PO8043: The European Union in Crisis?

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Office Hours: Friday 11am-1pm

Hilary Term 2018 • Tuesday 12-2pm • PX201 – Weeks 29-33

Course description

The European Union has come a long way since its modest origins as a common market for coal and steel for a handful of European nations. In a relatively short space of time we have seen a deepening as well as widening of the union. However, while this rising integration has been marked by periods of contestation, it is now more than ever that the European Union seems under threat. This course represents an introduction to many of the challenges facing the EU today: a perceived crisis of legitimacy, Euroscepticism, Brexit, authoritarianism, and national populism. It also explores how two recent events, the Eurozone crisis and the migrant crisis, have solidified opposition to the EU and/or its policies.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Identify the challenges currently faced by the European Union as an entity
2. Critically review these challenges and the extent to which they threaten the existence of the EU in its current form
3. Examine the extent to which these challenges are unique to the EU or are part of trends around the world

Assessment

Participation (20%)

Student participation and discussion is a central aspect of the seminar. Students are expected to come to the seminar having done the readings and prepared to discuss the topics. Assessment of students’ participation will be based on the quality of input into seminar discussion.

Students should come prepared to discuss the following:
Points for discussion (20%)

Students must submit discussion points in weeks 2-5 of the module. These discussion points relate to the required readings that have been assigned for the week. Having read the assigned papers, you should put forward three numbered points or questions that you think these papers raise. You are not required to do any detailed analysis or discussion but each point should be 1-2 paragraphs long (each paper should be no more than 500-600 words in total).

These discussion points will be graded on the basis of:

- Engagement with the assigned material
- Originality in terms of the insight presented
- Ability to critique the material in the readings (in terms of the theory or empirical evidence it presents, the conclusions it draws etc.)
- Ability to draw comparisons between the papers that have been assigned
- Ability to bring in insights from theories that you have previously engaged with (in prior weeks of the course, in other modules etc.)

When writing your discussion points you should ask these types of questions:

- How convincing is the argument that the author(s) is/are making?
- Is the empirical evidence that is being presented of sufficient quality to be able to support the claims being made?
- Do the conclusions that are being drawn follow logically from the evidence presented?
- Do the conclusions of one paper contradict or challenge those of another?
- Are there any issues that the authors have failed to properly engage with?
- What points are worth exploring further?

Papers are due at 5pm on the day before the seminar.

All discussion points should be submitted as a single document via Turnitin.

Research design paper (60%)

Each student will write a research design paper proposing a project related to the topic of the EU under threat. Students must clearly identify a research question that their proposed
project would answer. They must clearly identify the variation that they hope to explain, the key factors that they think will explain it (i.e. their theory), and then outline the way in which they would go about testing their theory (i.e. the methods they would use).

Students are not expected to do any of the analysis, but they should demonstrate an awareness of the issues associated with the conducting the research, including the following:

- Conceptualization of variables
- Measurement of variables
- Data availability/limitations
- Ethical issues
- Overall feasibility of the project

Research design papers should be submitted via Turnitin.

In order to submit papers via Turnitin, you must first enrol in the class using the following information:

   Class ID: 20067269
   Enrolment key: PO8043

Papers should be approximately 3,000 words, excluding the bibliography.

**NB:** Students must receive approval from the lecturer for their topics; no student may pass the module unless the research topic has been approved in advance. Students must submit a brief summary of a paragraph via email by **Thursday 4th April**.

**Academic honesty and plagiarism**

The university takes plagiarism very seriously. There are severe penalties associated with passing someone else’s work off as one’s own. Remember that careless note-taking can lead to this happening: remember to enclose direct quotations in quotation marks, and even when paraphrasing, ensure that a reference is provided.

The university’s policy regarding plagiarism can be found at: [http://www.tcd.ie/undergraduate-studies/general-regulations/plagiarism.php](http://www.tcd.ie/undergraduate-studies/general-regulations/plagiarism.php).

**Reading list**

This course is not an introduction to how the EU works. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the discussion it is important to be able to understand the institutional structure of the EU, the way in which decisions are made, and various EU Directives and key pieces of legislation
that set out policy in certain areas. The following books can provide some background on these issues:


**Topics and assigned readings**

*These readings are subject to change. Additional material may be added.*

**Week 1: Is the EU undemocratic? (12th March)**

*Required readings:*


**Week 2: The Eurozone crisis (19th March)**

*Required readings:*

- Alison Johnston & Aidan Regan (2014): European Integration and the Incompatibility of Different Varieties of Capitalism. MPIfG discussion paper

**Week 3: The migrant crisis (26th March)**
Required readings:


Week 4: Brexit and Euroscepticism (2nd April)

Required readings:


Week 5: (9th April): Populism and Authoritarianism

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

Assessment deadlines

Weekly discussion points should be submitted by 5pm on the day before the seminar. The final paper should be submitted at midnight.

We understand that sometimes it is necessary to ask for an extension on a paper. These will be granted if there are extenuating circumstances. However, no extensions will be granted unless students contact the lecturer in advance of the deadline.

A late penalty of 5 points per day or part thereof will apply if no extension has been granted.

The deadlines for the assessments are as follows:

18th March: response paper 1 (5%)
25th March: response paper 2 (5%)
1st April: response paper 3 (5%)
8th April: response paper 4 (5%)
24th April: research design paper (60%)