

Policy-Making in the European Union

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Office Hours: Mondays 2-3 pm (register via e-mail)

Overview

In this seminar, we will apply political science theories of policy-making in the EU and gain insights into the practice of making laws in Brussels. The seminar will have a particular focus on the EU legislative process and the interaction between the Commission, Council and EU Parliament. The EU's asylum policy serves as the main illustrative example. In 2020, after years of stalled negotiations on reforming the EU's Common European Asylum system, the Commission put forward the "New Pact on Migration and Asylum" which contained a reform of existing rules such as the Dublin-Regulation, but also a whole host of new legislative instruments. The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament agreed on the main contents of this Pact in late December 2023. In preparation for the excursion, students will work through the negotiations on the "New Pact on Migration and Asylum" and apply theories of EU policy-making as well as recent research on the interactions between EU institutions to explain the outcome of the negotiations.

The seminar will include a 2 – day study trip to Brussels with a visit to EU institutions and an NGO and give the students the chance to exchange and engage with practitioners. The trip will likely take place on June 10-11, 2024. Students might have to contribute to the costs of the excursion if no sufficient funding can be secured.

Course Objectives

After the successful completion of this class, you will:

1. have deepened your knowledge about the main institutions of the European Union and their interaction
2. have in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge of the legislative process in the European Union
3. be able to independently analyse policy-making processes in the EU

4. have a solid understanding of current debates on asylum policies in the EU
5. have gained insights into policy-making from the point of view of practitioners

Prerequisites

A solid foundational knowledge of the political system of the EU and the major integration theories is required. To participate you will have to have previously passed a course on European integration or the Political System of the EU (at a minimum the topics covered in the course "Comparing European Democracies" are expected knowledge). You should also have a good understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methods as the seminar will focus on theories and their application, but will not cover extensive methods training. Seminar sessions and all written assignments will be in English.

Course Requirements and Assignments

PLEASE NOTE: while the general requirements for the class are set out in the following, details including deadlines, the content of assignments and assessment criteria are subject to modifications until the start of the seminar on 9 April.

Your performance in this course will be evaluated using a portfolio examination, based on a group presentation and written report on one legislative file of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum (30%), a written report on one of the sessions during the study trip OR a reaction paper to one of the assigned readings (20%), and a final term paper (50%). You need to complete all components of the portfolio examination in order to receive a passing grade.

Group presentation and report (30%)

In the class session on 4 June, students will present the key files of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum in group presentations, based on a written report to be handed in until **2 June, 23.59 CET** via ILIAS. The reports and presentations should summarise the main contents of each file as well as the positions of the Commission, the European Parliament and key member states during the negotiations. The report needs to clearly indicate the students' individual contributions. Details on the distribution of files among student groups will be discussed at the beginning of the seminar in April.

Written report of a visit during the study trip OR reaction paper (20%)

Students can choose one of the following options:

1. **Written report of a visit during the study trip:** The written report (max. 2 pages) is a summary and reflection of one of the visits during the study trip to Brussels. It should introduce the speaker and discuss their role within the respective institution as well as during the negotiations of the New Pact (where applicable). The report summarises the presentation and discussion during the visit and serves as a reference for all students. It is

is due on **23 June, 23.59 CET** and has to be handed in via ILIAS. Details on the distribution of reports among students will be discussed at the beginning of the seminar in April.

2. **Reaction paper:** The reaction paper (max. 2 pages) critically discusses one of the required readings. It should include a summary of the main arguments, hypotheses, methods and results of the paper. Furthermore, the reaction paper should identify the key new insights gained from it as well as potential shortcomings, and discuss how the paper relates to other readings of the course. Details on the eligible readings as well as deadlines will be discussed at the beginning of the seminar in April.

Term paper (50%)

The final term paper should be between 3500 - 5000 words (excluding bibliography and appendices). It will consist of an empirical analysis of a research question related to policy-making in the EU. Students can choose the concrete topic and policy area as well as the methodological approach freely. However, students are encouraged to make use of the insights gained during the study trip for the term papers and may conduct additional interviews during or after the trip.

Course structure

Schedule at a glance

Week	Date	Topic
1	9 April	Introduction: Information & Theories Refresher
2	16 April	The legislative Process in the EU
3	23 April	The European Commission
4	30 April	Negotiations in the Council of the EU
5	7 May	Trilogues and Decision-Making in the European Parliament
6	14 May	Interest Groups in EU Policy-Making
7	28 May	Migration & Asylum Policies in the EU - Overview
8	4 June 10 - 11 June	Asylum Policy Reform in the EU - Student Presentations Study Trip to Brussels
9	25 June OR 2 July (tbc)	Reflection and Discussion of Term Papers

Detailed course schedule

The detailed schedule with assigned readings will be published before the first session. The newest version of the Syllabus can always be found on ILIAS.