Introduction

More than half a century ago, after the ruins of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War, six western European countries laid the foundation of one of the most ambitious projects in the history of the continent: the integration of the European countries in order to form a single economic and political entity. This project of regional integration has known some very concrete progress, at least on the economic level. The establishment of a single economic marketplace without regard to country borders today unites 27 countries. The monetary integration of a common currency, the euro, adopted by 17 of the countries in the European Union, and the integration of the neighboring Eastern European countries are evidence of real progress.

However, the process of European unification remains an unfinished project. The fact that the European Union was hit full force by the global economic and financial crisis, and combined with the debts of certain countries using the Euro, reveal the numerous pitfalls of a union incapable of resisting a global recession and of adopting a common strategy to get out of a crisis. Today, these facts threaten the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Union and rekindle the recurrent debates that structure the history of the European Union since its infancy: can the EU be permanently limited to an economic and monetary role without a real political union complete with a government that surpasses the current state of simple intergovernmental cooperation? Can the EU continue to give priority to expanding its horizons instead of developing its current state?

The course is designed for students to discover the economic foundations of the building of the EU as well as to understand its way of functioning in order to better grasp the complexity of the current situation and the challenges to come in an ever-changing global economy. The course also aims to increase students’ awareness to the European dimension of contemporary economic problems.

Course Materials

Students will be given a reading packet at the beginning of the semester comprised of documents such as news articles, excerpts, and research documents. Students should, however, complement the documents found in the reading packet with their own personal research and following of current economic events by reading articles from newspapers (l’Express, le Nouvel observateur, le Monde, la Tribune) and other news sites.

Lectures

Part I - Foundations of the European economic integration
- From the origins of regional European integration to the birth of the European economic community
- Establishment of the single-market system and the path to the EU

Part II - Economic policies to help the Union
- Financing and governing of common economic politics
- Shared agricultural politics: between reformism and conservatism
- Politics of competition and shared industrial politics
- Common monetary politics
Part III - Current stakes and future challenges

- EU and globalization
- Expansion vs. development
- EU and the global economic and financial crisis
- The crisis of the Euro zone: is the single currency system to blame?
- Europe moving towards a new strategy

Grading

Students are required to complete one oral presentation, which must include some outside research, on a topic relevant to the course. Participation in class debates and following presentations is also essential.

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<td>Class participation</td>
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<td>Oral presentation</td>
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<td>Final</td>
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Bibliography

Works


Journals, special issues on the European Union

- *L’Europe*, revue Alternatives économiques, L’Europe, n°95, 1er trimestre 2013.

Websites

- www.ecb.int (site officiel de la Banque centrale européenne)
- www.europa.eu (site officiel de l’Union européenne)
- www.europarl.europa.eu (site officiel du Parlement européen)
- www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat (site des statistiques européennes)
- www.eu2013.ie (site de la présidence irlandaise du Conseil de l’UE de janvier à juin 2013)
- www.euractiv.fr (l’actualité des politiques européennes)
- www.robert-schuman.org
- www.presseurop.eu (l’actualité économique, politique et sociale de l’UE)

Library: special issues on the European Union

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