



Democracy in the European Union course manual
MA European Studies: elective course
Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam

Academic Year 2022-2023

Convenor: Niels ten Oever

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Democracy in the European Union



Figure 1: Trial referendum on the establishment of a European federal state in Delft (The Netherlands), 17 December 1952, photographer Harry Pot / Anefo, <http://proxy.handle.net/10648/a903f4ce-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84>

Contact details for instructor

Niels ten Oever

- Office: OIH D2.09B
- Email: mail@nielstenoever.net (Canvas messaging preferred)
- Office hours: by appointment

Read and re-read this syllabus carefully. Failing to read the syllabus may influence your grade negatively in borderline cases. Please ensure you have read the [deliverables checklist](#) below.

Please use Canvas' messaging system for queries about the course. Please resend any unanswered messages after four (working) days. **Please use email sensibly. Some questions can be more efficiently dealt with in class (or by re-reading this course manual!).**

Course description

The historians Conway and Depkat rightly concluded that in the 1950s and 1960s building democracy meant creating the right material conditions for the prosperity of the many. Democracy was not conceived in solely political terms, but as part of the wider social and economic framework of society. The European push for socio-economic peace corresponded with postwar anti-totalitarian conceptions of human rights and consensus democracy.

Paradoxically, in the 1960s and 1970s, when 'Europe' came to be seen as the home of democracy, politicians and opinion leaders started emphasising the democratic deficit within the European Communities. This paradox will be the central focus of the course. It raises questions about the changing concepts of democracy in Europe and the effects of Europeanisation on the national political systems of the EC and EU member states.

In recent decades, EU scholars have tried to unbundle this paradox. In addition to the historical understanding of the changing nature of democracy in Europe, this course will examine different conceptual and policy frameworks that have been developed to understand the relationship between democracy and the EU with a view to discussing how democracy can be viewed in light of transformations at the local, national and European levels.

In the second half of this course, we will apply the theoretical and historical frameworks of democracy in the European Union on two cases, namely the development of a European digital space through policy, technology, and standardization, and by analyzing European responses to the war in Ukraine.

The course will be examined by a short presentation, an individual research paper about a specific research topic related to the central theme of the course and a short reflection note or policy brief. The research paper is based on literature and (archival or published) primary sources.

Course objectives

The course aims to give you the ability to:

- critically discuss concepts of 'democracy' and 'Europeanisation' from a variety of theoretical perspectives.
- analyse the interplay between 'Europe' and the internal domestic politics of the European member states.
- select and interpret (archival and published) primary sources on Europeanisation and democracy.
- understand and explain the tensions in the relationship between the EU and its citizens.

Method of instruction

This course takes place over a nine week period. Meetings usually consist of four hours of contact time. All sessions will take place onsite.

Course language

The principal course language is English. All course readings and other materials are in English.

Practical information

Core resources

All compulsory course readings are available in Canvas in the respective module.
 The Annex on primary (digital) sources, provided at the end of this course manual is a static version of a living document, available [here](#): please contribute to the document by adding references you find relevant!
 For a comprehensive list of databases available at the university, check: [here](#)

Course schedule summary

The following table provides a summary of classes and activities. You will create work groups and sign up for the research paper proposals in the first plenary session, please do so on Canvas under Files.

Week	Date	Comment
#1		No class
#2	11/04	The interpretation of democracy after the end of the Second World War as the original sin behind the current democratic deficit in the EU (Robin de Bruin)
	13/04	Southern enlargement and the ever-increasing self-identification of the EC with representative democracy in the 1970s and 1980s (Robin de Bruin)
#3	18/04	Democratic thought (Jasper Simons)
	20/04	Seminar and presentations of research paper proposal
#4	25/04	Democratic deficit and legitimacy in the European Union
	27/04	no class (King's day)
#5	02/05	Seminar and presentations of research paper proposal
	04/05	Democracy in Europe's emerging digital space: Gaia-X, AI, and Digital Sovereignty
#6	09/05	Seminar and presentations of research paper proposal
	11/05	Online discussion forum, joint literature selection for next week, group work (no seminar)
#7	16/05	Democracy and conflict: Ukraine part I
	18/05	No class (Ascension day)
#8	23/05	Democracy and conflict: Ukraine part II and course wrap up
	25/05	No class

Study load

You will spend 50% of your working time (**approximately 20 hours per week**) on this course. This consists of preparation for and participation in the meetings and completing the deliverables. The amount of effort may vary from session to session, but the workload is inevitably focused towards the period around delivery due dates.

In addition to the required readings and the preparatory tasks for each class, you should read a pertinent selection of literature from the [suggested readings][Annex - suggested readings]. You should choose texts that are relevant to your research objectives. You should also keep informed through regular reading of current news sources related to your chosen topic. The [deliverables checklist](#) provides details on the work to be submitted during the course. From week one onwards, you should be thinking about *all your deliverables*.

Passing grade

An average of 5.5 is the minimum grade you need to pass the course.

Lower grades on one deliverable may be compensated by higher grades on others. Individually written assessments that count for the final mark may be retaken once (see the current version of the Teaching and Examination Regulations), on or before the end of Block 6. Group work may not be resubmitted.

Resits

Resits are only available for individual submissions. In case of a resit, the last grade counts as the final grade. The research paper resit will be a rewritten version of the paper, deadline on or before the date of the **exam resit**. Research papers that are handed in late will be treated as resits.

Participation

Students are expected to participate actively.

We shall make use of a diversity of methods to encourage participation in the classroom, particularly during seminars. We shall make use of both 'jigsaw' (sharing knowledge amongst your peers) and 'deep-reading' (reading assignments) methods to encourage and stimulate reading and understanding.

Course Evaluation

Course evaluations are an important tool for improving the quality of courses and study programmes. At the end of a teaching period, questionnaires are distributed among the course participants. The results of these questionnaires are discussed by the Board of Studies, and ideas for improvement are communicated to the course coordinator. More information on the Board of Studies is available at <http://student.uva.nl/meus/az/item/board-of-studies.html>. Please do take time to fill these in at the end of the course.

However, you should not feel as though you have to wait until the end of the course in order to voice any issues that you may have. The course instructor invites you to engage either prior or immediately after a class, or via email to discuss any concerns.

Session locations

Please check <https://rooster.uva.nl> for the location of our meetings.

Deliverables

General guidelines for submitting written work

During the course, you are expected to submit several pieces of work. It is important to note the following requirements:

- Documents submitted digitally should conform to the following rules: PDF format, A4, fully justified paragraphs, with single line spacing **and page numbers clearly identified**. The following information should be clearly marked on the front page of the submission:
 - name
 - student number
 - course title and academic year
 - deliverable name
 - title of piece
 - date of submission
- Note that the front page of your submission is not included in the page limits described below.
- Students are expected to inform themselves of standard academic procedures for citing and referencing: coherence and consistency is most important.
- Work will be downgraded for language, spelling, and grammatical errors. Please double check before submitting.
- Students are expected to be familiar with the University's code of conduct and rules on plagiarism. For more information on preventing plagiarism, see [the UvA webpage on plagiarism and fraud](#), and also the [Academic Integrity Guide from the Faculty of Humanities](#).
- All deliverables are submitted via Canvas. **Documents submitted through email will be deleted.**

Research paper (D1)

Students will write a short individual research paper (3000 words, margin either way of 10%, incl. references and bibliography) about a specific research topic related to a central theme in the course. This research paper is based on literature and (archival or published) primary sources.

At the end of the course, you will submit a paper in which you apply the perspectives on democracy discussed in this course in an extensive analysis of, for instance, the news reporting of newspapers, speeches given by a politician, internal party correspondence or stakeholder position papers, on one of the key events in European integration history.

Example key events Choose your own focus area! (E.g. the British Foreign Office and the 1975 referendum, The Dutch press and the 2005 referendum, Jean-Marie le Pen and the Maastricht Treaty, NGO's in the EP etc.) Try to find out what archival material can be studied online (or, if possible, at the International Institute of Social History).

The following list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive.

1. Establishment Council of Europe, 1949
2. The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community, 1950-1952
3. Debate in European Parliament/national parliaments on European Defence Community and European Political Community, 1952-1953
4. Referendum Saar, 1955
5. Establishment European Economic Community/Euratom Community, 1955-1958
6. Association policy, European Development Fund and democracy-building in "third world" countries, 1963
7. Empty Chair Crisis, 1965-1966
8. Accession United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, 1973
9. EC and EU related referendums in Norway/Denmark
10. Establishment European Council, 1974-1975
11. The European Communities and democracy-building in Portugal, Spain, Greece.
12. Referendum United Kingdom, 1975
13. Establishment of the European Space Agency 1975
14. Campaigns first elections to European Parliament by direct suffrage, 1979
15. Treaty of Maastricht, 1992-1993
16. Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997-1999
17. The Lisbon Strategy and eEurope, 1999-2000
18. The writing of the Governance White Paper (2000-2001)
19. Eastern enlargement of the EU and democracy-building, 2004
20. Referendums in France and the Netherlands on Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, 2005

21. Lisbon Treaty, 2007-2009
22. Euro-crisis, 2009-2014
23. TTIP negotiations
24. Russia's war against Ukraine, 2014-
25. Brexit referendum, 2016
26. General Data Protection Regulation 2016
27. European Standardisation Strategy 2022

During the seminar sessions, you will be required to give a short (eight minute) presentation of your plans for your paper (D0.1). You will receive feedback from the lecturer and your peers during the session. Please sign up for your presentations on Canvas.

Your research paper will be assessed using the following rubric:

1. accurate synthesis and comprehensive review of existing secondary literature
2. formulation of a feasible research question
3. critical engagement with both primary and secondary sources
4. the clarity of presentation (style, language, formatting, et cetera)

Your presentation will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. clarity of presentation
2. awareness of context (show you have read relevant literature, etc.)
3. feasibility of your research design

Reflection note/policy brief – group work (D2)

Students are required to submit, as a group, a three-page assessment of the EU's approach to the Ukraine perspective from a perspective that considers democracy and democratic values at its core. Such a document should be written as an a) reflection note, or b) policy brief.

A reflection note would (naturally...) reflect on the actions taken by the European institutions in this specific case. This would assess the approach, actions and impact of EU action, specifically with regard to the challenges for democracy in the European Union (this can cover for example, the geostrategic threat to the principle and practice of democracy in European countries, or can cover issues of disinformation). It would draw on theoretical and empirical literature to build up an argument.

A policy brief would be more active in providing recommendations for future action, specifically in the context of the challenge to democracy posed by the conflict in Ukraine to the European Union. For this deliverable, you should imagine that you are policy experts trying to convince a group of stakeholders about your concerns.

Your reflection note/policy brief will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. outline of the issue at stake, including a description of the approach, actions and impact of EU (or Member State) action
2. definition of the challenge at stake (for the purposes of the paper)
3. additionally, for a policy brief, the submission would also be evaluated for its clear (and theoretically-derived) recommendations for future action.

Schedule

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	13/04	Southern enlargement and the ever-increasing self-identification of the EC with representative democracy in the 1970s and 1980s (Robin de Bruin)
#3	18/04	Democratic thought (Jasper Simons)
	20/04	Seminar and presentations of research paper proposal
#4	25/04	Democratic deficit and legitimacy in the European Union
	27/04	no class (King's day)
#5	02/05	Seminar and presentations of research paper proposal
	04/05	Democracy in Europe's emerging digital space: Gaia-X, AI, and Digital Sovereignty
#6	09/05	Seminar and presentations of research paper proposal
	11/05	Online discussion forum, joint literature selection for next week, group work (no seminar)
#7	16/05	Democracy and conflict: Ukraine part I
	18/05	No class (Ascension day)
#8	23/05	Democracy and conflict: Ukraine part II and course wrap up
	25/05	No class

Week 1

No lectures or seminars will be held in Week 1.

Week 2: Discussion on democracy in the contemporary EU

You will sign up for paper proposal presentations and group work.

There will be two lectures. The first lecture will be on the topic will be the interpretation of democracy after the end of the Second World War as the original sin behind the current democratic deficit in the EU. In this lecture, we talk about the meanings of democracy from the end of WWII to today. We look at whether the concept has evolved in a European sense.

The second lecture will focus on the Southern enlargement and the ever-increasing self-identification of the EC with representative democracy in the 1970s and 1980s.

Week 3:

The lecture will focus on the tensions among different conceptions of democratic thought in the European Union.

In the seminars, we will discuss the material raised in the lecture and also have presentations of your ideas for the final paper for this course.

Week 4:

The lecture will focus on democratic deficit and legitimacy in the European Union.

Week 5: Democracy in Europe's emerging digital space: Gaia-X, AI, and Digital Sovereignty

The success of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) firmly established the European Union as a norm setter in the digital space. This has led to a number of initiatives and legislations, such as the Digital Markets Act, the Digital Services Act, the Artificial Intelligence Act, and many more. We will interrogate how European digital sovereignty is taking place through two recent initiatives: GAIA-X and the AI act, and we seek to understand what the impacts of these are for democracy.

Week 6

In the seminars, we will discuss the material raised in the lecture and also have presentations of your ideas for the final paper for this course.

We invite you to propose literature to cover in the lecture and plenary seminar of next two weeks. During the session on 11/05 students will meet and jointly decide on the literature selection on the Ukraine war and the European Union for the coming two weeks.

Week 7: Democracy and Conflict I

Rather than a lecture, we organise group discussions about the impact of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine on the future of democracy in the European Union. This will extend over the entire week, with discussions taking place online outside of the lecture. You are expected to work on your group work this week, and can use this week to fine tune your arguments based on the discussions that take place.

Week 8: Democracy and Conflict II; course wrap up

We will finalise our discussions on the future of democracy in the EU in the lecture. You are expected to work on your research paper and group work. this week, as they are to be submitted at the end of the week.

Deliverables checklist

Item	Weight	Date due	Length
D0.1: Presentation	-	during seminars	max 8 minutes
D1: Research paper	75%	Wednesday 31/05/2023 @11.59pm	3000 words
D2: Reflection note/policy brief	25%	Friday 02/06/2022 @11.59pm	2000 words

Readings

Optional readings for week 1

European Commission, On the European democracy action plan. COM(2020) 790 final. Brussels: European Commission, 2020. Available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0790&from=EN>

Readings for week 2

Patel, Kiran Klaus, Project Europe: a history. Translated by Meredith Dale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Chapter 4 (Participation and Technocracy) and Chapter 6 (Superstate or Tool of Nations)

Do feel free to read the whole book (not obligatory).

Readings for week 3

Bang, Henrik, Mads Dagnis Jensen, and Peter Nedergaard. "‘We the People’ versus ‘We the Heads of States’: The Debate on the Democratic Deficit of the European Union." *Policy Studies* 36, no. 2 (March 4, 2015): 196–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2014.1000846>.

Sánchez-Cuenca, Ignacio. "From a Deficit of Democracy to a Technocratic Order: The Postcrisis Debate on Europe." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, no. 1 (2017): 351–69. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-061915-110623>.

Readings for week 4

Sternberg CS (2015) Political legitimacy between democracy and effectiveness: trade-offs, interdependencies, and discursive constructions by the EU institutions. *European Political Science Review* 7(4): 615–638. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773914000356>.

Schmidt VA (2013) Democracy and Legitimacy in the European Union Revisited: Input, Output and ‘Throughput’. *Political Studies* 61(1): 2–22. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2012.00962.x>.

Steffek J (2015) The output legitimacy of international organizations and the global public interest. *International Theory* 7(2): 263–293. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971915000044>.

Readings for week 5

Baur, Andreas. "European Dreams of the Cloud: Imagining Innovation and Political Control." *Geopolitics*, 2023, 1–25. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14650045.2022.2151902>

Veale, Michael, and Frederik Zuiderveen Borgesius. "Demystifying the Draft EU Artificial Intelligence Act—Analysing the Good, the Bad, and the Unclear Elements of the Proposed Approach." *Computer Law Review International* 22, no. 4 (2021): 97–112.

Moerel, Lokke, and Paul Timmers. "Reflections on Digital Sovereignty." EU Cyber Direct, Research in Focus Series 2021. Brussels: European Union, January 1, 2021. https://eucd.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/eucd/assets/khGGovSY/rif_timmersmoerel-final-for-publication.pdf.

Readings for week 6

No readings - group work and research and suggestions for texts on European Union and Ukraine for next two weeks

Readings for week 7

Class suggested readings on European Union and Ukraine war

Readings for week 8

Class suggested readings on European Union and Ukraine war

Annex - Digital (primary) sources

Compulsory readings for the lectures and seminars are provided in each module in Canvas.

- Archive of European Integration, University of Pittsburgh: <http://aei.pitt.edu/>
- Barbara Sloan European Union Document Collection: <https://www.ucis.pitt.edu/esc/librarycollection>
- British National Archives' Cabinet papers: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/default.htm?WT.c=Cabinet%20Papers%20Home>
- Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe (CVCE): <http://www.cvce.eu/en>
- Delpher - Database Dutch newspaper articles: <http://www.delpher.nl>
- Digital sources CIA: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/crest-25-year-program-archive>
- Digital sources Foreign Relations United States (FRUS): <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>
- Digital sources on British Foreign Policy overseas: <http://dbpo.chadwyck.com/info/about.do>
- Digital sources on the Netherlands and European Integration, 1950-1986: http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/euro-peseintegratie/index_html_en
- EuroDocs. Selected Transcriptions, Facsimiles and Translations: http://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page
- European Parliament, Historical Archives: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/historical-archives>
- European Parliament, plenary meetings (can be downloaded in several languages): <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fb879e98-2552-4ff2-b224-cf7846dbc147/language-nl>
- European Parliament, Proceedings: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/debates-video.html>
- European Union, Historical Archives: <https://www.eui.eu/Research/HistoricalArchivesOfEU>
- European University Institute Florence, Interview Project: http://archives.eui.eu/en/oral_history/
- Ministerraad België/Conseil des Ministres de Belgique: <http://extranet.arch.be:8180/Conseil1/?lg=nl>
- Oral History Archives - Columbia Center for Oral History: <http://library.columbia.edu/locations/ccoh.html>

Parliamentary web portals

- Belgium: <http://www.dekamer.be/kvvcr/index.cfm>; <http://www.senate.be/>
- Germany <http://dip.bundestag.de/>
- Netherlands 1814-1995 <http://www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl>
- Netherlands 1995- https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/zoeken/parlementaire_documenten

You will need to consult academic periodicals for your research paper!

Use the University Library online service to scan through the following journals *Contemporary European History*, *European Review of History*, *Journal of European Integration History*, *Cold War History*, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis*, *West European Politics*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*.

Online sources such as <https://scholar.google.com>, <https://academia.edu>, and <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv> host great papers. There are also tools such as <https://www.researchrabbit.ai/> and <https://www.webofscience.com/> that help you find relevant (related) publications.

In addition to the UvA University Library, books can be consulted in the university libraries in Leiden or Utrecht (via Interlibrary loan or by visiting the libraries themselves), and the library of the International Institute of Social history (Amsterdam) or the Royal Library (The Hague).