

Tel Aviv University

European Studies Programme

Course

The European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy



SYLLABUS

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Angelos Giannakopoulos

Spring Semester 2026

Course Description and Contents

The course offers an introduction into the foreign policy and external relations of the European Union. It provides insights into a) the legal and institutional framework of the Union's external relations; b) the relationship between the EU's foreign policy and the foreign policy of the member states; c) the different areas of the European Union's external action, such as human rights, trade, or security and defense policy; d) the relations of the EU with major powers and its Eastern and Southern neighbourhood. All course materials including books, articles and PPTs will be provided by the instructor before the start of the course.

Course Requirements:

1. Attending regularly and participating actively during the classes are highly required. Attendance and active participation will account for 20% of the overall grading.
2. Each student should write one **class paper** (2000-2500 words). The essay should be submitted until July 3rd, 2026. For the essays, please select a topic of the presentations in the syllabus at your discretion. It can be the same topic as for your presentation. Criteria for grading are content, structure, and style/ability to use correct English in an academic paper. The essay will account for 40% of the final grade. The essay should be submitted via Moodle.
3. Each student should conduct a **presentation** about one of the topics for presentations in the syllabus. You can choose one of the topics in the course outline or suggest a topic for a presentation to the instructor. The length of the presentation should be about 15-20 minutes, for two presenters 30-35 minutes. The presentation will account for 40% of the final grade.

Optional course reading materials and supportive sources (books):

1. Stephan Keukeleire/Tom Delreux: The Foreign Policy of the European Union, 3rd Edition, London 2022
2. Christopher Hill/Michael Smith/Sophie Vanhoonacker (eds.): International Relations and the European Union, 4th Edition, Oxford 2023
3. Jan Wouters/Frank Hoffmeister/Geert de Baere/Thomas Ramopoulos: The Law of EU External Relations: Cases, Materials, and Commentary on the EU as an International Legal Actor, 3rd Edition Oxford 2021
4. Federiga Bindi/Irina Angelescu (eds.): The Foreign Policy of the European Union. Assessing Europe's Role in the World, 2nd Edition, Washington DC 2012

Course Outline:

Institutional and Legal Framework	
Class 1	Introduction
	Introduction to the seminar and the topic of EU foreign policy; course requirements
Class 2	How to analyze EU foreign policy and historical overview of its making
	Theories that can be used to analyze EU foreign policy and a historical overview of the development of EU foreign policy
Class 3	Actors and competences

	Main actors of the EU's foreign policy; Competences of the European Union in the area of foreign policy
Policy Areas	
Class 4 (online)	Promoting human rights and democracy
	Presentation topics: 1) How can the European Union effectively promote democracy and human rights in the world?
Class 5 (online)	The EU's external action
	Presentation topics: 1) How does the EU contribute to global policies on climate protection (or another policy field of your choice in the area of external action)? 2) Why is the European Union considered to be a trade power and how does the EU use this power?
Class 6	Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP)
	Presentation topics: 1) How can the European Union strengthen its defense and become a more effective military power after Russia's war against Ukraine?
Relations with major powers and the EU's neighborhood	
Class 7	Russia's war against Ukraine and the EU's reaction
	Presentation topics: 1) How did the EU react to Russia's war in Ukraine and/or how can the war end? 2) How can the Ukraine become a member of the EU?
Class 8	The relationship between the EU and China
	Presentation topics: 1) What is and what should be the EU's strategy towards China? 2) What is the EU's policy towards Taiwan and the China-Taiwan conflict?
Class 9	EU-Asia relations
	Presentation topics: 1) How does the EU cooperate with the regional organization ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations)? 2) How does the EU cooperate with India? 3) How does the EU cooperate with Japan?
Class 10	The EU's Southern Neighbourhood: The Union of the Mediterranean and EU-Israel relations
	Presentation topics: 1) What is the EU's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? 2) How do the EU and Israel view EU-Israel relations? What are strengths and weaknesses in the bilateral relationship? 3) How is the relationship between the EU and Jordan?
Class 11	The relationship between the EU and the United Kingdom

	Presentation topics: What is the political and economic relationship between the UK and the EU after “Brexit” and Russia’s war against Ukraine?
Class 12	The relationship between the EU and the United States
	Presentation topics: The transatlantic relationship under the Trump administration – What do the US and the EU expect from each other in NATO and in political and economic relations?
Class 13	Concluding session
	Discussion: How can the EU achieve strategic autonomy and be a global power?
	Deadline for the submission of the class paper via Moodle: July 3rd, 2026

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

In order to get familiar with the course foci students are recommended to visit the following websites prior to the course:

- European Union Website https://european-union.europa.eu/index_en
- EURLEX for EC Legislation <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>
- European Court of Justice (ECJ) <http://curia.europa.eu/>
- EU-Treaties <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/eu-law/treaties/treaties-force.html>
- Interactive Timeline of the European Union <https://www.euwatch.be/timeline-of-the-eu/>