The European Union Polity

Dr Dionyssis G. Dimitrakopoulos
D.Dimitrakopoulos@bbk.ac.uk

This module is offered under the auspices of the Jean Monnet Chair in Parliamentary Democracy and European Integration which is co-funded by the European Union under its Erasmus+ programme

Birkbeck College, University of London
2020-21 academic year

This version of the coursebook reflects the exigencies of compliance with specific accessibility requirements. An alternative is available from the course tutor.
INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 3

MODULE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ................................................................................................. 3
BACKGROUND READING ............................................................................................................... 3
MOODLE .................................................................................................................................. 4

MODULE SYLLABUS ..................................................................................................................... 5

KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES ................................................................................................. 5

READING LIST ............................................................................................................................. 6

PART A: HISTORY AND THEORIES ............................................................................................. 6

PART B: INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICS ......................................................................................... 10

ASSESSMENT ............................................................................................................................... 24

LEARNING RESOURCES, ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND STUDENT FEEDBACK ......................... 28

STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING SERVICES .................................................................. 31

- 1 -
Introduction

Module Aims and Objectives
This course – which is offered under the auspices of the Jean Monnet Chair in Parliamentary Democracy and European Integration held by Dr Dionyssis G. Dimitrakopoulos at Birkbeck – has three core objectives. First, it seeks to examine the nature of the European Union. Second, it investigates the way in which the EU polity has evolved over time and the factors that shape its development. Third, it seeks to provide a critical examination of some of the key topics that permeate current debates on the process of European integration. Questions that will be examined in the context of this course include the following: What is the European Union? Where does the idea of a united Europe come from and why did it materialise only after World War II? How does the EU operate and why? How has it evolved over time? What are its main institutions? What kind of theories have social scientists developed in order to explain the process of European integration? What can the study of politics, law, history and the economy contribute to our understanding of the European Union? What is Euroscepticism?

The course is taught over 10 weeks with each session lasting three hours so as to include practical tasks (such as reading and discussing key documents in the history of European integration, etc.) carried out by the students in class either individually or in small groups, always under the direct supervision of the course tutor. This is meant to maximise in-class learning and thus reduce the need for post-class work.

Students completing this course will:
• be familiar with the main concepts and theories applied in the study of European integration;
• have detailed knowledge of the EU’s institutions and political process;
• have developed a critical approach to current debates and issues concerning the EU polity;
• be familiar with documentary sources; and
• have developed transferable skills, including critical evaluation, analytical investigation, giving oral presentations, communication and teamwork.

Background Reading

The following textbooks will be useful for this course:

In terms of theories of integration, a good place from which to start is S. Saurugger. 2014. *Theoretical Approaches to European Integration*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

These are available in the College library. Textbooks are a useful way into the complex issues that we will cover during this term but you will need to read much more widely so as to make the most of the course and do well in your essay and exams.
The *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* is another important e-resource. You can gain access to it via the College’s e-library as well as the course’s Moodle site (see below). It will be a very useful resource throughout this course. It includes the content of the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of European Union Politics* which will be useful throughout this course. In many cases – incl. when it comes to essay preparation – it would be a good idea to start either from a textbook or the relevant entry in the aforementioned encyclopedia, prior to reading the more demanding (and rewarding) academic literature that appears in this reading list.

Although the module is not meant to provide a running commentary on current events, students are encouraged to keep up to date with current developments (both for the purposes of stimulating seminar discussions but also for being better informed citizens) by reading esteemed publications such as the Financial Times and the Economist (also accessible via the College’s e-library), and using online news resources such as [www.euractiv.com](http://www.euractiv.com). Knowledge of a foreign language is not a requirement for those taking the course but sources such as Die Zeit, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Le Monde and Libération can be particularly useful, as can some influential and informative blogs (see the course’s site on Moodle for the relevant links) for students who do read other languages. Among the UK daily newspapers, the FT and the Guardian currently have the best UK correspondents in Brussels. You can also find them on Twitter where they are active (see your tutor’s BXL correspondents’ list on Twitter). Please also note that one of the key innovations introduced by this course is that much of the work that the course entails will be done in class (e.g. by reading key speeches and analysing them, etc.).

**Moodle**

This module uses a virtual learning environment known as Moodle, which contains electronic copies of module-related materials, such as PowerPoint presentations and selected readings. Moodle will also provide the principal means of electronic communication between lecturers and students and provide a platform for essay submission and marking. The Moodle base for this module can be accessed [online](http://www.its.birkbeck.ac.uk) by logging on with your ITS username and password (which you should receive when you have enrolled at Birkbeck).
## Module Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Practical task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A: HISTORY AND THEORIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.1.21</td>
<td>The History of the Idea of a ‘United Europe’</td>
<td>Introduction to the logic of the division of powers; the EU policy process; the role of the state.</td>
<td>Reading the Ventotene Manifesto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.1.21</td>
<td>The Development of the EC, 1950-2009</td>
<td>The origins and early stages of integration.</td>
<td>Reading the Schuman Declaration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.1.21</td>
<td>The ‘Grand Theories’ of Integration</td>
<td>‘Grand theories’ of European integration</td>
<td>(long seminar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B: INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.2.21</td>
<td>Legislative Politics in the EU: The Eur. Parliament</td>
<td>Reading week: no class week (Jean Monnet events)</td>
<td>• Should the EP be abolished?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.2.21</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>a) The ‘democratic deficit’; b) The Spitzenkandidaten process</td>
<td>• In-class test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Legislative Politics in the EU: The Eur. Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school:</td>
<td>Legislative Politics in the EU: The Eur. Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.2.21</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>a) Judicial politics: The ECJ</td>
<td>Compare the Rome and the Lisbon Treaty’s provisions on the reform of the treaties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) EU Agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) EU Treaty reform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.21</td>
<td>a) Judicial politics: The ECJ</td>
<td>a) Early agreements (seminar on legislative politics continued); b) The politics of treaty reform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3.21</td>
<td>From words to deeds? The politics of EU policy implementation</td>
<td>The UK as part of the ‘world of domestic politics’? Reviewing the case of the Working Time Directive</td>
<td>The role of the ECJ under the Lisbon Treaty compared to a national federal court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.3.21</td>
<td>Euroscepticism</td>
<td>a) Euroscepticism; b) Brexit</td>
<td>Reviewing party manifestos on European integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.3.21</td>
<td>Policy modes and the ‘crisis’ of the Community method</td>
<td>The Community method in crisis?</td>
<td>a) Reading Jürgen Habermas on the Community method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Moravcsik and ‘The End of the EU’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key dates for your diaries
- 27 February 2021: In-class ‘test’;
- 15 March 2021: Deadline for the submission of the essay (at 12 noon);
- 16 April 2021: The exam paper becomes available on Moodle at 12 noon;
- 19 April 2021: Deadline for the submission of exam answers via Moodle at 12 noon.
Part A: HISTORY AND THEORIES

Lecture: the history of the idea of a ‘united Europe’.
What does unity mean? What shape did various reformers propose that this unity take? What was the place of the state therein? What were their motives? Why did it materialise only after World War II?

Background reading

Introductory seminar: the logic of the course, the importance of lessons from comparative government, the logic of the division of powers within the EU and the role of the state in the process of European integration.

Essential reading

Further reading

In-class activity: reading the *Manifesto for a free and united Europe* (Ventotene manifesto). What lessons can we draw from it? Why is it considered a key document in the history of European integration? What do the timing, content as well as the identity of its authors (Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi) say about the nature of the process of European integration?
Lecture: the development of the European Communities/Union, 1950-2009
What are the key traits of the EU’s development during this period of time? How do deepening and widening relate to each other in the process of European integration? What happened during the period of ‘Eurosclerosis’ and why? Why was the integration process relaunched in the mid-1980s?

Background reading

Seminar: the origins and early stages of the process of European integration
What were the key lessons that one can draw from early stages of European integration in terms of the scope, pace and geographical coverage of this radical endeavour? What were the key arguments used against it and how can we make sense of them?

Essential reading

Further reading
European Union. N.d. EU timeline: the European Union through the years.

In-class activity: reading the Schuman declaration. What lessons can we draw from it? Why is it considered a key document in the history of European integration?
**Lecture: theories of integration**

What are the main theories that seek to explain the emergence and development of the EC/EU? How do they relate to broader theoretical debates between political scientists? What are their strengths and limitations?

**Overviews**


**Further reading**

*Functionalism and Neofunctionalism*


*Intergovernmentalism (classic, liberal, 'new')*


Kleine, M. and Pollack, M., eds. 2018. “Special issue on liberal intergovernmentalism”. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(7). In particular, see the contributions by Hix, Moravcsik, Schimmelfennig and the editors.


*Critiques and debates*


Seminar (two hours): neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism
What are the main points on which each of these two ‘grand theories’ is couched? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What can we learn from their critiques?

Essential reading
Lecture: Executive politics in the EU – the European Commission and the European Council

Are the roles of the European Commission and the European Council (as defined by the EU treaty) similar to those of a national executive or not? How are these key institutions internally organised and how do they operate? Are they partners or rivals? Have their roles changed over time?

Overviews

Further reading

**European Commission**
European Council


(I) Van Rompuy, Herman. 2019. "'My advice': Open letter from Van Rompuy to Michel." EUObserver, 8 July.

Seminar: the role of the European Commission

What is the role of the European Commission under the treaty? How does the Commission exercise this role and why?

Essential reading


Further reading


In-class activity: comparing the EEC (Rome, 1957) and the Lisbon (2007/9) treaties in relation to the European Commission’s powers.
Lecture: between legislative and executive politics – the Council (of Ministers)

What kind of institution is the Council? What is its role within the EU’s institutional architecture? Is it a legislative or an executive institution? Why is it not as transparent as it could be? Is it as intergovernmental as its composition implies?

Background reading

In addition to the corresponding chapters in the textbooks mentioned earlier, the following are useful:

Further reading

The Eurogroup (the gathering of the finance ministers of the members of the Eurozone)
Seminar:
  a) the European Council
Why has it been claimed that the European Council is the ‘new centre of EU politics’? Is this a positive development or a risky one?

Essential reading

b) Why is transparency in the Council (of Ministers) a problem?

Essential reading
Melchior, Sigrid. 2020. "EU transparency reforms can’t be left half done." Investigate Europe, 23 June.

Further reading

Week 6: 19 February 2021 – reading week
No class but an opportunity to a) get some reading done in relation to the material that we have covered thus far and b) start work on your essay.

Week 7a: Workshop week (incl. Jean Monnet Chair events)
Students taking this module are expected to attend a) the generic skills sessions (essay writing, etc.) offered by the Department of Politics during this week and b) any events held under the auspices of the Jean Monnet Chair in Parliamentary Democracy and European Integration held by Dr D. G. Dimitrakopoulos.

Week 7b: 27 February 2021 – Saturday school
Lecture: legislative politics in the EU – the European Parliament
What is the European Parliament? How does it compare to national parliaments? How and why has its institutional position changed in the EU polity? What is the ‘democratic deficit’? Does it exist? Why is its existence contested and what remedies have been proposed?

Overviews

Further reading

The ‘democratic deficit’
Start from the corresponding seminar reading, followed by these:


Magnette, Paul, and Yannis Papadopoulos. 2008. On the politicization of the European consociation: A middle way between Hix and Bartolini. EUROGOV.


Early agreements and trilogues


The ‘Spitzenkandidaten’ process

Politicians’ views

Cameron, David. 2014. "« M. Juncker n'a figuré sur aucun bulletin de vote »." Le Monde, 13 June.


Academic and other sources


Seminar:

a) The ‘democratic deficit’
What is the essence of the debate between the two opposing ‘camps’?

**Essential reading**


**Further reading**


b) The ‘Spitzenkandidaten’ process
What can we learn from the way in which the ‘Spitzenkandidaten’ came about?

**Essential reading**


**Further reading**


---

1 This week’s reading list is lengthy because of a) the importance of this issue for the EU as a polity as well as b) the corresponding academic and broader political debate.
In-class activity:
   a) Should the EP be abolished? Hix v. Straw
   b) In-class ‘test’
**Lecture:**
- Judicial politics: the EU’s courts;
- EU Agencies;
- The reform of the EU treaty

What role do the EU's courts play in the process of European integration? Are accusations of judicial activism warranted? How has the ‘ECJ’ ‘constitutionalised the treaty? What does that entail and why is it important? What does the EU’s ‘agencification’ entail and why does it matter? How is the EU treaty revised and why does it matter? How has the reform method evolved over time and why?

**Overviews**
In addition to the relevant chapters from the textbooks mentioned at the beginning of this coursebook, the following are useful:

**Seminar:**
- **a) Early agreements in the European Parliament:** what are they about? How do they operate? Are they a problem or not?

**Essential reading**

- **b) The reform of the EU treaty**
What are the key differences between the new and the traditional method of reforming the EU treaty? Do they matter?

**Essential reading**

**Further reading**

**In-class activity:** Compare the Rome and the Lisbon Treaty’s provisions on the reform of the treaties
**Week 9: 12 March 2021**

**Lecture: from words (in law) to praxis (at street-level) – the politics of EU policy implementation**

What does the implementation of the EU’s policies entail, who does it and how? Why does it matter? Is it a straightforward process or ‘the continuation of politics by other means’?

**Overviews**

Treib, Oliver. 2014. "Implementing and complying with EU governance outputs." *Living Reviews in European Governance* 9 (1).


**Further reading**


**Seminar: why was the UK part of the ‘world of domestic politics’? Reviewing the case of the Working Time Directive.**

**Essential reading**


**In-class activity:** The role of the ECJ under the Lisbon Treaty compared to a national federal court.
Lecture: Euroscepticism

What is Euroscepticism? Is there one or many? What causes it? How does it relate to populism and nationalism?

Overviews/introductions

Start from the following two and then proceed to read Taggart; Leconte.


Further reading


Brack, Nathalie, and Nicholas Startin (eds). 2015. "Euroscepticism, from the margins to the mainstream." International Political Science Review 36 (3 (special issue: Euroscepticism, from the margins to the mainstream)).


Kaufmann, Eric. 2016. "It’s NOT the economy, stupid: Brexit as a story of personal values." LSE Politics & Policy blog, 7 July.


Seminar: a) Euroscepticism
What is Euroscepticism? What causes it? Is Peter Mair right? How does it relate to proposals to address the ‘democratic deficit’?

Essential reading

Seminar b): Brexit – what accounts for it?

Essential reading
Kaufmann, Eric. 2016. "It’s NOT the economy, stupid: Brexit as a story of personal values." LSE EUROPP blog, 7 July.
Becker, Sascha O., Thiemo Fetzer, and Dennis Novy. 2016. "The fundamental factors behind the Brexit vote." VoxEU blog. 31 October.
If you are short of time, try the video instead (the link can be found on Moodle).

Further reading
O'Rourke, Kevin. 2016. "Brexit: This backlash has been a long time coming." VoxEU blog. 7 August.

In-class activities: a) reviewing UKIP’s manifesto; b) Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat party manifestos on European integration.
Lecture: the EU's 'policy modes'
What is the 'Community method' and why is it said to be in crisis? What are the alternative ways in which the EU operates, when it does not rely on the Community method? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Overviews

Seminar: the Community method in crisis?
Why is the Community method said to be in crisis? Why does this matter?

Essential reading

Further reading
Community method
(C) Habermas, Jürgen. 2013. Democracy, Solidarity and the European Crisis. Lecture delivered on 26 April 2013 at the Catholic University of Leuven. Leuven: KUL.

Other modes
Schäfer, Armin. 2004. Beyond the Community Method: Why the Open Method of Coordination was Introduced to EU Policy-Making. European Integration online Papers 8 (13).

**In-class activities:** a) reading Jürgen Habermas on the Community method; b) Andrew Moravcsik on ‘the end of the EU’ (video)
Assessment

The final mark for the module is the weighted average of the essay (which constitutes 25% of the final mark), the exam (which constitutes 65% of the final mark) and the seminar mark (which constitutes 10% of the final mark and relates to an in-class ‘test’ to be held on 27 February 2021).

The required word length for the essay is 2,500 words (+/- 10%), including bibliography. Please do not go beyond the maximum word limit; essays that breach this limit by more than 10% might have marks deducted or might not be marked at all.

Please note that the essay accounts for 25% of the final module mark, so you have a strong incentive to work as hard as you can on this coursework and to submit it on time.

The due date for submitting the essay for this module is 12 pm (midday) on 15 March 2021. Students will receive their essay marks and accompanying feedback by 26 March 2021.

The latest date for submitting essays for other modules are indicated in the table below. Please note that some students may find themselves facing the same deadline for assignments on two or more modules. You are encouraged to pay careful attention to this issue when managing your time so as to avoid working on multiple assignments at the last minute.

Please note that some students may find themselves facing the same deadline for assignments on two or more modules. You are encouraged to pay careful attention to this issue when managing your time so as to avoid working on multiple assignments at the last minute. The latest date for submitting essays for other modules are indicated in the table below.

Level 5 and 6 modules and coursework due dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>14 Dec. 2020</th>
<th>1 February 2021</th>
<th>15 March 2021</th>
<th>21 June 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War and Modern Society</td>
<td>British and Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Contemporary British Politics</td>
<td>Social and Political Theory (Essay 2)</td>
<td>The United States in International Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative European Politics</td>
<td>Challenges in Contemporary Politics</td>
<td>Introduction to International Political Economy</td>
<td>Social and Political Theory (Essay 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, Politics and Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5/6 Module</td>
<td>Transformations in Modern Politics</td>
<td></td>
<td>The EU Polity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Migration and Transnationalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parliamentary Studies has two major pieces of assessment due in the Spring Term. See the module handbook for details. Gender, Race and Class in Global Political Economy has three learning journals due during term time and one major essay due at the end of term 2. See the module handbook for details.
Coursework Submission

Students are required to submit their coursework electronically via Moodle on (or before) the essay submission date.

The deadline time for all coursework is 12 p.m. (midday).

Please keep an electronic and hard backup of the essay for safekeeping.

The Department endeavours to maintain anonymity for marking. Students are asked to complete a coursework cover sheet using their student number but not their name. This form should be cut and pasted onto the first page of their essay document. This file should also be saved using the student number rather than the student name (e.g. 12106999.doc). This is very important. We cannot identify your submission if you do not do this.

A coursework cover sheet is available on Moodle.

Students are advised to use the Harvard system of referencing (and do so consistently) but other established systems are acceptable (e.g. Chicago; MLA, APA, etc.) provided they are correctly and consistently employed. For guidance on how to reference books, journal articles, and other material, go online.

Coursework Feedback and Results

When you submit coursework during the year you can usually expect to receive a mark and feedback on Moodle within four working weeks (please note that work submitted after coursework deadlines may take significantly longer to mark, depending on the time of year).

The purpose of all feedback is to help you hone your academic skills and improve your work. Feedback on assessment consists of a mark and information on how you did and suggestions for development that you can reflect on and implement in your next piece of work.

Remember to read the marker’s feedback comments carefully – don’t just look at the mark!

If you have failed a piece of coursework you will be expected to resubmit – please see your programme handbook for information on resubmission and retakes.

All marks are provisional until they are approved by the Politics Exam Board, which meets in July of each year. Overall module marks (including exam marks) and dissertation results are released after this July meeting of the Politics Exam Board and will be made available to you via your My Birkbeck Profile (these marks will not appear on Moodle), usually in late July/early August.

Late Submission and Mitigating Circumstances

College policy dictates how the Department treats work that is due for assessment but submitted after the submission deadline.
Any piece of assessment that is submitted late and for which no application for consideration of mitigating circumstances (see below) has been accepted will be awarded a mark of no more than the pass mark of 50%. As a courtesy, you should tell your module seminar leader and your administrator if you are going to submit an essay late. However, staff cannot give extensions.

Where an assessment has not been submitted or attended and no application for consideration of mitigating circumstances has been accepted a mark of zero will be awarded.

If your essay or essays are submitted late because of illness or other mitigating factors, you are advised to submit a claim for mitigating circumstances to be considered.

The mitigating circumstances form and procedure is available online (please read the policy and guidance carefully). If your evidence is regarded as compelling, penalty marks will be revoked, and the ‘merited’ mark substituted.

It is very important that you submit your mitigating circumstances claim within two weeks of the assessment deadline for the element of assessment to which the claim relates. We are unable to consider any claims that are not accompanied by independent documentary evidence – for details on what is appropriate here please see pages 4-5 of the mitigating circumstances policy.

Update made on 24 September 2020

- There is a two-week cut-off for late submissions;
- And a 10% deduction for any assignment submitted up to 7 days late, after which it will be capped as usual;
- If submitted later than two weeks the assignment will not be considered for marking

Exams

The take-home exam requires students to answer three questions from a list of ten. The questions will be released on Moodle at midday on 16 April 2021 and answers should be uploaded by midday on 19 April 2021. There is a word limit of 1,000 words per question. As this is an open book assessment, you are allowed to consult notes, texts, journal articles, books etc. However, answers should be written as they would be in a closed exam, referring to authors’ names where appropriate but avoiding direct quotations from the academic literature. A list of references does not need to be provided, except if direct quotes are used. References count towards the word limit. Answers will be checked for assessment offences, including plagiarism, in the usual way. Students must avoid using directly material already used in essays, and must neither plagiarise nor ‘self-plagiarise’, i.e. use - verbatim - material previously submitted for summative assessment.

More guidance on the conduct of take-home exams is available under the Assessment tile of the Moodle base for this module. Past exams are available online.
Students who fail or do not take the exam in a module may be allowed a re-sit in August based on a different set of questions. Re-sit marks are capped at the passing grade unless the student has an accepted mitigating circumstances claim.

Seminar mark
This will be allocated on the basis of attending an in-class test that will cover the material examined up until that point. This test will take place (in class) right at the end of the workshop week (see key dates). Attendance is compulsory.

Essay Questions

1. What is differentiated integration? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

Since this is a topic that we did not cover in class, here is a list of relevant sources:

2. What lessons can one draw from the experience of the early steps of European integration in the 1950s?
3. Why is the European Commission often thought to be a ‘motor of integration’? Discuss with reference to its formal powers under the treaty.
4. In what way does the European Parliament differ from a ‘normal’ parliament?
5. Discuss the nature of the Council (of Ministers).
6. What do we know about the way in which EU policies are implemented at the national level and why does it matter?

Reading Week and Workshop Week

Reading Week
Reading Week is held in both the autumn and spring terms. Lectures and seminars do not run during the Reading Week, the purpose of which is to give you an opportunity to revise the material covered in the first half of the term and to prepare for the second half. This is also an excellent opportunity for you to make a start on essays and other coursework.

Workshop Week
In Workshop Week, which is held in both the autumn and spring terms in Week 7, lectures and seminars for specific modules are replaced by general study skills sessions as well as other events, some of which may be course-specific. These sessions cover topics such as essay writing, exam preparation and how to go about researching and writing your dissertation. Other events include outside speakers from the world of research and/or politics. The Departmental Office will provide you with details in due course. **Workshop Week is a fundamental part of your degree and attending the corresponding sessions (including and, in particular in the case of this course, the events organised under the auspices of the Jean Monnet Chair in Parliamentary Democracy and European Integration) is compulsory.**

Learning Resources, Academic Support and Student Feedback

Attendance Policy
**Attendance is compulsory on all modules.** Effective teaching and learning in seminars and lectures depends on all students attending. If you miss two or more classes in any module you may be advised to meet with your personal tutor, who will help you to address any academic problems that have arisen. Students attending fewer than three quarters of their classes on all modules will not normally be permitted to register for the written examination(s) and thus will not be able to complete the degree.

Special circumstances are always taken into consideration. If you have difficulties that prevent you from attending, it is very important that you contact the module leader and your personal tutor. The Department is fully committed to enabling our students to complete their degrees.

If you are unable to attend a class, you should contact the seminar tutor concerned to explain the circumstances and ask for any supplementary module materials you have missed — but bear in mind that such aids are no substitute for actual attendance, and that course material will not always be available, depending on the nature of the class. It is also important to find out whether you have missed any instructions or tasks for the following class.

In addition to regular class attendance, all students (both part-time and full-time) are expected to spend a number of hours per module every week in self-study, reading,
seminar preparation and – at certain times of the year – completion of assignments. This means that you will need to be fully committed to your studies before starting the course, and should carefully consider whether or not you are embarking on the best mode of study in the circumstances. Birkbeck has a long history of supporting working students successfully to undertake and complete challenging degree-level study. It is important that students embarking on our programmes (especially full-time) have space enough in their week to attend class, prepare for seminars, and research and write assignments. Any student who is struggling with their study, work and life balance should always contact their personal tutor to discuss the situation so that strategies can be put in place to enable them to complete their degree. It is possible to take a break in studies and you should talk to your personal tutor about this if you are finding it difficult to attend or to do the necessary preparation and coursework.

**Birkbeck Attendance Framework**

**During the 2020-21 academic year, depending on College measures in place as a result of COVID-19, the attendance requirement may apply only to live interactive seminars (if, for example, some lectures are pre-recorded and made available for online access).**

**Availability of Lecturers and Seminar Leaders**
Lecturers and seminar leaders are available to answer student queries about their work or to assist where students are experiencing difficulties relating to the subject matter covered during the module. They will let you know the best way of contacting them and when they are available to see you.

**Personal Tutors**
As part of our programme of student support all students are assigned to a personal tutor. In postgraduate programmes, the personal tutor is normally the programme director. You can find out who your personal tutor is on your MyBirkbeck profile (click on ‘Academic Support’).

Your tutor is available by appointment, and can offer advice and referrals for issues affecting student progress and wellbeing.

**Learning Support**
Studying at Birkbeck is undoubtedly challenging. The College’s Learning Development Service will help you consider how you can achieve your goals, find out what studying at Birkbeck is like and improve your study skills through a range of online tutorials and events. For more details, please go online.

Birkbeck offers a range of academic development workshops for students. Some courses are initially only available to first year undergraduates, but other students can join a standby list. All workshops are free of charge unless stated otherwise. Topics covered include:
- Moodle
- Reading skills
- Note-taking
- Time Management
- Essay writing
- Academic English

Visit our Learning Skills module on Moodle for resources that will help you build academic skills and increase academic performance.

You should also check out the College guidance about learning online.

Problems Affecting Your Studies
If difficulties arise at work or with family, money, health or anything else that may affect your study, please let someone in the Department know, and we will do our best to help. You are welcome to approach the director of your module, or the director of your programme.

If you wish to speak to a member of staff who is not teaching you, you might contact the Student Experience Officer, Dr Lisa Tilley or the Head of the Department of Politics, Dr Samantha Ashenden.

Alternatively, you can contact the Students’ Union advice service online, or any of the College services listed on My Birkbeck.

Birkbeck Library
Although lectures and seminars are an essential element of the module, success in learning depends largely on the reading and research that is undertaken individually by students. Most items on the module reading lists are available via Moodle or in the Birkbeck Library, which is open seven days a week for most of the year. Essential items for modules can be found either in the Reading Room Collection of reference-only print books and photocopies, or will be made available electronically via Moodle.

Information about the Library’s opening hours, layout and services, and access to the catalogue and electronic resources is available from the web site.

As well as its physical holdings, the Library has a comprehensive range of electronic resources available from the eLibrary section of the web site, including thousands of electronic journals, specialist research databases (which tell you what has been written on a topic or by a particular author) and exam papers.

An overview of the Library’s resources for Politics is available online.

Other Libraries
In the course of your studies it is expected that you will use the research collections located near to Birkbeck.
Student Feedback

The Department believes that student feedback is important to the quality of its provision. It invites you to make your views known or to raise issues through the following formal channels:

- **Class Representatives** are elected in the second/third week of the term. They represent the class in the Students’ Union and at the Student-Staff Exchange Meetings (see below), and can also approach the programme director or the Head of Department to raise issues on behalf of the class or individual classmates.

- **Student-Staff Exchange Meetings** are scheduled each term. All students are welcome, and class representatives are expected to attend. These meetings are scheduled to precede Department meetings so that staff can consider their responses to the concerns raised and report back to students on action taken.

- **A Module Evaluation Questionnaire** is completed and submitted in the Spring term. Students are asked to comment on the module and the quality of teaching. Responses are collated and summarised in a module review, presented by the module director to the Department Teaching and Learning Committee, where they are discussed. The module director examines the issues raised and identifies the follow-up action to be taken. A summary is presented by the Student Liaison Officer at the next Student-Staff Exchange Meeting.

- **Personal Tutors** (undergraduate) and the **Student Liaison Officer** (postgraduate) will communicate any concerns you have to the relevant tutor, teacher or administrator. This is a good way of giving feedback to us privately.

- Students are also encouraged to convey any concerns or complaints they have informally to module and programme directors or, if necessary, the Head of Department.

Student Support and Wellbeing Services

Student support at Birkbeck encompasses a wide range of services, aimed at not only supporting students' learning experience but also their personal development.

**Disability and Dyslexia Service**

At Birkbeck we welcome students with disabilities and we are committed to helping you seize the opportunities that studying here presents. Regardless of your condition, our experienced, understanding and welcoming staff are here to support you during your studies. To make an appointment, please contact the Wellbeing Team from your My Birkbeck profile by clicking on ‘Ask us’ and selecting ‘New Ask’ or call us on 020 3907 0700. Alternatively, please visit our [website](#) for information about a Study Support Plan, Disabled Students' Allowance, free dyslexia screening and more.
Access at Birkbeck
Birkbeck's main buildings have wheelchair access, accessible lifts and toilets, our reception desks and teaching venues have induction loops for people with hearing impairments, and we have large print and tactile signage. Accessible parking, lockers, specialist seating in lectures and seminars and portable induction loops can all be arranged by the Disability and Dyslexia Service.

Advice Service
Our trained advisors are on hand to provide information and advice about many aspects of your studies at Birkbeck including but not limited to: application and enrolment process, applying for government loans and financial support from the College, and payment options. Where we cannot answer questions immediately, we will either get back to you with an answer or refer your query to a specialist team who can.

Ask us a question, call us on 020 3907 0700 or come along to our drop-in sessions for help and support. Alternatively, please visit our website for further information.

Counselling Service
We offer a free, non-judgmental and confidential counselling service to support you with emotional or psychological difficulties during your time at university. To make an appointment for an initial consultation, please email counselling-services@bbk.ac.uk with your name, student ID, gender and telephone number. Alternatively, please visit our website for information about the service including a comprehensive selection of self-help resources which may be useful in gaining a greater understanding of the personal challenges you are facing and the ways in which you can think about addressing them.

Mental Health Advisory Service
We provide specialist advice and support in a safe, non-judgemental environment. Like the Counselling Service, we are here to help you when you are going through emotional or psychological difficulties. The main difference between our services is that the emphasis of our work is on practical support, rather than therapeutic interventions, to enable you to progress through your studies. To make an appointment, please contact the Wellbeing Team from your MyBirkbeck profile by clicking on ‘Ask us’ and selecting ‘New Ask’ or call us on 020 3907 0700. For further information about the service, please visit our website.

Careers and Employability Service
We provide comprehensive careers advice, events and information services both in person and online. The service is free and available to all Birkbeck students and recent graduates. To find out how we can help you to enhance your career development and employability ask us a question or visit the Students’ Employability Space. Alternatively, please visit our website for further information.
Nursery Service
We understand that studying while caring for a child or children can be especially challenging. We offer an affordable, professional evening nursery service, based in our central campus, for children aged from two to six years. For further information and contact details, please visit our website.
Accessing Resources Online: MyBirkbeck or Moodle?

MyBirkbeck

- Your applications and enrolments
- Your teaching timetable
- Your exam timetable
- Your modules and marks*
- Your attendance and ID card swipes
- Your payment information
- Your personal tutor details
- Your Study Support Plan, and information on the academic support we provide

*Please note that marks will only appear here once they have been officially published, usually in July.

- Pay your fees
- Upload a photo and order your Birkbeck ID card
- Request a change to your study status
- Confirm your modules
- Submit an ASK query
- Maintain and update your contact details

Moodle

- Read your module information including handbooks, reading lists, weekly schedules and messages from tutors
- Access Library and IT skills information
- Participate in discussion groups
- Submit your coursework
- View feedback and provisional marks for your coursework*
- Enrol on study skills workshops
- Access Moodle support

*Please note that you will have to look on your MyBirkbeck profile to view exam marks and overall module marks. These are normally available in July each year.
Appendix A: Assessment Criteria

Essays and exams are assessed using the following criteria (not in order of importance):

- **Answering the question**: the extent to which the work has dealt directly and clearly with the assigned task and provided a focused answer to the particular intellectual problem posed.
- **Structure**: the extent to which the work demonstrates coherent organization of the material and an overall argument that proceeds logically from introduction to conclusion.
- **Conceptual clarity**: the extent to which the work has understood key terms and concepts, defined ambiguous terms, and employed them correctly.
- **Analytic Content**: the extent to which the work provides a critical analysis of the problem that evaluates competing arguments and interpretations rather than a purely descriptive or narrative discussion.
- **Literature**: the extent to which the work demonstrates familiarity with, and command of, the relevant scholarly writings on the subject to which the work is addressed.
- **Evidence and Examples**: the extent to which the work deploys apposite examples and pieces of evidence to support its claims, thereby turning unsupported assertions into critical arguments.
- **Style and Presentation**: the extent to which the work makes effective and correct use of the English language and is written in a clear and scholarly style.

0-29: Totally inadequate work, which does not address the question and shows little or no knowledge of the subject, and fails to deal with any of the issues.

30-39: Inadequate work, which says something relevant to the question, but does not show much evidence of reading or an ability to develop a clear argument.

40-49: Poor work, which shows some knowledge of the literature and addresses the question, but lacks organisation.

50-59: Satisfactory work, which shows an awareness of the major issues, shows knowledge of the sources and of alternative approaches to the subject. Does not show a clear understanding of alternative arguments and makes uncritical use of sources.

60-69: Good work, which treats the issues in a critical and balanced way, and shows an awareness of context, sources and different explanations.

70-79: Excellent work, which displays exceptional knowledge of the literature and/or a substantial measure of originality.

80-100: Outstanding work in virtually all areas. Contains substantial evidence of original and independent thought.

Further information on assessment is available from the [Department of Politics](#) and the [College](#).
Appendix B: Birkbeck Plagiarism Guidelines

Written by Birkbeck Registry and adapted for TSMB by Nicholas Keep

What is plagiarism?
Plagiarism is the most common form of examination offence encountered in universities, partly because of the emphasis now placed on work prepared by candidates unsupervised in their own time, but also because many students fall into it unintentionally, through ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism. Even if unintentional, it will still be considered an examination offence.

This document, developed as guidelines to departments by Birkbeck Registry, is intended to explain clearly what plagiarism is, and how you can avoid it. Acknowledgement is made to guidance issued by the USA Modern Language Association (MLA, 1998).

Plagiarism is the publication of borrowed thoughts as original, or in other words, passing off someone else's work as your own. In any form, plagiarism is unacceptable in the Department, as it interferes with the proper assessment of students' academic ability. Plagiarism has been defined as “the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person’s mind, and presenting it as one’s own” (Lindley, 1952, p2). Therefore, using another person's ideas or expressions or data in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarise.

Borrowing others’ words, ideas or data without acknowledgement. It is acceptable, in your work, to use the words and thoughts of another person or data that another person has gathered but the borrowed material must not appear to be your creation. This includes essays, practical and research reports written by other students including those from previous years, whether you have their permission or not. It also applies to both ‘hard-copy’ material and electronic material, such as Internet documents. Examples include copying someone else’s form of words, or paraphrasing another’s argument, presenting someone else’s data or line of thinking. This form of plagiarism may often be unintentional, caused by making notes from sources such as books or journals without also noting the source, and then repeating those notes in an essay without acknowledging that they are the data, words or ideas belonging to someone else. Guard against this by keeping careful notes that distinguish between your own ideas and researched material and those you obtained from others. Then acknowledge the source.

Example 1

Original source:

To work as part of a team, to be able and prepared to continue to learn throughout one’s career, and, most important, to take on board both care for the individual and the community, are essential aspects of a doctor’s role today.

Plagiarism:

The essential aspects of a doctor’s role today are to work as part of a team, be able and prepared to continue to learn throughout one’s career, and, most importantly, to take on board both care for the individual and the community.

Acceptable:

One social writer believes that the essential aspects of a doctor’s role today are to work as part of a team, be able and prepared to continue to learn throughout one's career, and, most importantly, to take on board both care for the individual and the community (Greengross, 1997).

Example 2

Original source:

The binary shape of British higher education, until 1992, suggested a simple and misleading, dichotomy of institutions. [...] Within their respective classes, universities and polytechnics were imagined to be essentially homogeneous. Their actual diversity was disguised. [...] The abandonment of the binary system, whether or not it encourages future convergence, highlights the pluralism which already exists in British Higher Education.


Plagiarism:

Prior to the removal of the binary divide between polytechnics and universities in 1992, there was a misleading appearance of homogeneity in each sector. Now there is only one sector, the diversity of institutions is more apparent, even if convergence may be where we’re heading.

Acceptable:

Peter Scott has argued that prior to the removal of the binary divide between polytechnics and universities in 1992, there was a misleading appearance of homogeneity in each sector. Now there is only one sector, the diversity of institutions is more apparent, even if convergence may be where we’re heading. (Scott, 1994)

In each revision, the inclusion of the author’s name acknowledges whose ideas these originally were (not the student's) and the reference refers the reader to the full location of the work when combined with a footnote or bibliography. Note that in the second example, the argument was paraphrased – but even so, this is plagiarism of
the idea without acknowledgement of whose idea this really is. In writing any work, therefore (whether for assessment or not) you should document everything that you borrow – not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also information and ideas. There are, of course, some common-sense exceptions to this, such as familiar proverbs, well-known quotations or common knowledge. But you must indicate the source of any appropriated material that readers might otherwise mistake for your own. If in doubt, cite your source or sources.

Copying material verbatim
Another example of plagiarism is the verbatim copying of chunks of material from another source without acknowledgement even where they are accepted facts, because you are still borrowing the phrasing and the order and the idea that this is a correct and complete list. Also, you might be infringing copyright (see below). For example if you wrote based on example 2 above ‘The binary shape of British higher education, until 1992, suggested a simple and misleading, dichotomy of institutions. (Scott, 1995)’ then this still could be regarded as plagiarism as you used his exact words. It is important to rephrase the ideas in your own words, to show that you understand them while still acknowledging the source.

Re-submission of work
Another form of plagiarism is submitting work you previously submitted before for another assignment. While this is obviously not the same as representing someone else’s ideas as your own, it is a form of self-plagiarism and is another form of cheating. If you want to re-work a paper for an assignment, ask your lecturer whether this is acceptable, and acknowledge your re-working in a preface.

Collaboration and collusion
In collaborative work (if this is permitted by the lecturer) joint participation in research and writing does not constitute plagiarism in itself, provided that credit is given for all contributions. One way would be to state in a preface who did what; another, if roles and contributions were merged and truly shared, would be to acknowledge all concerned equally. However, where collaborative projects are allowed, it is usually a requirement that each individual’s contribution and work is distinguishable, so check with your lecturer. Usually, collusion with another candidate on assessed work (such as sharing chunks of writing or copying bits from each other) is not allowed.

Copyright infringement
Finally, you must guard against copyright infringement. Even if you acknowledge the source, reproducing a significant portion of any document (including material on the Internet) without permission is a breach of copyright, and a legal offence. You may summarise, paraphrase and make brief quotations (as I have done from my sources), but more than this risks infringing copyright.

References

Please see the policy on plagiarism and other assessment offences.
Appendix C: Policy on the Recording of Lectures and Other Teaching Sessions

Please note that the copyright in the lectures and other teaching sessions reside with the teacher responsible for the teaching session. Students may ask for permission to record any teaching session delivered as part of their programme of study. All such requests should be made prior to the recording to the teacher responsible for the teaching session, and the decision on whether to grant permission is at the discretion of the teacher. Special provisions apply to students with a disability who wish to record teaching sessions. Please see the Disability Office for further details.

If allowed by the tutor, recordings of teaching sessions may only be made for the personal and private use of the student making the recording. Students may not: (a) record teaching sessions on behalf of other students; (b) pass such recordings to any other person (except for the purposes of transcription, in which case they can be passed to one person only); and (c) publish such recordings in any form (this includes, but is not limited to, the internet and hard copy publication). Where students breach this policy, the College may regard this as a disciplinary offence. All such breaches will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Code of Student Discipline.