

Course title:	European Studies
Instructor:	Dr. Ulrich Brückner
Email address:	ulib@zedat.fu-berlin.de
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	48 (6 per day)
ECTS credits:	6
Prerequisites:	Students should be able to speak and read English at the upper intermediate level (B2) or higher. The course is designed for students with different academic backgrounds and a general interest in Europe. There are no special prerequisites for the course.

Course description

The course will introduce the basics of the European Union and describe and explain the processes of widening and deepening of this unique political entity. We will cover an overview of European Union history, its evolution in economic and political terms as well as of its institutional structure up to today.

Internal politics and policies, for example the decision-making process, the balance of power, questions about identity and democracy in this new system of governance will be discussed. We study the causes and effects of the war in Europe, its geopolitical dimension and how it affects policies and relations with neighbors and other parts of the world. Particularly important aspects include the discussion on relations with the UK after Brexit, the future of transatlantic relations and how the EU is dealing with China's and Russia's alternative models of governance. We will discuss migration as well as the rise of populism in EU member states. If students express specific interests in other topics or case studies sessions can be adjusted. The morning sessions consist of lectures, literature-based discussions and oral presentations from working groups. After lunch the course will visit various institutions in Germany's political center. Students will have the chance to discuss the topics from the morning sessions with international experts from political institutions, embassies and think tanks.

Student profile

Students from different countries, academic levels and backgrounds who are generally interested in European integration will benefit from each other in an intercultural and interdisciplinary learning process.

Former classes consisted of regular students and practitioners such as civil servants, communication experts, young politicians and even members of parliaments.

The course does not require special knowledge about European politics, law, history or culture, but participants should be interested in more than just their field of specialization.

In-class participation, especially in the discussions with experts, is essential for the course success and plays an important role in grading.

Course requirements

Attendance; active participation in the seminar's discussions and discussions with experts; oral and written presentation of a certain subject.

Required language skills

The language of instruction is English. Language proficiency on an advanced Intermediate level (B2) is a prerequisite for participation. For orientation purposes, you can assess your language skills here (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52>).

Grading

Participation: 40%,
Oral presentations: 30%,
Final paper: 30%

Reading

See course schedule. A digital course reader will be provided.

Course schedule

Date	Program
Thursday, January 8, 2026	The state of European Integration Excursion to the German Museum of History
Friday, January 9, 2026	Institutions and Decision-Making / Germany in the EU Excursion to a German Federal Ministry
Tuesday, January 13, 2026	Russia's war against Ukraine and the future of EU security Excursion to a think tank
Thursday, January 15, 2026	The EU as an international actor Excursion to the European House
Friday, January 16, 2026	Identity, Euroscepticism and Populism Excursion to the German Federal Foreign Office
Monday, January 19, 2026	Brexit and further enlargement: Relations with UK and candidate countries Excursion to an Embassy
Tuesday, January 20, 2026	Immigration and Asylum Policy / Demographic Trends Excursion to a research institute
Thursday, January 22, 2026	The Future of Europe Final discussion / exam FUBiS Farewell ceremony

*Field trips may be subject to change depending on the availability of appointments and speakers. On field trip days, adaptation of class times is possible.