

POLI 321: EUROPEAN UNION

Fall 2026: T/Th 2:25-4:05

Steele Hall 219

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Office Hours: T/Th 11:30 – 12:30 or by appointment

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The European Union (EU) has developed in fits and starts over the last 50 years, resulting in a complex decision-making network that balances the interests of the individual member states and the European-level institutions tasked with accomplishing the objectives of European integration. There are two primary objectives in this course: to learn about the history and decision-making institutions of the EU and to prepare for a simulation of EU politics with students from around a dozen other colleges and universities in this region. Course readings, lectures and discussions will provide background on the history, institutions and decision-making processes of the EU. Assigned projects will provide additional knowledge about the specific policy areas and issues under the EU's jurisdiction. We will then assume the roles of decision-making actors in the EU for a three-day simulation in Washington D.C. from November 12-14, 2026. We will depart campus early on Thursday morning and return on Saturday night. This simulation offers an excellent opportunity to apply our studies and develop a better understanding of the EU. **Note that participating in the simulation is a requirement to receive credit for this course.** Please let me know ASAP if you require a letter excusing you from other classes on those dates.

Required Text:

Cini, Michelle. 2022. *European Union Politics* (7th edition). Oxford University Press.

Assessment:

- 10% - class attendance and participation
- 10% - country profile paper
- 10% - alter ego paper
- 15% - simulation speech, participation in EU simulation, and debriefing paper
- 15% - quizzes
- 25% - mid-term examination
- 15% - policy area summary paper & presentation

Grading Scale:

The numerical equivalents of the letter grades are:

A+ = 98%-100%	C+ = 78%-80%	F = 60% or below
A = 93%-98%	C = 73%-78%	
A- = 90%-93%	C- = 70%-73%	
B+ = 88%-90%	D+ = 68%-70%	
B = 83%-88%	D = 63%-68%	
B- = 80%-83%	D- = 60%-63%	

Country Profile:

The paper must be 4-5 pages with double spacing and normal margins (meaning 1 inch on each side of the text). This is the profile of the country you will represent at the conference.

Part I: Background

You should describe your country. What is the structure of the state? Is it a federal state or a centralized state? How much power is decentralized to local or regional governments? What are the demographics of its population? Is the country comprised 100% of native citizens or does it have a large migrant population? What social tensions exist in the country? What is the status of the economy? Is it growing or stagnant? Is it agriculturally-based or services-based? You may even comment on popular foods and customs, if you like. However, keep in mind that this is not a tourist brochure.

Part II: International Relations and EU Objectives

Who are your neighbors? How does your country relate with its neighbors? Does it have good relations or tensions? Does it cooperate with its neighbors in any form of partnerships outside of the EU? What are its goals in the EU? What does it hope to gain from EU membership? Please, be specific. Every country hopes to prosper economically in the EU. Does your country hope to gain from agricultural subsidies? Does it gain security? Does it gain from open borders for investment and capital?

Part III: Conclusions

Provide your thoughts on the country. What do you think it can achieve in the EU? Where do you think it is going in the future? What hopes would you have for the country, if you were actually a native?

Rubric: This paper will be scored according to the following rubric: 45 points for part I, 15 points for part II, 15 points for part III, and 25 points for overall quality of writing.

Alter Ego:

The paper must be 4-5 pages with double-spacing and normal margins (one inch of white space on each side of the text). This is the profile of the position you will fill at the conference.

Part I: Position

You should focus on the powers and responsibilities of the position. You should provide an institutional description of how your position interacts with other individuals in the member state and at the EU. For instance, if you are Foreign Minister, what is your relationship with the President and the EU Commissioner? This should not focus on the particular personalities, but the institutional division of power. You should focus on the interests of your position. Are you intergovernmentalist or supranationalist? What are your likely goals in EU decision-making? If you are a Member of the European Parliament, what are your functions and responsibilities and what is the purpose of the committee on which you sit?

Part II: Personality

You should profile the actual personality that you will likely model. So, if you are the German Chancellor, you should profile Angela Merkel: her personality, her interests and her goals in the EU. If you are a Member of the European Parliament and cannot find information on your person, then look more closely at their national party and political group and profile those organizations.

Part III: Conclusions

You should provide your thoughts on both the position and the person. Is the position invested with broad powers or does the leader have to share authority? Is your person important to EU decision-making? The answers to these questions may lie in the formal distribution of powers (such as those outlined in the Constitution) or an understanding of the informal political realities in the Netherlands today. You should also conclude by stating your person's position on different parts of the topic or (if you have it) the proposal.

Rubric: This paper will be scored according to the following rubric: 45 points for part I, 15 points for part II, 15 points for part III, and 25 points for overall quality of writing.

Speech:

You should prepare a 1-page, single-spaced speech that you can deliver at the appropriate time within your governing body. You should choose a part of the proposal that is relevant to your alter ego, to your country, to your party, or in which you have a personal interest. The speech should detail your position and give other representatives in the room a reason to support your position. In other words, do not just state why you or your country support a position – try to think of reasons that other countries or other individuals should as well and persuade them of it within the speech.

Debrief Paper:

You should write a 1-2 page, double-spaced paper that reflects on your experience at the simulation. In the first part of the paper, describe what happened in your Council or committee and the simulation. In the second part of the paper, explain what you learned, if anything, from the simulation. What content from the course was emphasized within the simulation? On what topic(s) do you feel more knowledgeable because of your participation. In the third part of the paper, you should offer any suggestions you might have for revising or improving on the

simulation experience. You may also write about what you think is most valuable and what should be kept as part of the simulation experience.

Policy Area Paper and Presentation:

At the end of the semester, you will be assigned to groups and the group will research a pre-selected policy area, write a paper, and offer a presentation to the class. One grade will be assigned to the group for the paper and a second grade for the presentation. If you have problems with this, in principle or because of your specific group, please come and see me.

Paper: The paper should be 8-10 pages with double-spacing and normal margins (one inch of white space on each side of the text). You can draw information and material from the Cini textbook, but you must use at least 3 other academic or professional sources of information on your policy area. These sources cannot include media stories or popular Internet sites. Please ask if you have any questions about whether a particular source is acceptable.

The policy summary should address the history of the policy area. When did it fall in the EU's policy domain? Have the EU's powers in the area expanded over the years? If so, why and how? The summary should then address the specifics of the EU's current role in the policy area. Does the EU exclusively control the policy area or share competences with the member states? What legislation has the EU passed recently and what proposals are being considering now? The summary should provide examples of current policies and it should predict likely future policies. The paper will be due the day of your scheduled presentation.

Presentation: You will summarize the policy area to the class. You should prepare a presentation with some sort of audio-visual aid (in addition to PowerPoint if you choose to use that program). Your presentation must last for 40-45 minutes. You will then take questions from the class for 10 minutes.

Rubric: The paper and presentation will be graded separately, but each will be graded according to the following rubric: 50 points for the history of the policy area, 25 points for the description of what is currently happening in the policy area, and 25 points for the overall quality of writing/presenting.

Course Policies:

This course requires you to attend the European Union Mid-Atlantic Model EU simulation, which takes place in Washington, D.C. You must contact your other professors ASAP to request permission to miss their classes during this time and to make arrangements to make up any missed work for those classes. SU will cover the costs of transportation, hotel rooms and two evening meals during the simulation. Individual students are responsible for covering the costs (maximum \$100.00) of all other meals and incidentals.

You must stay informed of current events in the EU to perform well in the course and at the conference. The best source is the daily newspaper, the Financial Times. You can subscribe to

the newspaper, at a heavily discounted rate, for the semester. You can also read the Financial Times website at www.ft.com A fantastic site to research the policy stances of particular countries is European Business News Online at www.eubusiness.com The EU Observer is another important news sources on the EU, accessible at www.euobserver.com You can access the cover stories for free or subscribe for access to all news stories and the archives. Of course, it is helpful to access the EU website to learn about current events. However, it is a bit difficult to navigate the various sites of the EU institutions. You can find the main EU website at www.europa.eu.int The Economist magazine regularly reports on the EU. The New York Times and the Washington Post occasionally cover the EU.

Please note that class attendance is mandatory. You may miss two classes without providing an excuse. The class participation grade will be reduced by 7 points for every additional class missed, unless due to one of the following two exceptions. If you miss class due to a medical reason and provide documentation from a medical practitioner, your absence will be excused without any penalty. Any absences that result from religious observances shall also be excused without any penalty. Anything covered in class lectures or assigned readings may be part of the examinations. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out anything covered in class from another student. Please contact me immediately if you will need to miss class at any time during this semester.

All assigned readings are required. The *Cini* text (hereafter referred to as *Cini*) is available for purchase at the SU bookstore. Other selected readings will be available for download on Canvas. The lectures will, at times, overlap with the readings, but will often include content not in the readings. ***The quizzes and mid-term examination may cover anything from both the lectures and the readings.***

Any student with a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities should contact me as soon as possible so that we can make accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. Students with disabilities are advised to also contact Disability Services at 570-372-4340.

Make sure that you include proper citations in any written or oral work. Plagiarism will result in a failure for that assignment, referral to the administration and other potential consequences. Please consult Sharon Stoerger's online resource for more information on plagiarism: <http://www.web-miner.com/plagiarism> Please also consult the Susquehanna University Code of Student Conduct at <http://www.susqu.edu/studentlife/16594.asp> If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me or the Writing Center located in Fisher Hall, Room 202, phone number 570-372-4342.

AI technologies may be used in this course, but their application is confined to specific predefined scenarios. As we progress through the curriculum, I will provide explicit guidance on when and how AI technologies may be appropriately utilized to complement your learning experience. Students should note that using AI technologies outside these sanctioned instances is not allowed, and violations will be addressed according to the academic integrity policy. This AI policy is specific to this course, and students should not assume that it applies universally to other classes. Please see Susquehanna University's AI policy for more information.

I reserve the right to move around different topics and assignments on the syllabus in consultation with the class. Please do not hesitate to ask questions, introduce discussion points, articulate your opinions and comment on the reading materials.

Schedule of Classes:

Week 1: Introduction to the EU

Week of August 31

Day 1: Introduction to Class and Defining European Integration

Day 2: History of the EU I

Readings: *Cini* Chapter 1-2

Week 2: Evolution of the EU

Week of September 7

Day 1: History of the EU II

Day 2: Theories of Integration

Readings: *Cini* Chapters 3-4

Week 3: European Institutions

Week of September 14

Day 1: The Commission and the Council of Ministers – **Country Profile Due Today**

Day 2: The European Parliament and the Court of Justice

Readings: *Cini* Chapters 10-12

Week 4: Economic Integration

Week of September 21

Day 1: **Quiz 1** and Economic Integration

Day 2: **No Class**

Readings: No reading assigned this week

Week 5: Monetary and Fiscal Policy

Week of September 28

Day 1: Monetary Policy

Day 2: Fiscal Policy – **Alter Ego Due Today**

Readings: *Cini* Chapter 22

Week 6: Crises in the European Union

Week of October 5

Day 1: Sovereign Debt Crisis

Day 2: Migrant Crisis

Readings: *Cini* Chapters 25-26

Week 7: Mid-Term

Week of October 12

Day 1: Mid-Term Review

Day 2: **Mid-Term Examination**

Week 8: Preparing for the Simulation

Week of October 19

Day 1: Information about the Simulation and Trip Logistics

Day 2: **Fall Break**

Week 9: Agricultural Policy

Week of October 26

Day 1: Common Agricultural Policy

Day 2: **No Class**

Readings: *Cini* Chapter 23

Week 10: Environmental Policy

Week of November 2

Day 1: Environmental Policy

Day 2: Simulation Proposals Review

Readings: *Cini* Chapter 24

Week 11: Simulation Week

Week of November 9

Day 1: Simulation Preparation – **Speech Due Today**

Day 2: **EU Simulation – Washington D.C.**

Readings: Simulation Proposals

Week 12: Simulation Debrief

Week of November 16

Day 1: Simulation Debrief – **Debrief Paper Due Today**

Day 2: **No Class**

Week 13: Thanksgiving

Week of November 23

Day 1: **No Class**

Day 2: **Thanksgiving Break**

Week 14: EU Crises

Week of November 30

Day 1: Brexit

Day 2: Democracy Deficit

Week 15: EU Policy Area Presentations

Week of December 7

Day 1: Group Presentation 1 – Foreign, Security, and Defense Policies and the Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice

Day 2: Group Presentations 2 – Enlargement and Trade and Development

Readings: *Cini* Chapters 17-18, 19, 21

Final Exam: Quiz 2 on four policy areas