



## **ECON/POL 331 - EUROPEAN UNION**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The aim of this interactive course is that on its completion students will have a much better understanding of the 'identity' and functioning of the EU both as a geographical regional polity and as an on-going process of political and economic integration with global significance. The complexity of the EU means it can be studied from a number of different perspectives. The course adopts a general *multidisciplinary* approach: historical, geographical and cultural aspects considered necessary accompaniments to the main politico-economic framework adopted.

After initially situating the students within the context of the present EU of 27 members, the course begins by offering the students an historical overview (both theoretical and empirical in nature) of the motives and often conflictual forces lying behind the creation and subsequent development of the EU, best reflected in the main treaties signed: Paris, Rome, SEA, Maastricht, etc. The decision-making procedure as embodied in the intricate institutional/legal framework of the EU is then analyzed, with special attention being paid to the Council, European Commission, European Parliament and European Court of Justice. The course will then study key common policy areas and their surrounding debates.

At the heart of the EU is the Single Market and its connected Competition Policy. As regional/global social forces push the *four freedoms* and deepen the process of economic integration (not without some resistance) pressure for Economic and Monetary Union increases. How and why the member states chose to abandon their currencies in favor of an untested common currency needs to be examined, as does the *euro's* effect on the region, and on the international monetary system in general (e.g. US\$).

But the EU claims to be more than just an 'economic club'; frequently stressing how its various collectively financed common policies have improved the quality of life of its citizens. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the most expensive of these, and the focus of much debate. Are the critics justified in their demand that it be dismantled? One of the biggest recipients of CAP money of the years has been Spain. The course analyses Spain's participation in the European integration process as well as profiling its contemporary economic, political and social situation.

The EU's place in the world is then addressed. While accepting the intrinsic interconnection of politics and economics the course will first consider Europe's foreign policy concerns, interests and responses to challenges arising in the globalized post-Cold War world before assessing the region's Common Commercial Policy with the rest of the world (e.g. the US, ACP Countries, China etc).

Recent Enlargement (2004/7) has posed many challenges for 'old' and 'young' members alike, requiring substantial economic and institutional reform and accompanied by debates on efficiency, democracy, equality and identity, intensified even further with the potential future incorporation of that eternal 'bridesmaid', Turkey.

### **MATERIALS**

- McCormick, John, *Understanding the European Union: a Concise Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2005).

- Wallace, H; Wallace, W & Pollack, M (Eds): *Policy-making in the European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.
- Official EU Documents
- Real Instituto Elcano Reports
- Press Articles: Economist, Financial Times, New York Times

## **PROGRAMME OVERVIEW**

### **1. Evolution of the EU I: Early Integration**

- Post-War/Cold War context; European Coal & Steel Community; European Defense Community

### **2. Evolution of the EU II: Key Treaties**

- EEC; EFTA; 1960s/70s; SEA; Maastricht; EEA; Amsterdam etc; Constitution; Integration stages

### **3. Institutional Framework I: Decision-making**

- European Commission; Council; European Council; European Parliament; ECJ; Others

### **4. Institutional Framework I: EU Law**

- Unique aspects; Sources; Legislative Process; Case-law; Democratic Deficit; Multi-speeding

### **5. Economic & Monetary Union**

- Single Market & its Effects; Road to EMU; Single Currency; Convergence Criteria; Membership

### **6. The Euro**

- Functioning; Eurozone Management; ECB; Stability & Growth Pact; Global Player; Challenges

### **7. Competition Policy**

- Justification; Legislation; Role of Commission; Mergers; Liberalization; Cases; Global relevance

### **8. Common Agricultural Policy**

- Creation & Objectives; Financing; Effects; CAP in Global Trade; Attempts at Reform; Future

### **9. Spain and the European Union**

- History; Economic/Political Profile; 'Europeanization'/Role in EU; National Debates; Prospects

### **10. Foreign Policy Issues**

- Foreign & Security Policy; EU-US Relations; NATO; Russia; Middle East; Terrorism

### **11. External Economic Relations**

- Global Player; Common Commercial Policy; WTO; EU-US Relations; EU-ACP Relations; China

### **12. Enlargement**

- Candidate Economies; Negotiation Process; Copenhagen Criteria; Shock Therapy; Challenges for Candidates; Costs/Benefits for EU; Pending Issues for New Members; Future; Turkey

## **WEBS**

- [www.europa.eu.int](http://www.europa.eu.int) - EU web-page - history, policies, legislation, statistics, decisions,
- [www.eurunion.org/infores/euguide/euguide.htm](http://www.eurunion.org/infores/euguide/euguide.htm) - The EU: a Guide for Americans
- [www.consilium.europa.eu/](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/) - Council web-page
- [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com) - Analytical articles on world economic/political affairs

- [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com) - EU & World news, economy, country profiles, corporate activities, shares
- [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk) – UK daily, broad range of on-line national/international news articles
- [www.jeanmonnetprogram.org](http://www.jeanmonnetprogram.org) - Selection of EU law & politics articles
- [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) - World news, critical editorials
- [www.realinstitutoelcano.org/default\\_eng.asp](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/default_eng.asp) - Real Instituto Elcano - Spain, IR, politics articles
- [www.uaces.org/JCMS.htm](http://www.uaces.org/JCMS.htm) - Essays/articles on wide-covering EU issues