

1. Professor

Prof. Tom Delreux

Institut de sciences politiques Louvain-Europe (ISPOLE) & School of European Studies (EURO)

Place Montesquieu 1, bte L2.08.07 (Leclercq, office b.243)

1348 Louvain-la-Neuve

010/47 40 47

tom.delreux@uclouvain.be

tomdelreux.bsky.social

2. Aim of the course

The aim of the course is to understand and to critically assess the functioning, role and significance of the main institutions and actors in the political system of the European Union. Recent political science literature on the political and bureaucratic functioning of the main actors in contemporary EU politics will be discussed. Besides the main institutions (European Commission, Council of the EU, European Parliament, European Council, Court of Justice of the EU), attention will be paid to the interaction between the institutions in the formulation and implementation of EU policies, to interest groups and non-state actors, as well as to the increasing importance of EU-level agencies and national parliaments in EU policy-making.

3. Course material

- The lectures are the core of this course. Students are highly encouraged to attend the lectures.
- A reader with the obligatory readings (book chapters and journal articles) will be available
 - in hard copy format at Facopy (Agora 9, Louvain-la-Neuve);
 - and in digital format on Moodle.
- During the lectures, the framework to understand texts of the reader will be provided. As a result, the reader is best read together with the notes taken during the lectures.
- Whereas the obligatory readings from the reader are an essential part of the course material and need to be studied for the exam, the recommended readings are provided for those students who want to deepen their knowledge on the various topics discussed in this course. They are not part of the reader and do not have to be studied for the exam as such.

4. Exam

- There will be a written exam in June and in August.
- The exam covers all the material discussed during the lectures and in the reader (exceptions will be announced during the lectures and via the announcements on Moodle).

5. Course schedule, obligatory and recommended readings

05/02 *no lecture*

1. 12/02 **Introduction**

2. 19/02 **European Commission (1)**

- Wonka A. (2015), 'The European Commission' in Richardson J., Mazey S. (eds.), *European Union. Power and policy-making*, London, Routledge, p. 83-106.
- Kassim H. (2022), 'The European Commission: from collegiality to presidential leadership' in Hodson D., Puetter U., Saurugger S., Peterson J., (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 106-127.
- Mérand F. (2022), 'The European Commission: the cabinets and the services' in Hodson D., Puetter U., Saurugger S., Peterson J., (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 177-202.

Recommended readings:

- Blom-Hansen J., Binderkrantz A., Backgaard M., Finke D., Senninger R., Serritzlew S. (2025), *Policy Preparation Inside the European Commission*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hartlapp M., Metz J., Rauh C. (2014), *Which Policy for Europe? Power and Conflict inside the European Commission*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hooghe L. (2005), 'Several Roads Lead to International Norms, but Few Via International Socialization: A Case Study of the European Commission' in *International Organization*, 59(4): p. 861-898.
- Kassim H., Peterson J., Bauer M., Connolly S., Dehousse R., Hooghe L., Thompson A. (2013), *The European Commission of the Twenty-First Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Nugent N., Rhinard M. (2015), *The European Commission*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.
- Wille A. (2013), *The Normalization of the European Commission: Politics and Bureaucracy in the EU Executive*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

3. 26/02 **European Commission (2)**
[see readings for class 2]

4. 05/03 **European Parliament**

- Ripoll Servent A., Costa O. (2022), 'The European Parliament: powerful but fragmented' in Hodson D., Puetter U., Saurugger S., Peterson J., (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 128-148.
- Bache I., Bulmer S., George S., Parker O. (2015), *Politics in the European Union. Fourth edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press: chapter 15 'The European Parliament' (p. 270-289).

Recommended readings:

- Brack N., Awenig M., Costa O. (2025), 'Unity in adversity: has the grand coalition survived fragmentation and COVID-19 in the 9th European Parliament?' in *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 31(2): p. 335-362.
- Costa O. (ed.) (2019), *The European Parliament in Times of EU Crises: Dynamics and Transformations*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Costello R., Thomson R. (2011), 'The nexus of bicameralism: Rapporteurs' impact on decision outcomes in the European Union' in *European Union Politics*, 12(3): p. 337-357.
- Daniel W. (2015), *Career Behaviour and the European Parliament. All Roads Lead Through Brussels?*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Goetze S. and Rittberger B. (2010), 'A matter of habit? The sociological foundations of empowering the European Parliament' in *Comparative European Politics*, 8(1): 37-54.
- McElroy G., Bowler S. (2015), 'Political group cohesion and "hurrah" voting in the European Parliament' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(9): 1355-1365.
- Ripoll Servent A. (2018), *The European Parliament*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Whitaker R., Hix S., Zapryanova G. (2017), 'Understanding Members of the European Parliament: Four waves of the European Parliament Research Group MEP Survey' in *European Union Politics*, 18(3): p. 491-506.
- Yordanova N. (2013), *Organising the European Parliament. The Role of Committees and their Legislative Influence*, Colchester, ECPR Press.

5. 12/03 **Council of the EU**

- Puetter U. (2022), 'The Council of the European Union: co-legislator, coordinator and executive power' in Hodson D., Puetter U., Saurugger S., Peterson J., (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 78-105.
- Lewis J. (2017), 'The Council of Ministers of the European Union' in Laursen F. (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of European Union Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Naurin D. (2015), 'The Councils of the EU. Intergovernmental bargaining in a supranational polity' in Richardson J., Mazey S. (eds.), *European Union. Power and policy-making*, London, Routledge, p. 135-158.
- Puetter U. (2014), *The European Council and the Council. New Intergovernmentalism and Institutional Change*, Oxford, Oxford University Press: chapter 4 'The Council: from Law-making to Policy Coordination' (p. 148-225).

Recommended readings:

- Häge F. (2007), 'Committee Decision-making in the Council of the European Union' in *European Union Politics*, 8(3): p. 299-328.
- Häge F. (2013), 'Coalition Building and Consensus in the Council of the European Union' in *British Journal of Political Science*, 43(3): p. 481-504.
- Häge F. (2019), 'The Presidency of the Council of the European Union' in Laursen F. (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of European Union Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 35.
- Lewis J. (2022), 'The Committee of Permanent Representatives: integrating interests and the logics of action' in Hodson D., Puetter U., Saurugger S., Peterson J., (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 323-347.
- Naurin D., Wallace H. (eds.) (2008), *Unveiling the Council of the European Union. Games Governments Play in Brussels*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.
- Smeets S., Vennix J. (2014), 'How to make the most of your time in the Chair: EU presidencies and the management of Council debates' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(10): p. 1435-1451.

6. 19/03 **European Council**
- van Middelaar L., Puetter U. (2022), 'The European Council: the Union's supreme decision-maker' in Hodson D., Puetter U., Saurugger S., Peterson J., (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 51-77.
 - Schramm L. (Online First), 'The European Council turns 50: Studying and analyzing a key institution in the European Union' in *European Political Science*.
- Recommended readings:
- Beach D., Smeets S. (2020), 'New Institutional Leadership – how the new European Council-dominated crisis governance paradoxically strengthened the role of EU institutions' in *Journal of European Integration*, 42(6): p. 837-854.
 - Puetter U. (2014), *The European Council and the Council. New Intergovernmentalism and Institutional Change*, Oxford, Oxford University Press: chapter 3 'The European Council: the New Centre of Political Gravity' (p. 68-147).
 - Nardelli A., Arnett G. (2015), *Super Mario Bros meets House of Cards: the European Council's badge system*, The Guardian – European Union Datablog, <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2015/jun/25/super-mario-bros-meets-house-of-cards-the-european-councils-badge-system>.
 - Wessels W. (2015), *The European Council*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.
7. 26/03 **Interinstitutional relations: decision-making**
- Lelieveldt H., Princen S. (2023), *The Politics of the European Union. Third edition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: chapter 4 'Legislation and Decision-Making: Putting the Institutional Puzzle Together' (p. 73-100).
 - Kluger Dionigi M., Rasmussen A. (2019), 'The Ordinary Legislative Procedure' in Laursen F. (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of European Union Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Recommended readings:
- Brandsma G. (2013), *Controlling Comitology. Accountability in a Multi-Level System*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.
 - Crombez C., Hix S. (2015), 'Legislative Activity and Gridlock in the European Union' in *British Journal of Political Science*, 45(3): p. 477-499.
 - Delreux T., Laloux T. (2018), 'Concluding Early Agreements in the EU: A Double Principal-Agent Analysis of Trilogue Negotiations' in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(2): p. 300-317.
 - Héritier A. (2013), 'Twenty years of legislative codecision in the European Union: experience and implications' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 20(7): p. 1074-1082.
 - Kardasheva R. (2013), 'Package Deals in EU Legislative Politics' in *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(4): p. 858-874.
 - Reh C., Héritier A., Bressanelli E., Koop C. (2013), 'The Informal Politics of Legislation: Explaining Secluded Decision Making in the European Union' in *Comparative Political Studies*, 46(9): p. 1112-1142.
 - Roederer-Rynning C., Greenwood J. (2015), 'The culture of trilogues' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(8): p. 1148-1165.
 - Thomson R. (2015), 'The distribution of power among the institutions' in Richardson J., Mazey S. (eds.), *European Union. Power and policy-making*, London, Routledge, p. 189-210.
8. 02/04 **Court of Justice**
- Saurugger S., Terpan F. (2022), 'The Court of Justice of the European Union: a quiet leader' in Hodson D., Puetter U., Saurugger S., Peterson J., (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 149-174.
- Recommended readings:
- Hix S., Hoyland B. (2022), *The Political System of the European Union. Fourth edition*, London, Bloomsbury: chapter 4 'Judicial Politics' (p. 89-120).
 - Schmidt S. (2015), 'The shadow of case law. The Court of Justice of the European Union and the policy process' in Richardson J., Mazey S. (eds.), *European Union. Power and policy-making*, London, Routledge, p. 159-188.
9. 09/04 **Agencies**
- Rimkute D. (2022), 'European Union agencies: explaining EU agency behaviour, processes, and outputs' in Hodson D., Puetter U., Saurugger S., Peterson J., (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 203-224.
 - Rittberger B., Wonka A. (2015), 'EU agencies' in Richardson J., Mazey S. (eds.), *European Union. Power and policy-making*, London, Routledge, p. 233-258.
- Recommended readings:
- Busuioac M., Groenleer M., Trondal J. (eds.) (2012), *The agency phenomenon in the European Union. Emergence, institutionalisation and everyday decision-making*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.
 - Egeberg M., Trondal J. (2011), 'EU-level agencies: new executive centre formation or vehicles for national control?' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 18(6): p. 868-887.
 - Thatcher M. (2011), 'The creation of European regulatory agencies and its limits: a comparative analysis of European delegation' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 18(6): p. 790-809.
 - Trondal J., Jeppesen L. (2008), 'Images of Agency Governance in the European Union' in *West European Politics*, 31(3): p. 417-441.

23/04 no lecture: Spring break

30/04 no lecture: Spring break

11. 07/05 **National parliaments**

- Costa O., Brack N. (2014), *How the EU Really Works*, Surrey, Ashgate: section 6.4 'National Parliaments and European Integration' (p. 156-166).
- Rozenberg O., Hefftlar C. (2015), 'Introduction' in Hefftlar C., Neuhold C., Rozenberg O., Smith J. (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of National Parliaments and the European Union*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 1-39.

Recommended readings:

- Auel K., Christiansen T. (2015), 'After Lisbon: National Parliaments in the European Union' in *West European Politics*, 38(2): p. 261-281.
- de Ruiter R. (2013), 'Under the radar? National parliaments and the ordinary legislative procedure in the European Union' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 20(8): p. 1196-1212.
- Gattermann K., Högenauer A., Huff A. (2016), 'Research note: studying a new phase of europeanisation of national parliaments' in *European Political Science*, 15(1): p. 89-107.
- Jensen M., Martinsen D. (2015), 'Out of Time? National Parliaments and Early Decision-Making in the European Union' in *Government and Opposition*, 50(2): p. 240-270.
- Kröger S., Bellamy R. (2016), 'Beyond a constraining dissensus: The role of national parliaments in domesticating and normalising the politicization of European integration' in *Comparative European Politics*, 14(1): p. 131-153.
- Winzen T. (2013), 'European integration and national parliamentary oversight institutions' in *European Union Politics*, 14(2): p. 297-323.

12. **Interest groups and societal interest representation**

- Lelieveldt H., Princen S. (2023), *The Politics of the European Union. Third edition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: chapter 6 'Interest Groups and Interest Representation' (p. 119-140).
- Abels G. (2022), 'The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: consultative institutions in a multichannel democracy' in Hodson D., Puetter U., Saurugger S., Peterson J., (eds.), *The Institutions of the European Union. Fifth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 369-390.

Recommended readings:

- Greenwood J. (2017), *Interest Representation in the European Union. 4th edition*, London, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Judge A., Thomson R. (2019), 'The responsiveness of legislative actors to stakeholders' demands in the European Union' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(5): p. 676-695.
- Klüver H., Braun C., Beyers J. (2015), 'Legislative lobbying in context: towards a conceptual framework of interest group lobbying in the European Union' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4): 447-461.
- Mazey S., Richardson J. (2015), 'Shooting where the ducks are. EU lobbying and institutionalized promiscuity' in Richardson J., Mazey S. (eds.), *European Union. Power and policy-making*, London, Routledge, p. 419-444.
- Panke D., Hönnige C., Gollub J. (2015), *Consultative Committees in the European Union. No Vote – No Influence?*, Colchester, ECPR Press.
- Princen S., Kerremans B. (2008), 'Opportunity Structures in the EU Multi-Level System' in *West European Politics*, 31(6): p. 1129-1146.

14/05 no lecture: Ascension Day