



UNIVERSITÀ  
CATTOLICA  
del Sacro Cuore



**Ramon Llull University, IQS School of Management - Barcelona  
Catholic University of the Sacred Heart - Milan  
Franklin University Switzerland - Lugano  
Forum-Nexus Program  
Undergraduate Division**

### Course Syllabus

**POL 375-01  
Understanding Europe and the European Union: Multidisciplinary  
perspectives with an emphasis on political issues**

#### Introduction

Comprising 27 countries with a combined population of 450 million people, the European Union generates about one third of the world's economic output. The EU today constitutes a highly complex supra-governmental organization, with its own institutions and a complex policy-making system. Facing tremendous challenges brought about by the integration of a large number of new members, capitalizing on opportunities stemming from economic integration, and being an emerging force in international politics, the European Union is a uniquely important topic for students of all majors.

#### Course Description

This course provides an overview of the history, evolution, and current challenges facing the European Union, with an emphasis on political issues. It focuses on the economic and political rationale for closer integration, on the difficulties of reconciling sharply different cultural, legal, and political traditions, on the stresses caused by immigration and enlargement, and on the recent challenges presented by the global economic and financial crisis.

#### Course Objectives

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the European Union and how and why it was formed
2. Identify countries that are members of the European Union, their geographical location, their capital city, and their impact on the EU as a whole
3. Be familiar with key historical events and important leaders in Europe's history
4. Understand the political, social, economic, and cultural environments and characteristics of the main EU members
5. Recognize prominent international organizations and the role they play in Europe
6. Demonstrate familiarity with current events affecting Europe, especially those related to political issues

## **Course Requirements**

The course requires active student participation. Students are expected to read the required materials before every class. Punctual attendance is required. There will be a midterm exam, a final exam, a team project, and a final presentation. Each student is required to participate in professional visits and cultural visits, as well as the International IQ Seminar.

## **Teaching Procedures and Methodology**

Teaching methods used in this course include lectures, discussions, assignments, and professional and cultural visits. Learning in this course requires the student's constructive participation and active involvement in both class discussions and small group discussions. The professional visits will expose the participants to different aspects of the class and will highlight the practical relevance of the concepts learned. Cultural visits enhance the students' understanding of the history and culture of the country.

## **Attendance Policy**

Students are permitted to miss class only once, due to illness, injury, or another appropriate reason. Missing more than once may result in a letter grade deduction for every additional absence.

## **Participation in "Europe Today: An International IQ Seminar"**

All students also attend **Europe Today: An International IQ Seminar**, a daily session conducted by the Program Director, Dr. Hugo Hervitz. In this seminar, students learn about the culture of each country, gain an understanding of essential European geography and current events, discuss their experiences and cross-cultural interactions, get language tips, and identify ways to have an even more immersive study abroad experience. The material covered in the seminar complements the syllabus for this course, and there will be some exam questions based on the seminar. Participation in the International IQ Seminar is factored into the grade for this course.

## **Required Textbook**

### **Understanding the European Union: A Concise Introduction**

by John McCormick

8<sup>th</sup> Edition

Kindle Edition recommended

Red Globe Press, 2020

## **Additional Readings**

Additional articles from a number of sources covering current European issues will be distributed by the instructor throughout the course.

## **Assignments**

### **Team Project**

Working in teams, students will select a topic related to a current political issue in the European Union. The selected topic must be approved by the instructor. The team project will consist of an in-depth review of the selected topic, recorded in a final project paper.

The paper should be 10-15 pages in length, double-spaced, size 12 font, and include a list of references used.

It is recommended for the project to include a **field work** component. Group members may seek opportunities to chat with or interview local residents that you interact with during your time in Europe, such as hotel personnel, taxi drivers, restaurant staff, students, etc. In a diplomatic and non-adversarial way, try to gauge their opinions on the main issues related to your chosen topic.

### **PowerPoint Presentation**

Each team will also present their project in a visual format (PowerPoint or other). In your presentation, include slides about each section, explaining your selected topic. Plan for your presentation to last 10-15 minutes.

### **Components of Final Grade**

Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	30%
Team project	20%
Presentations	10%
Class participation	10%
International IQ Seminar	10%

### **Grading Scale**

93-100 %	A
90-92.9 %	A-
87-89.9 %	B+
83-86.9 %	B
80-82.9 %	B-
77-79.9 %	C+
73-76.9 %	C
70-72.9%	C-
67-69.9 %	D+
63-66.9 %	D
60-62.9 %	D-
Below 60 %	F

### **Course Outline**

#### **Module 1: Introduction to Europe and the European Union**

- Essentials of European geography
- Essentials of European history
- What is the European Union?
- European Union members and prominent non-members
- Compare and define “Europe”, “EU”, and “Eurozone”

#### **Module 2: Introduction to Italy and Italy within the context of the EU**

- Historical overview of Italy
- Art and architecture in Italy
- The social and cultural environment in Italy

- The political environment in Italy
- The economic environment in Italy
- Business environments in Italy
- Italian attitudes towards the EU

### **Module 3: Evolution of the European Union**

- Postwar Europe
- First steps toward integration (1948-55)
- The European Economic Community (1955-86)
- Focus on the single market (1986-92)
- From Community to Union (1992-2003)
- The era of crisis (2003-)

### **Module 4: The European Institutions**

- A constitution for Europe
- The European Council
- The European Commission
- The Council of the EU
- The European Parliament
- The European Court of Justice

### **Module 5: Introduction to France and Germany within the context of the EU**

- Historical overview
- The social and cultural environment
- The political environment
- The economic environment
- Business environments

### **Module 6: Current Issues in the EU**

- The EU handling of the Covid-19 pandemic
- The EU handling of the war in Ukraine
- Financial issues: The Euro-crisis
- Social issues: Immigration
- Political issues: Foreign Policy
- Business issues: Trade and Globalization
- The lessons learned from Brexit

### **Module 7: The Future of the European Union**

- Social and cultural outlook
- Political outlook
- Economic outlook
- Business outlook

### **Schedule of Classes and Visits**

The detailed schedule of classes, professional visits, and suggested cultural visits for each session will be available online at [www.forum-nexus.com/schedules](http://www.forum-nexus.com/schedules).

Please note that this course will be offered as a Section 01 class.

## **Academic Integrity**

Ramon Llull University, Franklin University Switzerland, and the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart place a high value on the integrity, good conduct, and academic honesty of all students. Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity at all times. Any instance of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a grade of F for the course.