

# INSTITUTIONAL REFORM OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Winter term 2023/24

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**Lecturer:** Helena Heberer

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**Time:** Tue 10:00 – 11:30

**Loc:** IBW building, S100

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**Office hours:** On request (Zoom oder in-person)

**1. Course description:** The EU faces unprecedented challenges in view of Russia's attack on Ukraine, democratic backsliding in some member states, and the looming climate crisis. At the same time, the European Union is approaching possibly its most contentious election in June 2024. In order to involve citizens, civil society, as well as politicians, a "Conference on the Future of Europe" took place in 2021 and 2022 with the aim of exploring options for reforms to the EU's policies and institutions. This seminar provides a forum for critically reflecting on various aspects of the EU's institutional architecture and its reform options on the basis of empirical political science literature. We will engage critically with the prospects and challenges of a European fiscal union, a European high speed rail system, and finally the legal and normative ramifications of the expulsion of member states from the European Union. The seminar is interactive: students will join a team and participate in seminar debates, arguing for or against a particular reform proposal. Finally, the seminar will take place in the "NRW debattiert Europa" event and debate the future of the EU with other student teams. Students will complete the seminar by writing a short final paper related to politics in the European Union.

## 2. Course objectives:

- Develop capacity to understand and critically reflect on the main debates related to the study of the EU's institutional framework
- Develop oral presentation and debate skills
- Develop skills to work in a team
- Learn how to write an academic paper

**3. Course requirements:** This is a highly interactive seminar. You need to be prepared to do the readings before class and regularly contribute to the debates when we meet. Master students will be evaluated on the basis of the following components:

### 1. Group project (30%)

Each student will be assigned to a team during the first meeting. Each team will consist of 3 members. The task will be to argue either for or against a pre-determined reform proposal. Your responsibility as a team is to prepare, in writing, three 7-minute speeches (approx. 1,000 words each) either for or against this proposal (depending on whether you are in the pro or contra group). The three speeches need to be cumulative and build upon each other. In other words, the first speech should make an opening argument, whereas the second should elaborate on some specific aspects or provide additional arguments, while the third one should make a convincing closing argument. Each team will debate with the opposing side in class in the following format: Speech 1 Pro, followed by speech 1 Contra, followed by speech 2 Pro, speech 2 Contra, speech 3 Pro, and speech 3 Contra. Each speech cannot last longer than seven minutes. Speakers 2 and 3 can (and should) also address any arguments made by the opposing side. Each group will furthermore receive credits for participating with questions/interruptions in the other debates.

2. Constructive feedback on speeches (15%)  
Each team will provide three specific suggestions on how to improve the speeches of the other teams in writing after the specific debate.
3. Participation in NRW debattiert (15%)  
After each debate, the class will vote for a winning team. The three teams with the most points will represent the class during the NRW debattiert event in Duisburg. The teams that will debate will prepare by simulating the debate one week prior in class. All \*other\* course participants will be assigned to one of the three teams and help re-write the speeches. Everyone is expected to participate in the NRW debate even itself. This year, the NRW debattiert event will host debates in German and English
4. Final paper (40%)  
Each student will write a final paper (Master students, 5-10 pages), to be handed in on **February 16**. You need to hand in a draft of two pages by **December 12** and each student needs to sign up for an office hour appointment to discuss the draft thereafter. There are two options for the final paper:  
Option 1 - Research Design: For first year students, I would strongly recommend this option. The research design should outline an empirical study related to politics in the EU. The research design should describe your puzzle/research question, working hypotheses, state of the art, and the methods and data you would collect and use. For instance, you could conceive of a research design which aims a replication and extension of one of the studies in the reading list (published in a peer-reviewed journal).  
Option 2 - Empirical Paper: If you have a dataset that you would like to analyze, your paper could implement an empirical study related to politics in the EU using a quantitative research design with this existing dataset. An actual replication and extension of an existing study is a possible option.

**4. Course Material:**

Readings will be available as electronic articles through Ilias.

**5. Important dates:**

Exam registration deadline .....	tba
2-page draft paper due .....	12.12.2023
NRW debattiert event .....	25.01.2024
Final paper due .....	16.02.2024

## 6. Course outline:

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Session 1      10.10.2023 **Introduction**  
Allocation of students to debate teams

### Readings:

- NRW debattiert Europa Competition Rules
- [Final Report of the Conference of the Future of Europe, May 2022](#)
- George Tsebelis (2012). “From the European Convention to the Lisbon Agreement and Beyond: A Veto Player Analysis”. In: *Reforming the European Union: Realizing the Impossible*. DOI: [10.1515/9781400842506](#)
- Youri Devuyt (2012). “The Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties”. In: *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*
- Thomas König (2018). “Still the Century of Intergovernmentalism? Partisan Ideology, Two-level Bargains and Technocratic Governance in the post-Maastricht Era: Still the century of intergovernmentalism?” In: *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56.6, pp. 1240–1262. DOI: [10.1111/jcms.12738](#)

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Session 2      17.10.2023 **Fiscal Union: Introduction**  
After a short introduction to the history and idea of a European fiscal union, students will research the debate topic in-class and discuss potential pro and contra arguments with the other teams. If possible, please bring your own laptops.

### Readings:

- Clemens Fuest and Andreas Peichl (2012). “European Fiscal Union: What Is It? Does It work? And Are There Really ‘No Alternatives’?” In: *CESifo Forum*. Vol. 13 (1), pp. 3–9
- Marin Mileusnic (2021). “Steps towards a European Fiscal Union: Has the revised Stability and Growth Pact delivered so far?” In: *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 17.3. DOI: [10.30950/jcer.v17i3.1123](#)
- Gilles Thirion (2017). “Economic rationale and design challenges”. In: *CEPS Working Documents* 1, pp. 1–36
- C. Randall Henning and Martin Kessler (2012). “Fiscal Federalism: US History for Architects of Europe’s Fiscal Union”. In: *SSRN Electronic Journal*. DOI: [10.2139/ssrn.1982709](#)
- Fabio Franchino and Paolo Segatti (2019). “Public opinion on the Eurozone fiscal union: evidence from survey experiments in Italy”. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 26.1, pp. 126–148. DOI: [10.1080/13501763.2017.1400087](#)
- [Fiscal Policy in the European Union: Are New Rules Needed?](#)

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**Session 3**     24.10.2023 **Fiscal Union: Debate**

Debate topic: "Do we need a fiscal union?"

Team 1: Pro, Team 2: Con

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**Session 4**     31.10.2023 **Fiscal Union: Debate**

Debate topic: "Do we need a fiscal union?"

Team 3: Pro, Team 4: Con

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**Session 5**     14.11.2023 **European Climate Policies: Introduction**

After a short introduction to the European climate politics, students will research the debate topic in-class and discuss potential pro and contra arguments with the other teams. If possible, please bring your own laptops.

**Readings:**

- [From patchwork to true European high-speed rail network: the costs and benefits](#)
  - Tiziana D'Alfonso, Changmin Jiang, and Valentina Bracaglia (2015). "Would competition between air transport and high-speed rail benefit environment and social welfare?" In: *Transportation Research Part B: Methodological* 74, pp. 118–137. DOI: [10.1016/j.trb.2015.01.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trb.2015.01.007)
  - Tiziana D'Alfonso, Changmin Jiang, and Valentina Bracaglia (2016). "Air transport and high-speed rail competition: Environmental implications and mitigation strategies". In: *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 92, pp. 261–276. DOI: [10.1016/j.tra.2016.06.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2016.06.009)
  - Regina R. Clewlow, Joseph M. Sussman, and Hamsa Balakrishnan (2014). "The impact of high-speed rail and low-cost carriers on European air passenger traffic". In: *Transport Policy* 33, pp. 136–143. DOI: [10.1016/j.tranpol.2014.01.015](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2014.01.015)
  - Martin Roll and Alain Verbeke (1998). "Financing of the trans-European high-speed rail networks:" in: *European Management Journal* 16.6, pp. 706–713. DOI: [10.1016/S0263-2373\(98\)00047-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-2373(98)00047-4)
  - [Special report: A European high-speed rail network](#)
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**Session 6**     21.11.2023 **European Climate Policies: Debate**

Debate topic: "To advance climate protection, should the EU invest in a European high-speed rail network?"

Team 5: Pro, Team 6: Con

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Session 7      05.12.2023 **The EU and the rule of law: Introduction**  
After a short introduction to the legal and normative implications of the expulsion of EU member states, students will research the debate topic in-class and discuss potential pro and contra arguments with the other teams. If possible, please bring your own laptops.

**Readings:**

- [Charter of Fundamental Human Rights of the European Union](#)
- Jan-Werner Müller (2015). "Should the EU Protect Democracy and the Rule of Law inside Member States?: Protection of Democracy and the Rule of Law". In: *European Law Journal* 21.2, pp. 141–160. DOI: [10.1111/eulj.12124](#)
- Laurent Pech and Kim Lane Scheppele (2017). "Illiberalism Within: Rule of Law Backsliding in the EU". in: *Cambridge Yearbook of European Legal Studies* 19, pp. 3–47. DOI: [10.1017/ce1.2017.9](#)
- Bojan Bugarič (2014). "Protecting Democracy and the Rule of Law in the European Union: The Hungarian Challenge". In: *LSE 'Europe in Question' Discussion Paper Series* 79, pp. 1–44
- [Those calling for the EU to expel Hungary should think again](#)

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Session 8      12.12.2023 **The EU and the rule of law: Debate**

Debate topic: "Should the EU be able to exclude member states that violate the principles of the rule of law?"  
Team 7: Pro, Team 8: Con

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Session 9      16.01.2024, 10 – 13.30 Uhr (**double session!**) in S3.40 (IBW building, third floor)

**Simulation of NRW debattiert Europa event**

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Session 10      25.01.2024 **NRW debattiert Europa event** Duisburg (please reserve full day)

We will discuss logistics closer to the event.

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Session 11      30.01.2024 **Debate debriefing and conclusion**

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