

European Union Governance & Policy Challenges

Online Training from the University of Washington

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Course Overview

This training, sponsored by the European Union Center and Center for West European Studies and co-sponsored by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union, is focused on the real-world policy issues and international negotiations of the European Union, as well as the theory of international negotiation, public policy and the politics surrounding policy formation.

We will look at the roles of large and small countries in policy formation, negotiation, and how countries negotiate to ensure that final policy outcomes reflect their preferences and concerns. The training consists of eight lectures. Parts 1 and 2 establish a background knowledge of the issues and functions of the EU, then, parts 3 through 8 cover specific topic areas and challenges the European Union faces.

We will work with questions of comparative government, media, public communication, leadership, accountability, decision-making, assessing project outcomes, forecasting, project budgeting, taxation, and the challenges of executing complex projects in the real world.

Suggested Readings:

It is suggested that you peruse The Economist (economist.com) as you follow this EU Governance & Policy Challenges training, focusing on articles addressing EU, Economic, Policy-making and Trans-Atlantic issues.

Part 1: Introduction to the EU

Part 1 offers an overview of the themes of this training, as well as a deep background dive into the roots of the European Union and the underlying question of "What is Europe?" following along from the Roman Empire to the Treaty of Rome and the founding of the institutions that would become the European Union.

Particular attention is paid to the questions of the development of larger and smaller states in Europe, and the consequences of the Second World War in creating the modern political and economic landscape of Europe.

Part 1 Suggested Activity: Choose a topic covered in Part 1 and write a two-page policy briefing paper on that topic. Although Part 1 covers the history of the EU, try to incorporate an area of current EU/national policy contention, and write from the perspective of an individual EU member country.

Part 2: EU Foundations

Part 2 continues with the topics from Part 1, including an overview of the themes of this training, as well as a deep background dive into the roots of the European Union and the underlying question of "What is Europe?" following along from the Roman Empire to the Treaty of Rome and the founding of the institutions that would become the European Union.

Particular attention is paid to the questions of the development of larger and smaller states in Europe, and the consequences of the Second World War in creating the modern political and economic landscape of Europe.

Part 2 Suggested Activity: Similar to the suggested activity for Part 1, choose a topic covered in Part 2 and write a two-page policy briefing paper on that topic. Although Part 2 covers the continued history of the EU, try to incorporate an area of current EU/national policy contention, and write from the perspective of an individual EU member country.

Part 3: EU Institutions

The European Union works with and through a unique array of institutions, providing both a democratic foundation and a powerful set of working entities to define policy, manage projects across the full range of competencies, provide oversight, and rule on areas of dispute.

Part 3 Suggested Activity: Write a two-page policy briefing paper on one of the EU Institutions or one of the specific issues covered in Part 3. Your paper should be on an area of current EU/national policy contention, and be written from the perspective of an individual EU member country.

Part 4: The EU and Defense

This module discusses European defense and security, with an emphasis on the challenges facing the EU in creating a defense identity given NATO's strength in this area, and the overlapping but not identical memberships and priorities of the two organizations. Russia, Turkey, Syria, Libya, Ukraine and other topics are included.

Part 4 Suggested Activity: Write a two-page policy briefing paper on the EU and Defense or one of its specific aspects covered in Part 4. Your paper should be on an area of current EU/national policy contention, and be written from the perspective of an individual EU member country.

Part 5: EU Membership

The rights and obligations of becoming an EU member state and working successfully within the EU and Single Market are discussed. The challenges on both sides of the English Channel after the UK's official exit, and remaining issues to be resolved, are a focus area, along with current and potential future candidates for membership, including Turkey and the Western Balkan region.

Part 5 Suggested Activity: Write a two-page policy briefing paper on EU Membership or one of its specific aspects covered in Part 5. Your paper should be on an area of current EU/national policy contention, and be written from the perspective of an individual EU member country.

Part 6: EU Migration

The transition from a historic area of emigration to a migration/immigration destination has been challenging for Europe over the last 50 years. We look at historic migration patterns, post-WW2 changes and developments, and continue into the 2015 migration crisis and ongoing regional challenges that remain.

Part 6 Suggested Activity: Write a two-page policy briefing paper on EU Migration or one of its specific aspects covered in Part 6. Your paper should be on an area of current EU/national policy contention, and be written from the perspective of an individual EU member country.

Part 7: Agriculture of the EU

The Common Agricultural Program today represents about 30% of the EU's budget, down from over 60% in the 1980's. Agricultural and rural development programs remain the EU's single largest area of expenditure. A look at the underlying economics and challenges of agriculture, food security, market management, and global impacts of agricultural support programs is the centerpiece of this module.

Part 7 Suggested Activity: Write a two-page policy briefing paper on EU Agriculture or one of its specific aspects covered in Part 7. Your paper should be on an area of current EU/national policy contention, and be written from the perspective of an individual EU member country.

Part 8: The EU and Environment

The EU is a global leader in developing and promoting meaningful environmental programs, from local noise pollution to global CO₂ levels. This module focuses on the EU as a regulator, and how it works to move this critical topic forward across a diverse range of competencies, from clean air and water to renewable energy and green industry.

Part 8 Suggested Activity: Write a two-page policy briefing paper on EU and Environment or one of its specific aspects covered in Part 8. Your paper should be on an area of current EU/national policy contention, and be written from the perspective of an individual EU member country.