduction

October 20, 12:00-15:30

Allocation of students to debate teams

Readings:

- NRW debattiert Europa Competition Rules
  - [Final Report of the Conference of the Future of Europe, May 2022](#)
  - 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.
  - Devuyst, 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 Reforming European Elections

#### Part 1: Election of the European Commission President

November 3, 12:00-13:30

*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 1: Pro, Team 2: Con)*

Readings:

- [“Towards new rules for European elections?” , EP Briefing May 2022](#)
- 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.

## Part 2: Gender Equality in the EP

(cont.) 14-15.30

*Debate topic: “To achieve gender equality, women should occupy 50% of the seats in the European Parliament.” (Team 3: Pro, Team 4: Con)*

Readings:

- [“Towards new rules for European elections?”, EP Briefing May 2022](#)
  - 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.
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## Session 3 Institutional Reform and Policy Challenges

### Part 1: Future Enlargement

November 17, 12:00-13:30

*Debate topic: “Is there a need for a fast-track accession process for Ukraine?” (Team 5: Pro, Team 6: Con)*

Readings:

- R. Daniel Kelemen, Anand Menon, und Jonathan Slapin. 2014. “Wider and deeper? Enlargement and integration in the European Union”, *Journal of European Public Policy* 21(5)
  - Sara B. Hobolt .2014. “Ever closer or ever wider? Public attitudes towards further enlargement and integration in the European Union”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21:5, 664-680,
  - [“What prospect is there of Ukraine joining the EU?”, LSE Blogs](#)
  - [“Join forces: How to sustain public support for Ukraine’s EU accession”, ECFR](#)
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## Part 2: EU Competence for Climate Change Policy

(cont.) 14:00-15:30

*Debate topic: “In order to achieve its climate targets, the European Union should promote the expansion of nuclear energy in the member states.” (Team 7: Pro, Team 8: Con)*

Readings:

- Green peace: How Europe’s climate policy can survive the war in Ukraine
- EU Taxonomy: Commission presents Complementary Climate Delegated Act to accelerate decarbonisation, February 2022
- European Parliament debate on EU taxonomy (watch the debate with English interpretation here)
- Nuclear energy and climate change. Discussion paper, Scientists for Future

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## Session 4 Popular Support for EU Institutional Reforms

December 8, 12:00-15:30

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 19  
12-15.30

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Session 6 **NRW debattiert Europa event**  
January 26  
Duisburg (please reserve full day)

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Session 7 **Debate Debriefing and Conclusion**  
February 2  
12-13.30

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