

# European Politics and Economy

## Course syllabus 2025



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**Universiteit Utrecht**

# European Politics and Economy

## Period

7 July–18 July 2025

## Credits

4 ECTS + Certificate of attendance

## Contact

Course coordinator

Matthias Rekers

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Utrecht Summer School

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## Materials

Brigitte Leucht, Katja Seidel and Laurent Warlouzet eds., *Reinventing Europe: The History of the European Union, 1945 to the present* (London 2023).

More materials to be provided by the course coordinator.

## Location

Drift 13, classroom 003

Drift 13, classroom 004

<https://www.uu.nl/en/drift-13>

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# European Politics and Economy

## Course description

This course offers an introduction to the political landscape of Europe. Central to the course is the European Union (EU), a political partnership which has become a major player in global politics.

First of all the historical background of the European Union will be discussed. It originated from a long process of political and economic integration that started after the Second World War and culminated in the formation of the EU with the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. Several lectures will give insight into the various stages of integration, the role of European leaders and the present Euroscepticism and resistance to the European project.

Another theme of the course is the system of governance within the European Union, which consists of the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe); the European Council (representing the collective leadership of the EU through the heads of state or government of each member state); the Council of the European Union (representing national governments); and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

Finally, this summer school will cover essential policies, critical themes, and significant geographical regions. Students will engage in discussions on specific policies, such as sustainability, and explore key themes like the role of interest groups in the European Union.

# European Politics and Economy

## Lecturer

**Matthias Rekers** is a historian specialized in twentieth century political and cultural history. He is mainly interested in the interplay of institutional structures, political processes and historical trends on the one hand, and individuals' mentalities, choices and actions on the other. Among other topics, he has studied neoliberalism in the Netherlands and the corresponding shift in ministers' careers since the 1970s.

## Guest lecturers

To be announced.

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# European Politics and Economy

## Program

Day 1: Monday, July 7 – Drift 13, Utrecht

### Timetable

10:00-10:45	Welcome and introduction to the course
10:45-11:00	Break
11:00-13:00	Seminar: What is Europe? What should it be?
13:00-14:30	Lunch
14:30-15:30	Lecture: The History of the European Union (1945-1968)

### Preparation

Brigitte Leucht, Katja Seidel and Laurent Warlouzet eds., *Reinventing Europe: The History of the European Union, 1945 to the present* (London 2023).

- Introduction, pp. 1-6.
- Chapter 1: The formation of the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community and Euratom, 1945-58, pp. 7-26.
- Chapter 2: From the early Common Market to the crises of the 1960s, 1958-68, pp. 27-46.

### Lecturers

Matthias Rekers

### Assessment

In-class participation.

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# European Politics and Economy

Day 3: Wednesday, July 9 – Drift 13, Utrecht

## Timetable

10:00-12:00	Lecture: Overview of European Institutions Addressing the Democratic Deficit
12:00-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:30	Seminar: The Legislative Procedure and Economic Governance of the European Union with a Focus on the Institutions Involved

## Preparation

- Simon Hix and Bjørn Høyland, *The political system of the European Union* (Basingstoke 2011), pp. 1-19.
- Neill Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union* (Bloomsbury 2017), pp. 129 (first paragraph) and 161 (concluding remarks) for the Commission; 163 (first paragraph) for the Council of the European Union; 183 (first paragraph) and 200 (concluding remarks) for the European Council; 225 (concluding remarks) for the European Parliament.

## Lecturers

Matthias Rekers

## Assessment

In-class participation.

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# European Politics and Economy

Day 4: Thursday, July 10 – Excursion to Amsterdam

## Timetable

09:00	Departure from Janskerkhof, Utrecht to Amsterdam
10:00-12:00	...
12:00-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	...
17:00	Departure to Janskerkhof, Utrecht

## Preparation

- Sabine Saurugger, 'Interest Groups and Democracy in the European Union', *West European Politics* 31:6 (2008) 1274-1291.

## Lecturers

Matthias Rekers

## Assessment:

Portfolio: Reflection prompt #1.

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# European Politics and Economy

Day 5: Friday, July 11 – Drift 13, Utrecht

## Timetable

10:00-12:00	Lecture: Sustainability Policies and European Developments in Environmental Governance
12:00-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:30	Seminar: Cases of Environmental Protection and Degradations

## Preparation

Brigitte Leucht, Katja Seidel and Laurent Warlouzet eds., *Reinventing Europe: The History of the European Union, 1945 to the present* (London 2023).

- Chapter 11: A citizens' Europe? Consumer and environmental policies, pp. 203-212 (Introduction, 1. Key issues and actors & 2. Origins and development of environmental policy); 218-219 (Conclusion).

Anna-Katharina Wöbse and Patrick Kupper, *Greening Europe: Environmental Protection in the Long Twentieth Century – A Handbook* (Berlin 2022).

- Chapter 16: Europeanizing Biodiversity: International Organizations as Environmental Actors, pp. 419-424 (1. Introduction & 2. International Organizations and Nature Conservation); 431-441 (5. The Council of Europe: Habitats and Biodiversity, 6. The Greening of the European Communities & 7. International Organizations and Concepts as Agents).

## Lecturers

Matthias Rekers

## Assessment

In-class participation.

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# European Politics and Economy

## Day 6: Monday, July 14 – Excursion

### Timetable

09:00	Departure from Janskerkhof, Utrecht to the Hague
10:30-12:00	
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13:00-15:00	
17:00	Departure to Janskerkhof, Utrecht

### Preparation

Please bring an ID, mobile phone and headphones with you.

### Lecturers

Matthias Rekers

### Assessment:

Portfolio: Reflection prompt #2.

# European Politics and Economy

Day 7: Tuesday, July 15 – Drift 13, Utrecht

## Timetable

10:00-12:00	Documentary: <i>Inside Europe: Ten Years of Turmoil</i> (2019)
12:00-13:30	Lunch
13:30-14:00	Lecture: Euroscepticism and The European Parliament Elections, 2024
14:00-14:15	Break
14:15-15:30	Seminar: Regional Difference in Euroscepticism

## Preparation

Brigitte Leucht, Katja Seidel and Laurent Warlouzet eds., *Reinventing Europe: The History of the European Union, 1945 to the present* (London 2023).

- Chapter 10: Economic and Monetary Union: From 1957 to the euro crisis, pp. 194-200 (4. The euro crisis)
- Chapter 18: Integrating or breaking up Europe? Euroscepticism and opposition to Europe, pp. 333-334 (Introduction); 343-349 (3. Crisis Europe and the rising tide of Euroscepticism, 2000-2020s); 349-351 (Conclusion)

## Lecturers

Matthias Rekers

## Assessment

In-class participation.

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# European Politics and Economy

Day 8: Wednesday, July 16 – Drift 13, Utrecht

## Timetable

10:00-12:00	Lecture: Economic Security Meets Austerity: European Strategic Autonomy at the Brink
12:00-13:30	Lunch
13:30-15:00	Assessment: Finalize Portfolio
15:00-17:30	Prepare for Group Presentations

## Preparation

- Matthias Matthijs and Sophie Meunier, 'Europe's Geoeconomic Revolution: How the EU Learned to Wield Its Real Power', *Foreign Affairs* (August 22, 2023).
- Gina Gopinath, 'Cold War II? Preserving Economic Cooperation Amid Geoeconomic Fragmentation', *International Monetary Fund* (December 11, 2023).

## Lecturers

Matthias Rekers

## Assessment:

Portfolio: Reflection prompt #3.

# European Politics and Economy

Day 9: Thursday, July 17 – Drift 13, Utrecht

## Timetable

10:00-13:00	Prepare for Group Presentations
13:00-17:00	Assessment: Group Presentation

## Lecturers

Matthias Rekers

## Assessment

Group presentation.

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Day 10: Friday, July 18 – Drift 13, Utrecht

## Timetable

14:00-15:00	Presentation of Certificates
15:00-17:00	Drinks

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## Assessment

There will be three assessments that test your ability to reflect individually, your engagement with the school and the acquisition of knowledge,

1. In-class participation: 30%
2. Portfolio: 30%
3. Group presentation: 40%

You need an average grade of at least 5,5 to pass the course.

## Portfolio

Students are requested to submit the portfolio for assessment. The Word file must be uploaded in the assessment folder in the teams group. Doublecheck that your name and surname appear in your submission file. If you have problems uploading the Word file, send the file to Matthias directly ([m.rekers@uu.nl](mailto:m.rekers@uu.nl)).

In the portfolio you will reflect on your learning experience during the summer school. The deadline for the portfolio is **Wednesday, 16 July, 3 p.m.** The portfolio includes three prompts, each requiring a response of approximately 250 words (the entire portfolio should be approximately 750 words in total):

1. How does the literature on interest groups relate to their functioning and constraints within the European Union? In your answer, include insights from our visit to ... / ... during our Amsterdam excursion, as well as the assigned reading for that day.<sup>1</sup>
2. List three key insights from the excursion to The Hague, and explain why each of them was significant.
3. Reflect on the entire Summer School in European Politics and Economy by answering the following questions:
  - a. What have you learned?
  - b. What would you like to explore further?
  - c. What did you enjoy the most and the least?

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<sup>1</sup> Sabine Saurugger, 'Interest Groups and Democracy in the European Union', *West European Politics* 31:6 (2008) 1274-1291.

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## *Group presentation*

In groups, students will present on one of the following book<sup>2</sup> chapters:

- Chapter 8: The construction of a single market: Liberalization and its regulation
- Chapter 9: Milk lakes and butter mountains: The common agricultural policy
- Chapter 12: A European society? Social policy and migration
- Chapter 13: Ideas and movements in favour of European integration from the nineteenth century until today
- Chapter 14: The European Union in international politics and trade: A global power in the making?
- Chapter 15: Eastern Europe in the history of European integration: From the periphery to the centre?
- Chapter 16: The Franco-German relationship at the heart of the EU history
- Chapter 17: In or out? Britain and the European project

Each group will present a different chapter. On Tuesday, 16 July, you can form groups of five. While not all group members need to present, the work should be distributed equally. You can choose your own group.

Each group will deliver a 15-minute presentation that provides an overview of the chapter by answering three of the five key questions listed at the end of the chapter and connecting the key insights to the overarching theme of European Politics and Economy. You will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Clarity of presentation (coherence, time management)
- In-depth engagement with the chapter and articulation of its main insights through three of the five key questions
- Reflection on the takeaways in relation to the overarching theme of European Politics and Economy

Each group must submit their PowerPoint presentation for assessment. The PowerPoint must be uploaded to the assessment folder in the Teams group by **Thursday, 17 July, at 1 p.m.** Double-check that your first names appear in your submission file. If you have any problems uploading the PowerPoint, send the file to

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<sup>2</sup> Brigitte Leucht, Katja Seidel and Laurent Warloutzet eds., *Reinventing Europe: The History of the European Union, 1945 to the present* (London 2023).



# European Politics and Economy

Matthias directly ([m.rekers@uu.nl](mailto:m.rekers@uu.nl)).

## Attendance and grading system

Note that full attendance is expected in all lectures, seminar sessions, and excursions. Students who are absent beyond their fault (illness, accident, etc.) should submit a medical certificate to the course coordinator, Matthias Rekers ([m.rekers@uu.nl](mailto:m.rekers@uu.nl)), as soon as possible. Make-up assignments are expected for all unexcused absences. Students who fail more than two make-up assignments will be dropped from this course.

Your grades will be numerical grades according to the Dutch grading system. Dutch grades range from 0 (very bad) to 10 (excellent). At Utrecht University, a 5,5 is the lowest passing grade, though note that this might be different at other (Dutch) institutions. Also note that grade inflation has not affected the Dutch grading system as much as it has some American institutions. Grades of 9 and higher are rarely given, the most common grades are between 6 and 8. The Utrecht University student registration system (Osiris) that will produce your transcript will round off all grades to whole numerals for 5 and lower, and half numbers for 5.5 and higher. On course work and examinations, however, it is customary to receive a grade that has not been rounded off. Plusses and minuses are sometimes used, and count for one-fourth of a point, for instance: 8- = 7,75. Meaning of numerical grades:

9.00-10.00	Excellent
8.00-8.99	Very good
7.50-7.99	Good
7.00-7.49	Very satisfactory
6.50-6.99	Satisfactory
6.00-6.49	Sufficient
5.50-5.99	Acceptable; minimum pass
5.00-5.49	Insufficient; fail
4.00-4.99	Unsatisfactory
3.00-3.99	Very unsatisfactory
2.00-2.99	Bad
0.00-1.99	Very bad

Note that conversion of grades that you have received in the Netherlands to grades at your home institution is the responsibility of your home institution, not Utrecht University. This chart should be used as an indication; no rights can be drawn from it.