UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Le Dinamiche delle Integrazioni Europee

2526-1-F8702N008

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.

Autonomy of judgement

Ability to collect, analyse and critically interpret, independently, theoretical approaches relating to the specific field of the European Integration studies, and different types of empirical data concerning political and social phenomena and their change.

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.

Ability to learn

Ability to continue one's education independently, developing specific learning methods that facilitate the acquisition of and access to further knowledge and skills related to one's field of study and other related disciplines.

Contents

The course aims to present and analyse the key dynamics of the European integration process in its fundamental dimensions. The first dimension is the strengthening of the EU's supranational and transnational institutions, known as 'deepening'. The second dimension is the EU's expansion to other states and societies on the continent, known as 'widening'. We will analyse the integration process from the perspective of European political sociology, focusing on active and participatory citizenship. This process requires ongoing innovative work on public and social policies that can strengthen the capabilities of citizens and the democratic institutions of the Union and its member and candidate states.

Detailed program

The process of 'Europeanisation', which is defined here as the strengthening of the democratic systems of EU member states and candidate countries, involves the continuous and profound transformation of European societies. It concerns the harmonisation of the structures and institutions of these societies in accordance with the political, economic and social aspects of the 'Copenhagen criteria', as well as reforms in all social sectors, as 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, this course will focus particularly on the period beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of communist regimes, continuing to the present day. This historical period is pivotal for both the formation of the European Union and the integration of Central, Eastern and Balkan Europe, a process marked by both progress and challenges.

The first part of the course will introduce the fundamental principles of interpreting European integration, its unique governance model, and the discursive and normative development of its structures and institutions. We will then analyse various crises that have characterised the past thirty turbulent years, including the financial crisis of 2008, the migrant crisis of 2015, the ongoing crisis of the 2020–present-day Coronavirus pandemic, the crisis provoked by the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and the Israeli–Palestinian war. Each of these crises has been addressed by specific policies: these include austerity measures, changes to border control regimes and the redefinition of the European welfare state, as well as the development of a common foreign and defence policy at the EU's supra- and transnational levels. While these crises highlight potential risks and threats to future integration, they also demonstrate a growing awareness of the need for a Europe based on solidarity and substantial equality that guarantees social justice.

During the seminars, we will discuss three case studies: the accession of the Western Balkans to the EU; Brexit; and the war in Ukraine. Each case study will offer an opportunity to discuss the concept of a social Europe and its capacity to address emerging socio-economic challenges and mounting social disparities, alongside the implications of a new war in Europe amid the backdrop of mounting illiberal tendencies and potential disintegration within European democracies. Finally, we will observe and analyse the new constitution of the European institutions after the parliamentary elections in June 2024.

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. There will be no mid-term exams.

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 the student 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, Slovenian, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian languages.

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