Course description:

This course provides an overview of European Union institutions and policymaking processes. It analyzes the various roles of EU institutions and advisory bodies. It examines the ways in which interest groups, political parties and public opinion affect decision-making in the Union. It explains and traces the implications of the diversity of policymaking processes that characterize EU decision-making. Finally, the course engages debates about the “democratic deficit” in Europe and considers whether meaningful action can be taken to increase legitimacy.

Course requirements and assessment:

Participation (including presentations): 20 %
Multiple-choice questions: 20 %
Final in-class exam: 60 %

Books to buy:


September 20

Week 1: Introduction: The EU political system and its different decision-making levels

Hix ch. 1


September 27

Week 2: Executive Politics: The European Commission

Hix, ch. 2


October 4

Week 3: Legislative Politics: The Council of Ministers

Hix, ch. 3

Cini, ch. 10 (The Council)


October 11

**Week 4: Legislative politics: The European Parliament**

Cini, ch. 11 (The European Parliament)


October 18

**Week 5: Judicial Politics: The European Court of Justice**

Hix, ch. 4

Cini, ch. 12 (The Courts)


October 25

Week 6: New Modes of Governance

Zeitlin, Jonathan (2005): “Introduction: The Open Method of Coordination in Question” and “Conclusion: The Open Method of Coordination in Action: Theoretical Promise, Empirical Realities, Reform Strategy”, in Zeitlin and Pochet, with Magnusson, *The Open Method of Coordination in Action*.


November 1

Week 7: Public Opinion, Democracy, Parties and Elections

Hix, ch. 5 + 6

Cini, ch. 23 (Public Opinion)


November 8

**Week 8: Interest Representation**

Hix, ch. 7

Cini, ch. 13 (Interest Groups)


November 15

**Week 9: The effect of the EU on member states: Europeanization**

Cini, ch. 25 (Europeanization)


November 22

**Week 10: Regulating the Single Market**

Hix, ch. 8


November 29

**Week 11: Europe in Search of legitimacy**

Cini, ch. 22 (Democracy and the European Polity)


*Hix, Simon and Andreas Follesdal, ‘Why There is a Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44(3) 2006.

**Simon Hix and Stefano Bartolini “Politics: The Right or the Wrong Sort of Medicine for the EU?”,

December 6

**Week 12: Final Exam (=> no readings)**