TEACHING GUIDE - 2026-2027

European Union External Relations

UGRA_013004

Departments	Department of International, European Union and Comparative Law
Teaching Languages	English
ECTS	4
Teacher responsible	Giovanni Gruni - giovanni.gruni@esade.edu

Course Goals

After the course, students should be able to:

- explain the basic structures and dynamics of EU external relations;
- identify the various actors, instruments, and decision-making processes involved when analyzing cases or current affairs;
- critically analyze different policy areas of EU external action and how the roles of actors, competences, and rule-making evolve;
- have a clear overview of the EU's main fields of action and the policies it pursues in each.

Previous knowledge

Previous knowledge about the institutional setup of the EU, about the role of international organizations and dynamics in international relations will be assumed.

Prerequisits

All students from the programme are welcome. A good command of English is necessary.

Students are expected to have a basic knowledge of the EU and international relations based on previous courses.

Reading European and international news is a prerequisite for the course as we will discuss also current affairs.

Teaching methodology

Class sessions will consist of lectures, debates (with the entire class and within smaller groups), problem analysis, case studies, group work and presentations. The sessions will be devoted to learning, challenging and applying the different aspects of EU external relations.

Description

Course

The EU is a unique actor in international relations. It is one of the largest economic areas in the world and can be a highly influential player on the

contribution to program

international stage. The EU's external competencies clearly reflect its distinctive characteristics: a constant tension between intergovernmental and supranational (community) methods of governance. This course is an introduction to EU External Relations.

We will begin with an overview of the internal dimension of the EU's external action: its sources, types, the main actors involved, the decision-making processes and instruments that shape EU external relations, as well as the role of international law within the EU and the guiding principles of its external action.

We will then examine several policy areas in which the EU is active internationally: the common commercial policy, the common foreign and security policy, its relations with neighbouring countries and potential future members, and finally, the EU's external action in the fields of environmental protection and human rights.

Short description

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Please note:

IMPORTANT:

ALL WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS FOR THIS EXAM WILL BE CLOSED BOOK

Students can participate in the ordinary exam only if they have attended at least 80% of classes.

Students need to achieve at least a grade of 5 points (out of 10) in the final exam in order to pass the

course.

In case students cannot attend a class, they must inform Programme Direction and the professor by email in advance and provide the necessary justification (e.g. medical certificate). Accepted reasons for class absence include illness, major life events (e.g. births and deaths), ESADE activities for which the student has the written approval from the Programme Direction.
Other events that can be scheduled at another time (e.g. personal trips, job interviews, doctor's appointments etc.) will not be accepted as justified reasons of absence.
Late submissions of assignments will not be accepted after the deadline, unless an exception has been requested and granted before the deadline.

In case of unforeseen events that affect the teaching activities, the teaching schedule, the evaluation methods and percentages and the teaching guide may be modified to address the situation.

Program Learning Objectives

GEL23-Bachelor in Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order

- Responsible Leadership
  - Recognize the social impact of international organizations and governments decisions.
- Communication Skills
  - Communicate effectively through written interventions.
- Lawyering skills and knowledge
  - Describe the functioning of the institutions of the European Union in the framework of Community law.
- International Relations and Global Governance
  - Apply geopolitical analysis to decision-making by the different actors involved in international relations.

Bibliography

Wessel, R.A. & Larik, J., EU External Relations Law: Text, Cases And Materials, Oxford: Hart Publishing (Book)

Hill, C., Smith, M. & Vanhoonacker, S., International Relations and the European Union, Oxford: Oxford University Press (Book)

Keukeleire, S. & Delreux, T., The Foreign Policy of the European Union, London: Bloomsbury Academic (Book)

Activities

Online training activities

In-class discussions and debates

Analytical exercises

Written and/or oral exams

Teamwork

Quizzes/tests

Group presentations

Readings

Case study analyses

Content

#	Topic
1	1. Introduction
2	2. The Internal Dimension of the EU's External Competence Sources and Typology Actors and Internal Decision-Making The Role of International Law within the EU Principles of EU External Action
3	3. The Common Commercial Policy
4	4. The Common Foreign, Security and Defense Policy
5	5. Neighbourdhood and Enlargement Policies
6	6. The EU's Human Rights & Environmental Action
7	Some cross-cutting topics will be addressed throughout the course, notably the role of the EU in other international organizations, the global economic system and trade wars, climate change, Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Palestine.

Assessment

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
Participation in program activities	participation	Ordinary round	20.00%
Written and/or oral exams	Written exam(s)	Ordinary round	60.00%
Other	Class presentation	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 3 (Mandatory)

GDL20-Double Degree in Law and Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
- GDL20 Year 2 (Mandatory)

GDL23-Double Degree in Law and Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
- GDL23 Year 2 (Mandatory)

GEL19-Bachelor in Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
- GEL19 Year 2 (Mandatory)

GEL23-Bachelor in Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
- GEL23 Year 2 (Mandatory)

GEL25-Bachelor in Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
- GEL25 Year 2 (Mandatory)