

University of Rome Tor Vergata  
Undergraduate Degree (B.A.) in Global Governance

Course Syllabus

**Global Politics**

12 CFU

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**Course descriptions and topics: The EU and Global Politics**

The class will focus on the EU in global politics by focusing in particular at two main policy areas: Transatlantic Relations and Development policies.

The relationship between the *United States* and the EU is a rather ambiguous one. On the one hand, both sides claim to attach great importance to closer co-operation and to a strengthening of their relationship. On the other hand, they are involved in what appears to be petty disputes, threats, retaliation measures, counter-retaliations. This holds true in the trade area – despite being each other largest trading partners – thus jeopardizing TTIP negotiations. It also holds true in foreign and defense policies, despite the multiple threats that the world is currently facing.

European public opinion, vexed by Europe's economic crises, is strongly against any increased spending on defence. European leaders are more concerned by the immediate level of their domestic popularity than by the medium- to long-term effects of their decisions. Europe is investing less in both security hardware and research into security-related technology. In short, Europe is lagging behind.

To make things worse, Europe's self-proclaimed soft-power leadership – which some observers praise as complementing U.S. hard power in a supposed informal division of labour – has reached its limits. Europeans failed to foresee and contain trouble in their own backyards, East and South alike. Deep divisions among EU member states are further weakening Europe's ability to act coherently in foreign and security policy.

As a result, Europe is condemning itself to increased irrelevance on the world stage. The U.S. administration is growing ever more impatient and the transatlantic relationship – which is and should remain the main pillar of Western foreign policy – is being further shaken.

As for development policy, it is one of the longest established policies in the European Union and one of the most intricate areas in the field of EU studies. A primary source of complexity is its principal instrument, foreign aid. In fact, the EU can be seen as both an atypical bilateral donor, in that it transfers substantial amounts of resources directly to developing countries, and a unique collective donor, for its efforts to 'federate' the development policies of its Member States around a common vision. The difficult co-existence of these two dimensions generates friction between EU supranational institutions and Member States, certainly on the issue of coordination and complementarity, but also on the choice of more interest- or norm-driven approaches. Other significant sources of tension are related to the attempts to create better synergies between aid and other policies (for instance, trade, agriculture, security, and migration) which are believed to have an equal, if not greater, importance in the fight against world poverty. Against this background, this course explores the evolution of the relations between the EU and the developing world since the Treaty of Rome, paying special attention to the changing nature of the EU-Africa partnership, the cooperative-competitive relationship with key international organisations, and the impact of rising powers on the global development architecture. Moreover, it uses development policy to investigate the extent to which the EU acts effectively on the world stage, the type of actor and power the EU is (or seeks to be) in the international arena, the degree of coherence across policies, and contentious issues such as partnership, identity and Europeanization.

**Readings:**

- F. Bindi – I. Angelescu, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union: Assessing Europe's Role in the World*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition, 2012;

- F. Bindi – I. Angelescu, *The Frontiers of Europe. A Transatlantic Problem?* Brookings Institution Press, Washington, 2011.
- M. Carbone, *The European Union and International Development: The Politics of Foreign Aid*, Routledge, London, 2007.

Additional readings to be provided in class.