CET Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Florence
Course Title: FL/ECON 324
Course Code: The European Political Economy
Total Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3
Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Economics / Political Science, Italian Studies, International Relations
Language of Instruction: English
Prerequisites/Requirements: Prior Economics coursework recommended but not required

Description
This course explores the current development of the European Union and its economic policies. While the course starts with a brief introduction to the historical development of the European integration, the primary focus is on the European Union’s economic policies: single market, social policy, monetary policy and the euro, welfare, competition and industrial policy, migration and environment policy, and the EU’s external policies as the world’s largest trading bloc. Special emphasis is given to the historical development of Italy’s internal political economy, and how the European Union’s policies have influenced its current state.

The course offers a general survey of the economic history of Europe after the Second World War, and aims to shed light both on the way in which European economic development influenced the national and international stages and, conversely, how national and international factors conditioned the dynamics of European economic policies. In this way, the course highlights the dynamics of Europe from the foundation of European Communities and the development of a common market to the rise of the European Union and of its exclusive Monetary Union.

The course takes a trans-disciplinary (which is a different key concept than cross-cultural) approach of the topic, shedding light on the strong connections between economic policies and general political framework. It also highlights the influence of the economy on historical, social and cultural factors, and vice versa.

Objectives
The aim of this course is to educate students about European economic policies and their consequences at economic and social levels on different three stages: European, national and global. Specific economic systems (capitalism, organised capitalism, social capitalism, socialism, neo-liberalism, etc.), policies (all those mentioned above and some others, such as state-aids, laissez-faire, protectionism, mutual recognition, financial integration, sustainable development, etc.) and administrative structures (various European agencies: European Environment Agency; committees at European Parliament level: Development, Economic and Monetary Affairs; Directorates General at European Commission level: DG Competition, DG Agriculture, etc.; European Central Bank), and political institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council, Council of Ministers, Presidency) are discussed. In the course, students examine political and economic developments as tightly related and mutually illuminating processes. Students
CET Syllabus of Record

become practiced in drawing parallels between the two major economic paradigms—Western and Eastern—and understanding both the radical differences and eventual similarities between them. Finally, students unpack the issue of so-called Americanization of the European economy by becoming versed in the current scholarship on this topic.

Course Requirements

Lectures represent the main didactic base for the course. Individual study of readings is required on a weekly basis. Students are expected to read assignments carefully before class and take detailed notes during lectures. Students are required to read 20 to 25 pages of reading per class. Classes also include interactive assignments and discussions in which students are expected to actively participate.

Students complete an oral presentation on a topic of their choice and confirmed by the instructor. Presentations should not exceed 45 minutes. Students may choose their preferred format, but multimedia presentations are most welcome. Upon completion, students transform the presentation into a paper of about 2,000 words. The paper should include clear references to at least two secondary academic sources. Criticism and personal opinions are particularly encouraged.

There is a midterm and final exam, each consisting of two parts, short answer questions and essays. The final exam covers the materials from the second half of the term only.

Finally, students are required to complete “quick writes” in class. These brief in-class writing assignments give students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the assigned readings for that class, and to propose questions and hypotheses that may be discussed during the class session.

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

Class participation 15%
Quick write readings assessment 15%
Research project (presentation and paper) 20%
Midterm exam 20%
Final exam 30%

Primary Texts


Supplementary Texts

CET Syllabus of Record


Outline of Course Content

Note: Fall/Spring students cover approximately 1 topic per week. During the summer, when class periods are longer, students cover approximately 2 topics per week.

TOPIC 1: What is Europe? Introduction
An historical overview; the origins of Europe; West versus East and the corresponding economic systems (capitalism versus socialism; free market and competition versus state central economy); Europe and the European Union.

TOPIC 2: The European Union integration process: From Rome to Maastricht and Beyond

TOPIC 3: The Road to a Single Market
Free trade area; customs union; common market; harmonization; mutual recognition; single market; structural policies.

TOPIC 4: Social Changes and EU Social Policy
EU labour market; the rise of services economy; gender roles; demographic and family issues; the impact of immigration, the impact of the EU economic policy on European society; the Italian case.

TOPIC 5: EU Monetary Policy and the Single Currency (euro). Management in the Eurozone
European Monetary Union; European Central Bank; single currency (euro); the impact of the introduction of euro (case studies: Italy, Germany); Exchange Rate Mechanism 2 (ERM2); Maastricht (convergence) criteria; financial services integration; banking regulations and supervision; the role of international institutions and groups (IMF, WB, G20; consequences of the last crisis at European and national level (Italy, Greece, etc.).

TOPIC 6: The Making of EU Environmental Policy--Open debate
CET Syllabus of Record

The development of EU environmental policy; policy-making process and institutions (Environment Directorate General, European Parliament, European Environment Agency); Non-Governmental Organisations (the Green G8); policy areas (climate change, ground-level air pollution, biodiversity, the ‘Wild Birds and Habitat Directives’); EU and the Kyoto Protocol; the USA resistance.

TOPIC 7: European Welfare System and Welfare Policy. European Migration Policy
a) Welfare: economic and social welfare; national welfare systems in the EU; EU competence and legitimacy in social welfare policy.
   b) Migration: immigration and welfare policy; ‘Fortress Europe’; migration at EU level; immigration and migration policy in Italy.

TOPIC 8: The Making of EU Competition Policy and the New Industrial Policy
The emergence of EU competition policy and member states' resistance; industrial policy and changes over time; pursuing competitiveness; global pressure and international challenging systems: the USA and the growing economies (China, India).

TOPIC 9: European Union Enlargement and Integration Processes
Waves of EU enlargement (from Europe of 6 to Europe of 27); integrating Eastern Europe and the Copenhagen (enlargement) criteria; negative and positive integration; diversity versus integration; future expansion of EU; the problematic case of Turkey.

TOPIC 10: European Political Economy from a Global Perspective
EU’s external economic relations; EU and Global economy; intra-EU and extra-EU economic relations; the future status and competence of national states (the Italian case).

TOPIC 11: Europe and the USA
Shifts in Transatlantic relations, the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA); EU–USA divergences; Americanization of Europe; EU integration as a possible model for globalization.