

Europe in crisis: Quo vadis, Europa?

Center for European Studies

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Full course description

Crisis after crisis is rocking Europe at a time that European citizens are questioning the very nature of the European Union (EU) itself. European politics and society are under pressure. The social, political and economic turmoil on the European continent covers a broad array of topics: Brexit; the Eurozone and its financial challenges; terrorist attacks on European soil; religious and political radicalisation; and political tension between different member states of the European Union. Ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Syria and the Middle East create an unstable neighbourhood and the consequences, such as the current refugee crisis, are pushing existing divisions within European core values to the surface. Two simple questions come to mind: what is going on in 'Europa'? And, where is it all leading?

This course takes the crises as a starting point to understand Europe, the European Union and European politics and society. There is a broad consensus that the EU is a unique peace project which has achieved enormous success over the years, on a scale its founders could barely have imagined. More recently, however, the EU has been facing several internal and external challenges such as the June 2016 vote in the United Kingdom in favour of leaving the EU; the Greek debt crisis and lingering concerns about the Eurozone; the ongoing migrant and refugee flows; the heightened terrorism threat and the rise in populism and xenophobia. These put EU values and solidarity to the test. Facing such challenges, it is vital to uphold the EU's common values of democracy, fundamental rights and the rule of law. This course will address exactly those concerns: How is the EU dealing with the current crises? Is it able to maintain its core values, in particular the protection of fundamental rights, along the way? In addition, the EU's next steps and possible future scenario in light of the ongoing crises will be explored.

The class takes a PBL format. This means that students are expected to actively engage during the meetings. The aim is to establish a learning environment in which students can analyse problems, ask relevant questions and develop answers on the basis of the assigned literature and their own individual research. At the end, students should become aware of the most pertinent challenges the EU is facing at the moment and understand the origins and consequences of those challenges. Furthermore, students should be able to analyse and interpret the different challenges from a (European) human rights perspective. Students also learn how to read and compare the case-law of the two most important European courts – the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights.

This course consists of 32 class hours divided over 7-8 weeks. Students earn 6 ECTS credits when they obtain a passing grade. Students who need more credits can sign up for the extended course format, which includes an Independent Study Project (ISP) worth an additional 3 ECTS. The maximum number of credits that can be obtained is 9 ECTS.

Disclaimer: trips and visits related to the course are conditional. E.g. Dutch travel advice should be positive regarding the region that will be visited and institutions should be able to accept visitors. In case a proposed trip or visit cannot continue due to circumstances, alternatives may be organized.

Course objectives

The course has the following objectives:

- to understand the contemporary crisis dynamics in Europe.
 - to understand what the European core values are and how they are protected during the crises.
 - to analyse the ongoing internal and external crises from a human rights perspective.
 - to become acquainted with the human rights case-law of the two most important European courts.
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Prerequisites

Introductory course in Political Science, International Relations, Contemporary European History, European law or European Studies. Interested students who do not meet these prerequisites can petition the lecturer to be admitted.

A minimum of 8 students is required for the class to take place

Recommended reading

The literature will consist of several academic books, academic articles and policy material. Students are also encouraged to bring their own literature.

POL3009

Period 2

28 Oct 2024 - 20 Dec 2024Period 5

7 Apr 2025 - 6 Jun 2025

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinator:

S. Charitakis

Teaching methods:

Assignment(s), Paper(s), PBL, Research, Skills, Work in subgroups

Assessment methods:

Assignment, Attendance, Final paper, Participation

Keywords:

European Union ■ European Values ■ Fundamental Rights ■ European Politics