

Institutions & Decision-Making

UGRA_005206

Departments	Department of International, European Union and Comparative Law, Department of Society, Politics and Sustainability
Teaching Languages	English
ECTS	4
Teacher responsible	Fernandez Fernandez Oscar - oscar.fernandez9@esade.edu

Course Goals

This course explores the dynamics of decision-making across a number of important areas of world politics. Today, the international arena comprises not only states with diverse political systems, but also international organisations (formal and informal), non-state actors and multistakeholder initiatives. These confront unique economic, social and environmental challenges, but also interact with and affect one another as a result of globalisation. States strive to reap the benefits of interdependence – not only through cooperation but also through coercive practices – and to protect themselves against its downsides. These processes are sometimes promoted or mediated by regional economic integration organisations, such as the European Union and ASEAN, as well as by more widely encompassing institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organization. In this class, we will unpack these dynamics theoretically and empirically, observing how domestic and international institutions jointly shape the efforts to advance public interests and address global problems. In addition, we will analyse how decision-makers navigate the contradictions and dilemmas that sometimes arise from these goals, as well as the many constraints that they face.

Prerequisites

None.

Teaching methodology

Most sessions will consist of a lecture combined with a more participatory segment where students will be given a range of tasks to perform in order to consolidate their understanding of the course content, including discussions and exercises. In addition, students will be asked to do several readings and carry out some exercises at home, as well as deliver presentations in class and sit for a final exam. Active participation will be encouraged and indeed expected throughout all sessions.

Description

Course contribution to program

The course introduces the complex interplay between national, transnational and international actors, with particular attention paid to important organisations and issue areas like trade and development, global health and human rights. After completing the course, students should have a comprehensive understanding of how decisions are made by individual states and collectively within major international organisations and agreements, with an economic focus and beyond. They should also understand the ways in which these institutions shape and are shaped by actions that states pursue domestically. Participants will gain knowledge of key theories and concepts which are useful to explain the operation and importance of governance institutions, as well as critical insights on their functioning and purpose. Transferrable skills, such as report writing, oral presentation, and teamwork, will also be developed.

Program Learning Objectives

GEL23–Bachelor of Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order

- General Management Skills
 - Recognise the economic, legal and social concepts that define the context of different stakeholders in the context of international relations and global governance.
- Systemic and Strategic Thinking
 - Apply tools, frameworks, and perspectives in an integrative way to analyze the interrelations between different actors in the global context.
- Teamwork
 - Deliver work that contributes to the team's goal.

Activities

In-class discussions and debates

Analytical exercises

Written and/or oral exams

Role-play exercises and simulations

Teamwork

Group presentations

Readings

Case study analyses

Content

#	Topic
1	[Global governance: a dense and diverse institutional landscape] This introductory bloc will address the evolution of the global governance landscape in the past decades and describe how a state-centric model has given way to a more complex international system. We will present the main types of institutions populating the world stage and reflect upon their significance and constraints, from the perspective of competing theoretical approaches. More specifically, we will explore how relevant international organisations and regimes came into being, as well as the incentive structure involved in creating, perpetuating and abandoning them.
2	[National and international decision-making in theory] In this bloc, we will explore the different strategies that national and international entities pursue in relation to one another in an attempt to maximise absolute and relative gains. We will also unpack these entities and analyse the roles played by different bodies and stakeholders within them, such as secretariats in international organisations and interest groups in nation-states. In doing so, we will rely on rationalist and constructivist accounts of decision-making processes, by introducing two-level game theory, the principal-agent theory of delegation, control mechanisms, socialisation dynamics and the model of exit, voice, and loyalty. This will be complemented with an examination of the institutional mechanisms available for reaching decisions at the international level, such as majority voting and consensus.
3	[National and international decision-making in practice] This final bloc will offer students a comprehensive understanding of decision-making practices across key entities with varying institutional features, as well as in international regimes governing specific issue areas – such as trade and development, global health and human rights. This will be based on case studies that will enable students to become familiar with the trade-offs involved in decision-making processes and their different manifestations. We will also delve into the concrete, practical experiences of national and international policymakers in their

#	Topic
3	efforts to advance their respective goals and tackle some pressing policy challenges.

Assessment

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
Written and/or oral exams	Final exam	Retake and ordinary round	40.00%
Individual or team exercises	Continuous assessment through individual or team exercises	Retake and ordinary round	40.00%
In-class analysis and discussion of issues	Participation and attendance. Students must attend at least 80% of all sessions in order to qualify for a first exam sitting; the minimum attendance in order to qualify for a re-sit exam is 50%. Justified absences are excluded.	Ordinary round	20.00%

PROGRAMS

113S-Law Exchange Program (Undergraduates: Law)
113S Year 1 (Optative)

GBL24-Double Degree in Business Administration and Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Business)
GBL24 Year 1 (Basic)

GDL23-Double Degree in Law and Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
GDL23 Year 1 (Basic)

GEL19-Bachelor of Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
GEL19 Year 1 (Basic)

GEL23-Bachelor of Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
GEL23 Year 1 (Basic)