



UNIVERSITÀ  
CATTOLICA  
del Sacro Cuore



**Franklin University Switzerland  
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore  
Forum-Nexus Program  
Course Syllabus**

**Understanding Europe and the European Union:  
A Political Approach**

**Course Description**

This course provides an overview of European institutions, culture, and history, with a particular emphasis on the countries of Spain, Italy, France, Netherlands, and Greece. It starts from the simple premise that one cannot understand Europe today without studying its history. This is not done just for the erudite pleasure of studying history, but because this history is still alive and impactful, it has fundamentally shaped the institutions and cultures of Europe today.

Ever since the fall of Rome, Europeans have tried to unite the continent under a single banner, forming a political community and a common culture, and today's European Union is just the newest attempt. Europe has its own identity, that is both grounded in the past, but profoundly malleable and adaptive. This course proposes a division of the class into a first half dedicated to understanding the functioning of the European Union and its institutions and the general history of the continent. After the midterm, the course will then look at thematic issues facing Europe and Europeans today, from federalism, to Brexit, to immigration and the rise of illiberal democracy, to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Students should gain appreciation for the complicated question of "What does it mean to be European?"

**Learning Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, students will understand:

- the overall arc of European history, from the Classical Period to the contemporary period
- how these events shaped the issues and debates that the continent faces today.
- the history of European integration and the basic structures of EU institutions
- the debate over federalism in the EU.
- the importance of economics in tying together the EU.

- the place of Europe in the world.
- the impact of Immigration and its relationship with Europe's colonial past.
- the rise of the far right and illiberal democracy.
- the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

### **Course Requirements**

The course requires active student participation in class discussions. Students are expected to read the required articles and material before every class. Punctual attendance is required. There will be a midterm exam, a final exam, and a group PowerPoint presentation. Each student is required to participate in all professional visits and eight independent cultural visits (ICVs).

Teaching methods used in this course include lectures, discussions, field activities, and professional visits. Learning in this course requires the student's constructive participation and active involvement in both class discussions and small group discussions. Small group discussions in particular are a key mechanism for facilitating learning from other team members. Thus, it is essential to attend all group activities inside and outside classes. The professional visits will expose the participants to different aspects of the class and will highlight the practical relevance of the concepts learned. The visits will be accompanied by individual or group assignments. Cultural visits enhance the students' understanding of the history and culture of each country.

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

All students also attend **Europe Today: An International IQ Seminar**, a daily session with occasional distinguished guest lectures. 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. Knowledge from and participation in the International IQ Seminar is factored into the grade for this course.

### **Assignments & Grading**

Students will be evaluated with a midterm and a final exam that will be based on a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The basis for these exams will be material covered in class, as well as the readings. Relevant material from the International IQ seminar may be included.

Students will make a group presentation that takes one of the thematic issues examined at the end of the course and makes an in depth analysis of the issue. They will explain the historical roots of this issue, why it is important to understanding Europe today, and evaluate how the European Union is addressing this issue. The presentations can be done in groups, and should

last 10-15 minutes. After their presentations, students will handwrite, in class, a report summarizing their presentation and research findings.

Active and engaged participation in class is necessary to succeed in this course. This requires solid attendance as well as active participation in class discussions. Students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings, and ready to discuss in a respectful, collegial manner with their peers.

### **Components of Final Grade**

Midterm Exam	35%
Final Exam	35%
Group Project	20%
Class Participation	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

### **Required Textbooks and Readings**

Black, Jeremy. 2021. *A History of Europe : From Pre-History to the 21st Century*. London: Sirius International Editions (2021). ([kindle Amazon US](#))

Usherwood, Simon McDougall, and John Pinder. 2018. *The European Union : A Very Short Introduction*. Fourth edition. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press ([kindle Amazon US](#))

The professor will share other shorter readings with students for specific classes as needed.

### **Course Outline**

Class	TOPIC
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Module 1	What even is Europe, anyway? : An Introduction to the EU and its institutions <i>Reading Assignment: Black, Introduction &amp; VSI Ch 1, Ch 3</i>
Module 2	The French Revolution & the Dawn of Modern Europe <i>Reading Assignment: Black, Ch 6-7</i>
Module 3	The Birth of Modern Politics: Liberalism, Conservatism, and Socialism in 19th Century Europe <i>Reading Assignment: Black, Ch6</i>
Module 4	Nationalism and Empire: 1848-1918 <i>Reading Assignment: Black, Ch 8</i>
Module 5	Age of Anxiety and Mental Breakdown: 1918-1945 <i>Reading Assignment: Black, Ch 8</i>
Module 6	Cold War and the beginning of the EU: 1945-2023 <i>Reading Assignment: Black, Ch 9, VSI Ch 2 &amp; 4</i>
Module 7	Project Europe: Triumphs and Challenges in the Construction of a European Community <i>Reading Assignment: VSI, Ch 11 &amp; George Steiner "The Idea of Europe" (<a href="#">link</a>)</i>
Module 8	Legal and Economic Frameworks in the EU: The ties that bind <i>Reading Assignment: VSI, Ch 4, 5, 6</i>
Module 9	The United States of Europe? Federalism, Confederation, and Identity <i>Reading Assignment: VSI, Ch 7</i>
Module 10	Europe as a World Power: Influence via regulation & market access, as seen in climate regulation, consumer protections & digitization <i>Reading Assignment: VSI Ch 7-10</i>
Module 11	What place for Nationalism in Europe?: Immigration, the complicated inheritance of Colonial Empires, The Rise of the Far Right, and Illiberal Democracy
Module 12	Russian Imperialism: The Long Roots of the Ukrainian Invasion <i>Reading Assignment: Plochy Article (<a href="#">link</a>)</i>

### **Course Bibliography**

Tim Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648-1815*  
Charles Briggs, *The Body Broken: Medieval Europe 1300-1520*  
Peter Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity*  
William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*  
Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of Third Reich*  
David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*  
Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*

Ian Kershaw, *Roller-Coaster: Europe 1950-2017*

Brigitte Leucht, Katja Seidel & Laurent Warlouzet, eds., *Reinventing Europe: The History of the European Union, 1945 to the present*

Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations*

Charles Naurert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*

Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment*

Kiran Klaus Patel, *Project Europe: A History*

Serhii Plokyh, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*

Simon Price and Peter Thonemann, *The Birth of Classical Europe: A History from Troy to Augustine*

Barbara H Rosenwein, *A Short History of the Middle Ages*

Guido Ruggiero, *Renaissance in Italy: Social and Cultural History of the Rinascimento*

Laurent Warlouzet, *Europe contre Europe: Entre Liberté, Solidarité, et Puissance*

Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy*

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is a critical component of this course. Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions throughout the program. Excused absences are granted only under specific circumstances: documented illness, physical injury requiring medical attention, or other situations that Forum-Nexus staff determine to be valid and appropriate reasons for missing class. Any unexcused absence will lead to a reduction to the overall grade.

### **Academic Integrity**

Franklin University Switzerland, and Università Cattolica 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.

### **AI Policy**

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, Grammarly, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your creative ideas for specific writing assignments;
- Finding information on relevant topics related to the course;
- Checking spelling on your writing assignments and presentations.

The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Generating a draft of your writing assignments and final presentation.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or responses to complete class assignments.

In sum, any content that you hand in must not be generated by AI software, but it has to represent your intellectual contribution. Unauthorized use of artificial intelligence tools to write

your paper or disguise plagiarized work is considered unauthorized assistance in this course and will result in a failing grade on the assignment.