

Syllabus: Introduction to the European Union Course – Fall 2009

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Course Description

The purpose of the course is to introduce the European Union (EU). Originally formed in 1957 by six nations, the EU is currently composed of twenty-seven countries from Western and Central Europe. The goal of European unity is not a recent innovation, having existed at least since the time of Charlemagne, but a commitment to cooperate did not become a priority until after World War II when hesitation about relinquishing certain aspects of national sovereignty was overridden by the war's devastation. The authority of the EU evolved slowly through a series of treaty agreements to encompass a complex network of social, political, and economic responsibilities. In the process, an elaborate structure of institutions developed to manage the EU's expanding range of activities. Three issues remain unresolved about the EU's future:

- the degree to which political—rather than merely economic—unity will be accomplished;
- the impact enlargement will have on the operation of the EU; and
- the challenge, if any, to the United States that will be posed by the collective strength of the EU's member states.

It has clearly become important for American students to know and understand the EU. The course incorporates historical, political, sociological, and economic considerations in studying the EU in order to appreciate the

magnitude of what is being attempted.

Learning Objectives

Goals

The learning objectives for the course require students to demonstrate knowledge of the following:

- the historical origins and development of the EU;
- the EU's governing institutions;
- the EU's policy-making processes;
- current EU policies and issues; and
- EU-USA relations.

Aside from acquiring knowledge about the EU, students will be challenged to sharpen writing, analytical, technological, and communication skills.

Course requirements: Preliminaries

1. WebCT/GeorgiaView: The course is taught entirely online via WebCT/GeorgiaView. You have received an introductory letter via email with login and password information. Please make sure that you change your password and that you remember it by writing it down and keeping it in a secure location. Once you change your password, the instructor will not know what it is. This is the most common source of log-in problems.

2. PLEASE NOTE: A Printable PDF Version of the Syllabus which may be easier for you to reference is available on this WebCT site, under "Course Resources."

3. Please check your calendar often for updated information as to the dates of quizzes, exams, and discussion dates. While you can access the course and post your discussion submissions anytime, anywhere in asynchronous fashion, each module contains assignments which everyone must complete within the same prescribed due dates indicated on the calendar. More information about this is below.

4. You will be graded on two kinds of assessments: exams and discussions. There are a total of ten exams (8 quizzes, a Midterm exam, and a Final exam). Collectively, the quizzes are "worth" 20% of your course grade. The Midterm exam and the Final exam are each worth 20% of

your course grade. There are two kinds of Discussion grades, one in which you collaborate on a "leader group essay" for one of the modules (20% of your total course grade), and one (also worth 20%) which is the combination of your participation grades for each module in responding to and commenting on the leader group essays of others (each of the 8 module discussions is 2.5 points for a combined result of 20). The total value of your grades for the discussion portion of the course is 40%, rounding out the grade weighting for all grades to 100%.

There is no required textbook for the course, as the modules contain all the readings required and you will be collecting readings in the form of online documents and web sites for use by yourself and other students.

Course requirements: Quizzes and Exams

Introduction 8 Quizzes

Midterm Exam

Final Exam

Requirements Quizzes: Each module has a separate quiz. You must complete each quiz within the time frame set by the calendar. Once you begin a quiz you must finish it within one hour or WebCT/Georgia View will not allow you to complete it. Each quiz is "worth" 2.5% of your course grade.

Midterm: The Midterm may be taken anytime within a two-day period designated on the calendar but once it is opened it must be completed within 90 minutes. It will consist of twenty multiple choice questions (each worth two points) and two essay questions (each worth 30 points and each answerable in 3 to 4 paragraphs) on the modules covered by the date of the Midterm. The Midterm exam is "worth" 20% of your course grade.

Final exam: The Final exam may be taken anytime on Thursday, December 10 but once it is opened it must be completed within 90 minutes. It will consist of twenty multiple choice questions (each worth 2 points) and two essay questions (each answerable in 3-4 paragraphs and each worth 30 points) on the modules covered after the Midterm exam. The Final exam is "worth" 20% of your course grade.

Course requirements: Discussions

Introduction	Discussions: You will receive two types of discussion grades, a single Discussion leader grade and a Discussion participant grade. You will be one of the Discussion leaders in one of the eight modules (how this works is described below) and you will be a discussion participant responding to the leaders of the other seven module discussions. You will receive a numeric grade for your discussion leader role, worth 20% of your course grade.
Requirements	For the discussion "leader" phase of the course, you will be collaborating with three to six other students in the authoring of a single essay about the module to which you are assigned. Everyone in the course will discuss this essay during the discussion "open" phase for that particular module. Even though you will be collaborating with several other students on a single leader essay post as part of the "leader phase" of the assignment your grade for this part will be individually assigned. As a discussion participant in the other seven module discussions you will receive a grade out of 2.5 points for each module discussion. (You will get a free 2.5 points for the module discussion that you lead) Thus, you could earn a total of 20 points for this portion of the discussion (i.e., 20% of your total course grade). More information on the Discussions is provided below.

Course requirements: How the Discussions Work

Introduction	3. Discussion Leader: Three to six students are assigned and required to lead the class discussion of each of the eight modules during the semester and author what is called the "leader essay." You can find out which module you will share the leadership role in by locating your name on the pdf file that provides this information on the WebCT site, under "Course Resources." The leader essay students have been assigned to a separate and private bulletin discussion board where they can communicate with each other and prepare a single leader essay post (agreeable to all) answering the instructor's questions on the
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topic and explaining what issues in the module were most of interest on the assigned topic. This essay must be posted by midnight on the due date listed on the calendar. Students must take care to contribute to their roles in a timely way, collaborating with others by the due dates for such collaboration. These dates will be listed on the calendar.

The leader essay involves two tasks. First, it must consist of a narrative of 1000-1200 words that contains the answer to the instructor's questions in narrative form and in the original words of the group leaders. The statement must be posted on the due date listed on the calendar. Second, the 1000-1200 word statement should be supplemented with at least two thought-provoking questions to be answered by the other students. Besides the module (as a source of information for the essay and the questions, recent news about the EU can be found in The Economist magazine and from the websites below: EU Observer: <http://www.euobserver.com>; Euractiv: www.euractiv.com; EU Commission Delegation to the US: <http://www.eurunion.org> ; U.S. Mission to the EU: <http://www.useu.be>.; and the official EU site, Europa.

Each of the three to six leaders will be assigned a separate grade for their contributions to the module discussion. Students can only receive credit for group work that occurs on the private discussion board. "No-Shows" on the group member board receive a "0" for the assignment. Please note that the private discussion spaces are "private" only insofar as the other students in the class are concerned. The instructor monitors all discussions, including private discussions, and bases student grades on discussions as well as the resulting essay.

Course requirements: How the Discussion Boards Work

Introduction 4. Bulletin Board Discussions: Students should visit the "Discussions" section (under "Communication Tools") during the first day of

class (August 24) and introduce themselves on the "Introductions" board, indicating why they are taking the course. Please note that three types of open discussion lists exist: Introductions, the eight individual "module open discussion boards," and Student Chit Chat. All course-related work (except for the private leader discussions) should be posted on the module open discussion boards. Student Chit-Chat is for general or off-the-topic exchanges among students. Only postings on the module open discussion and leader boards will be counted in assessing student performance. Students are required to make substantive contributions to questions related to readings and lectures that will be posted weekly. If a student posts only one post containing a paragraph to a particular discussion, that will usually not be enough to receive full credit. Extensive posts that are text-rich but vague or off-topic also do not help. Students may respond to these questions at any time of day but their responses must take place during the period in which the module is open. Contributions (posts) are graded on the basis of both quantity and quality. Each "post" will be evaluated in terms of content (the level of understanding evidenced in the posts), critical thinking (introducing different interpretations to ideas), and writing (the clear communication of ideas). Students should respond to one another's comments. Because this course requires the achievement of a genuine learning community, instructors will generally NOT be responding to the posts of students on the module open discussion board (although obviously there may be exceptions to this), but students will, with the instructor, be facilitating the learning of one another. The instructor will craft the questions for the leader essay, explain it if need be, and grade each essay (as well as the module open discussion of each student) in as timely a manner as possible. The instructor will provide extensive comments as to the reason for the grade assigned to the essay.

Students should check for instructor announcements weekly and check e-mail and discussion boards daily. Attendance alone is not enough in a web-course. To receive credit for participation, a student must log-on and make a substantive contribution to the discussion at least twice weekly. Simply saying "hello," "ditto" or "I agree" is not considered a substantive contribution. Please note that the instructor is able to chart each

student's progress through the course. The instructor knows when each student has logged into the course, what pages were viewed, how long was spent on each page, what posts were made, and how many posts have been read.

Grade Distribution at a Glance

8 Quizzes (2.5% each) = 20%

Midterm Exam = 20%

Final Exam = 20%

Leader Group Member and Essay = 20%

Discussion Participant = 20%

100%