UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Processes of European Integration

2425-1-F8701N078

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding:

The course aims to provide a basic knowledge of the perspectives and theoretical models of the process of integration of European states and societies in its multiple dimensions and in a polycentric perspective, taking into account the historical, structural and institutional development of the European Union.

Applying knowledge and understanding:

The course provides skills for understanding specific European politics and policies, and for applying these conceptual and methodological tools to the design of research and cooperation projects within the EU.

Communicational skills

The active and continuous participation of the students is one of the prerogatives of the course. Seminar activities and group work are an integral part of the educational project.

Contents

The course aims to present and problematise the main dynamics of the European integration process in its fundamental dimensions: the first, the strengthening of the supranational and transnational institutions of the EU, defined as *deepening*, and the second, the enlargement of the EU to the states and societies of the continent, thus its *widening*. We will analyse the integration process from the perspective of a European political sociology, through the lens of active and participatory citizenship. This process requires continuous and innovative work on public and social policies capable of strengthening the capacities of citizens and democratic institutions of the Union and its member and candidate states.

Detailed program

The process of 'Europeanisation', understood here as the strengthening of the democratic systems of the EU Member States and candidate countries, involves a profound and continuous transformation of European societies. Europeanisation concerns the structural and institutional harmonisation of these societies in accordance with the political, economic and social aspects of the 'Copenhagen criteria', but also through reforms in all social sectors in a broader sense, defined by the norms and regulations of the 'acquis communautaire'.

Starting from the origins of a united Europe following the defeat of Nazism and Fascism in the Second World War, the course will attach particular importance to the period that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the communist regimes and continues to the present day. This historical period is crucial both for the constitution of the European Union as such and for the dialectical and contradictory dynamics of the integration of the 'other' Europe, the Central, Eastern and Balkan Europe.

The first part of the course will illustrate the basic concepts interpreting European integration, its specific model of governance and the discursive and normative construction of its structures and institutions. We will then analyse various crises that have characterised the turbulent thirty years, in particular the financial crisis (2008), the migrant crisis (2015), the Covid-19 pandemic crisis (2020 onwards), the crises provoked by the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine (2022) and the Israeli-Palestinian war, each of which has been addressed by specific policies: Austerity, border regime(s) and the redefinition of the European welfare state, the construction of a common foreign policy and defence at the supra- and transnational EU level. These crises point to potential risks and sources of threat for future integration, but also to a growing awareness of the importance of a Europe based on solidarity and substantial equality, guaranteeing social justice.

We will then discuss three case studies during the seminars: the first on the accession of the Western Balkans to the EU, the second on *Brexit*, and the third on the war in Ukraine. Each of the three cases offers space for discussion on a social Europe and its ability to deal with new socio-economic difficulties and growing social inequalities, as well as the drama of a new war in Europe, under the spectre of illiberal tendencies in European democracies, even their disintegration. Finally, the new constitution of the European institutions after the parliamentary elections in June 2024 will be the subject of observation and analysis.

Prerequisites

No specific prerequisite is required. A basic knowledge of English is desirable, but not essential.

Teaching methods

The course will combine lectures and participatory activities – students will be invited to present and discuss several selected texts. We will host experts in the field during our seminars. Please note that all lectures require attending in person. Italian is the official language of the course.

A certain number of afternoon meetings with working students may be arranged; Erasmus students may ask for short seminars in English, both in remote synchronous mode.

I will receive students both in presence and via Webex – the appointment should be agreed by mail a few days in advance.

Assessment methods

The first part of the exam requires the writing of a paper (3500-5000 words including the bibliography), on a selected topic proposed by and agreed with the teacher; the paper must be delivered at least 7 days before the oral exam. The oral examination consists in presentation and discussion of the paper content. Participation to the seminars will be taken into consideration for the final evaluation.

Students can write and discuss their papers in English, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian language.

Evaluation criteria:

The written exam test:

/- Ability to grasp the fundamental conceptual elements proposed by the course;

/- Ability to unfold synthetically a subject chosen for the test in an original and autonomous way;

/- Ability to develop a critical and reflective discourse in written form.

The oral exam test:

/- Understanding of the specific concepts related to the course topics;

/- Appropriate knowledge concerning the subject selected for the paper;

/- Ability to present the topic in a coherent way;

/- Ability of critical and reflective thinking.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

For an introduction:

Cavalli A., Martinelli A. (2015), *La società europea*, Bologna: il Mulino.

The book is available in an updated English version for the Erasmus+ students:

Cavalli A., Martinelli A. (2021), *European Society*, Leiden and Boston: Brill.

For theories and conceptions:

Wiener A., Börzel T.A., Risse T. (eds.) (2019), *European Integration Theory*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Sekuli? T. (2020), *The European Union and the Paradox of Enlargement. The Complex Accession of the Western Balkans*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (Chapters 1, 2 e 3)

Other relevant literature:

Fabbrini S. (2017), *Sdoppiamento. Una prospettiva nuova per l'Europa*, Bari: Editori Laterza.

Favell A. and Guiraudon V. (Eds.) (2011), *Sociology of the European Union*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Guiraudon V., Ruzza C. and Trenz H.J (Eds.) (2015), *Europe's Prolonged Crisis. The Making or the Unmaking of the Political Union*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Heinisch R., Massetti E. and Mazzoleni O. (2019), *The People and the Nation: Populism and Ethno-Territorial Politics in Europe (Extremism and Democracy)*, London: Routledge.

Kauppi N. (Ed.) (2013), *A Political Sociology of Transnational Europe*, Colchester: ECPR Press.

Marchetti C.M. (2015), *L'Europa dei cittadini. Cittadinanza e democrazia nell'Unione Europea*, Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Recchi E. (2013), *Senza frontiere. La libera circolazione delle persone in Europa*, Bologna: il Mulino.

Trenz H.J. (2016), *Narrating European Society. Towards a Sociology of European Integration*, London: Lexington Books.

All texts will be available in the University library and, where possible, in electronic format. Other selected materials will be uploaded on the course web platform. Each student may create his/her selection of references regarding the specific topic of the paper.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS