

Environmental Politics and Policy in Europe

Florian Schmitt

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| Email Address: | info@fubest.fu-berlin.de |
| Time Slot: | Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m. |
| Language of Instruction: | English |
| Contact Hours: | 45 |
| ECTS Credits: | 6 |

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the EU and its policy on environmental protection and natural resources. After a brief recap of the basics of policy-making in the EU, students will learn about the guiding principles and developments within the EU's environmental policy. Subsequently, the course will cover the major environmental challenges we are facing currently.

In the first part of the course, we will establish a basic understanding of the functioning of the European Union and the underpinnings of European environmental policy and politics. We will also look at the European reaction to climate change and discuss the effectiveness of the main solutions to this global problem. The second part of the course will delve into the EU's policies in a range of economic sectors.

Learning Objectives

The course objectives are three-fold. First, it aims to familiarise students with the structure and functioning of the EU, enabling them to critically understand the rationale behind collective protection of the environment and the institutional framework in which EU environmental policy has developed.

Second, the course aims at presenting the key areas of EU's environmental policy with a focus on the policy process and the role different actors play within the given institutional setting. This includes an analysis of the EU's role as an international actor.

Third, several sessions will also present core notions of environmental policy like the precautionary principle or the utilization of the best available technologies, as well as the underlying environmental problems of each policy field within the context of sustainable development. This aspect will allow students to understand the need for environmental protection but also the tension with other important societal goals.

The course is open for interdisciplinary discussion with a social science focus.

Student Profile

Students should be in their fourth semester of college/university education or beyond.

Assignments and Grading

Participation, in-class discussion, Term Paper presentation: 300 Points

Independent Project: 100 Points

Midterm Exam: 250 Points

Draft Term Paper: 100 Points

Final Term Paper: 250 Points

Completion of the Midterm Exam as well as the Term Paper is needed for a grade.

| FUB Grade | Points of 1,000 |
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| 1.0 | 980-1,000 |
| 1.3 | 950-979 |
| 1.7 | 900-949 |
| 2.0 | 850-899 |
| 2.3 | 800-849 |
| 2.7 | 750-799 |
| 3.0 | 700-749 |
| 3.3 | 650-699 |
| 3.7 | 600-649 |
| 4.0 | 500-599 |
| 5.0 | < 500 |

Attendance

Attendance in class is **mandatory**. We also expect you to be **punctual** out of respect to both your instructor and your fellow students. An absence for more than half of a particular day's session will be considered an absence for that day.

If you cannot attend class because you are ill, please **notify your instructor** by [e-mail](#) (not via messenger service or through another student) **before class**. Any absence **without a notification** of your instructor before class will automatically be considered **unexcused**.

Absences because of **illness** are **excused**; however, for the **third** sick day and every other sick day after that (per course), you will need to turn in a **doctor's notice** ("Attest" in German) in order for them to count as excused, too. It is **your** responsibility to keep track of your absences and to know when a doctor's note is required. No doctor's notice issued more than three days after the day of illness will be accepted.

If you miss an **exam** due to an excused absence, your instructor and the FU-BEST team will arrange a make-up exam for you; you may also be entitled to a term paper **deadline extension**. If you, however, do not fulfill all course requirements needed for a grade by the (later) date determined by the program, passing the course is no longer possible.

Please also note that if you miss **more than half** of a course's sessions (even if due to excused absence), passing the course is no longer possible.

Personal travel and visits by relatives or friends are **not** accepted as reasons for absence (i.e., absences for these reasons always count as **unexcused**).

Regarding **unexcused** absences, please note the following:

- Any unexcused absence has consequences for at least the participation portion of the grade.
- Two unexcused absences lead to a lowering of the course grade by a fraction.
- Three unexcused absences will result in a 5.0 (equivalent to an "F") on the transcript.

Literature

Course readings and videos available on the digital learning platform Blackboard and through the links below.

Course Schedule

| Calendar | Topics, Readings, etc. |
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| Session 1 | <p>Topic: The European Union – background and institutions</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civitas (2015) “European Union Treaties”, 2 pages. • Delreux, T. & Happaerts, S. (2017) Environmental Policy and Politics in the European Union, pp. 58-97. (skim read this) • The Road to the Treaty on European Union. Available here <p>See Blackboard for media</p> |
| Session 2 | <p>Topic: The European Union – the policy-making process</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heidbreder, E.G. & Brandsma, G.J (2018) “The EU Policy Process” in: Ongaro E., Van Thiel S. (eds.) The Palgrave Handbook of Public Administration and Management in Europe. The Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 805-821. • Wurzel, R. K. W., et al. (2019) „The European Council, the Council and the Member States: changing environmental leadership dynamics in the European Union”. In Environmental Politics, 28:2, pp. 248-270. <p>See Blackboard for media</p> |
| Session 3 | <p>Topic: Climate Change and Ethics</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paris Agreement Text (FYI, UN Treaty Ratification) • Oberthür, S and von Homeyer, I. (2023) <i>From emissions trading to the European Green Deal: the evolution of the climate policy mix and climate policy integration in the EU.</i> Journal of European Public Policy 30 (3), 445–468 https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2022.2120528 <p>See Blackboard for media</p> |
| Session 4 | <p>Topic: The European Green Deal</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Geopolitics of the European Green Deal • Ahlström, H., & Sjøfjell, B. (2023). Why policy coherence in the European Union matters for global sustainability. Env Pol Gov. 2023; 33:272–287. • Commission proposes transformation of EU economy and society to meet climate ambitions • Paleari (2024): The EU policy on climate change, biodiversity and circular economy: Moving towards a Nexus approach • For reference: EGD text and annex <p>See Blackboard for media</p> <p>Submission of Independent Project</p> |

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| <p>Session 5</p> | <p>Topic: Energy in the EU (1): Energy crisis and renewables</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Communications (skim) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ REPowerEU Plan (COM/2022/230 final) ○ EU Solar Energy Strategy (COM/2022/221 final) > ○ Wind Power Action Plan (COM/2023/669 final) > skim text, pay attention to actions and the Annex • Renewables (read closely) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Factsheet on Clean Energy ○ Factsheet REPowerEU ○ EPRS Wind energy in the EU briefing ○ EPRS Solar briefing ○ EPRS Energy transition briefing ○ EPRS Revision of the Renewable Energy Directive: Fit for 55 package <p>See Blackboard for media</p> |
| <p>Session 6</p> | <p>MIDTERM EXAM</p> |
| <p>Session 7</p> | <p>Topic: Energy (2) Decarbonisation</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEA (2023), Energy Technology Perspectives 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the Executive Summary (pages 20-25) & the "Highlights" of each of the six chapters (pages 36, 82, 146, 210, 280, 361) • IEA (2024) Electricity 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the Executive Summary (pages 8-14) & sections on Europe (pp 121-126) • A. J. Jordan & B. Moore (2023) The durability–flexibility dialectic: the evolution of decarbonisation policies in the European Union, Journal of European Public Policy • Simone Abram et al (2022) Just Transition: A whole-systems approach to decarbonisation, Climate Policy, 22:8, 1033-1049, • Systemiq and the University of Exeter (2023), The Breakthrough Effect: How to trigger a cascade of tipping points to accelerate the net zero transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read (at least) the Executive Summary (pp 11-19) & Sections 3 & 4 (pp 58-74) <p>See Blackboard for media</p> <p>Submission: Draft of the Term Paper</p> |

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| <p>Session 8 Double Session</p> | <p>Topic: AFOLU</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRS intro to land use, land use change and forestry • Understanding Land Use in the UNFCCC - please read the Intro (pages 1-9) • Special report on land and climate change - summary for policy makers • Roe, S., Streck, C., Obersteiner, M. et al. (2019) Contribution of the land sector to a 1.5 °C world. Nat. Clim. Chang. 9, 817–828 • Wezel et. al (2020) Agroecological principles and elements and their implications for transitioning to sustainable food systems please read the abstract, introduction, and conclusion • Lalawmpuii (2023) Role of water-energy-food nexus in environmental management and climate action <p>See Blackboard for media</p> |
| <p>Session 9 Double Session</p> | <p>Field trip</p> |
| <p>Session 10</p> | <p>Topic: Sustainable transport</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission communication: Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future • Zero Emissions Vehicles Factbook: COP28 Edition • Dale and Moos (2023) Why the world’s first flight powered entirely by sustainable aviation fuel is a green mirage • Sustainable Urban mobility - Avoid-Shift-Improve (see blackboard) • Low-Carbon Fuels for Aviation and Maritime Transport: Workshops Summary <p>See Blackboard for media</p> |
| <p>Session 11</p> | <p>Topic: Buildings and Cities</p> <p>Readings</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission: A Renovation Wave for Europe - greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives and Nearly zero-energy buildings • Jaysawal et. al (2022) Concept of net zero energy buildings (NZEB) - A literature review • D'Agostino et. al (2021) Assessing Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEBs) development in Europe • Goggins, J. (2024) Green cement production is scaling up – and it could cut the carbon footprint of construction (10 minute read) • Buildings Performance Institute Europe: EU Buildings Climate Tracker - executive summary <p>See Blackboard for media</p> |

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| <p>Session 12</p> | <p>Topic: Waste and the Circular Economy</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Möslinger, Ulpiani, Vettors (2023) Circular economy and waste management to empower a climate-neutral urban future. <i>Journal of Cleaner Production</i> 421 • Pinyol Alberich and Hartley (2023) The Circular Economy in European Union Policy: Explaining an idea's success through policy learning. <i>Env Pol Gov.</i> 2023;1–12. • Antonopoulos, I., Faraca, G., Tonini, D. (2021). Recycling of post-consumer plastic packaging waste in the EU: Recovery rates, material flows, and barriers. In <i>Waste Management</i>, 126, pp 694-705. • EEA - Reaching 2030's residual municipal waste target — why recycling is not enough • EU agrees new law on more sustainable and circular batteries <p>See Blackboard for media</p> <p>Submission: Final version of Term Papers</p> |
| <p>Session 13</p> | <p>Presentations of Term Papers</p> |