Universidad Rey Juan Carlos

TEACHING GUIDE

EUROPEAN UNION POLITICAL HISTORY

GRADO EN RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES (INGLÉS)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-27

Publication date: 07-07-2026

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I.-Subject Identification	
Type	OBLIGATORIA
Teaching period	2 course, 2Q semester
Nº of credits	6
Language in wich the subject is taught	English

II.-Presentation

The European Union was born in 1992, with the Treaty of Maastricht. It has then a very short political history. And even shorter if we consider that until the Treaty of Lisbon of 2009 it was not even a Legal person. Though this is not entirely true, as the European Union is a result of a long period of integration that goes beyond the 9 May 1950. It is a common place to consider that the European Union, which features 27 nation-states -The UK excluded- that, despite their long historical traditions, are tending to be subsumed into supranational organizations, whose purviews and authorities are continuously expanding European Union, is essentially based in an economic integration process, as since the 1950 Schuman Declaration the “Community Acquis” (Acquis Communautaire) has seriously and irrevocably reduced national sovereignty aims at consolidate a Common Market. Nevertheless notions of national identity are far from extinct as Europe’s longest-standing nation-states not only have not disappeared but in many ways the scope and impact of the national state has actually intensified. In fact, in what has probably been a backlash against this trend towards supranational integration, many Europeans identify more and more with their “homelands,” calling for regional pride. If the EU is hard to understand is because its creation has not superseded its Member States. That means that without knowing the background of European political history it is impossible to understand the process of European integration. In this course we will get back to the origins of European nations and states, in order to allow students to understand the contemporary meaning of crucial realities such as Law, the State, Government and Politics, and restore a taste and hunger for general culture that is, sadly, disappearing in our societies, drowned out by more “practical” technological and economic concerns. But it is not only sad. It makes EU reality ununderstandable. And that makes very difficult dealing with the European integration process in the everyday life. By the end of the course, students would not only have broadened their culture but should be able to understand the present European Union reality according to the origins of its essential institutions.

III.-Learning outcomes

CG01. Students must be able to possess and understand their own knowledge of the area of institutional relations, based on general secondary education.
CG03. Students must have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data in order to make value judgements that include an analysis of the relevant political, legal, social, economic, scientific and ethical issues.
CG07. Students must be able to understand international relations from a perspective based on respect for human rights and the principles of democratic life and multicultural society.
CE02. Students must be aware of the historical development of the political, social and cultural processes, ideas and movements that have served as a foundation for modern States and international relations.
CE03. Students must be able to identify, understand and analyse the source, basic principles and development of a democratic and plural society, as well as its confrontation with other lifestyles.
CE14. Students must be capable of independently studying and analysing the political and social ideas and movements that develop within a framework of international relations.
CE16. Students must be capable of understanding and analysing the specific features of political and constitutional models from a comparative perspective.

- Key for degrees not adapted to RD 822/21: **CB** - basic competences, **CG** - generic competences, **CE** - specific competences, **CT** - transversal competences.
- Key for degrees adapted to RD 822/21: **CON** - knowledge, **COM** - competences, **HAB** - skills.

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IV.-Contents

IV.A.-Syllabus

SYLLABUS

1. The origin of European Nations.
2. The origin of European States.
3. The transition from Universal model to State model and its consequences, from 1648 to 1776.
4. The origin of Nation-State: From the American to the French Revolution (1776-1815)
5. The apogee of European nation-states: the XIXth Century (1815-1914)
6. The suicide of Europe: 1914-1945
7. Europe and the World Order after WWII: 1945-1950
8. Historic models of integration or how to get together in the Western constitutional tradition
9. The Federalist option: the U.S. model and the process of European Integration from the Westphalia Treaty to the Hague Congress of 1948.
10. The European way; the Community Method or step by step integration
11. From the Treaty of Paris to the Single European Act (1951-1986).
12. From the Europe of Communities to the European Union (1986-2009) or how to retrieve international European relevance.
13. European Union new challenges: the War in Ukraine and the new international order. An opportunity for Europe?

General theme: History of Europe through Literay texts.

IV.B.-Training activities

Type	Title
Lectures	Learning how to structure the acquired knowledge through a personal reflexion
Lectures	Learning how to structure your own ideas according to different perspectives
Lectures	Ues of the case method
Oral presentations	Oral presentations of topics related to the subject
Other activities	Reading of three books and discussion on them. Technique of the Book Club. The three books will be related to the subject.

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V.-Student workload	
Theoretical sessions	30
Resolution of exercises, problems, case studies, etc.	20
Practical sessions in experimental, technological and clinical laboratories, fieldwork, etc.	0
Tests and/or exams	10
Academic tutorials	24
Related activities: conferences, seminars, etc.	24
Preparation of theoretical sessions and self-study	22
Preparation of practical tasks, exercises, case studies, projects, etc.	40
Preparation for tests and/or exams	10
Total student workload	180

VI.-Methodology and academic programme		
Type	**Period**	**Content**
Theoretical sessions	Week 1 to Week 15	(Ap) In person Master classes developed in small groups of students to work and explain main contents of the on line materials
Week 1 to Week 15	(Ad) Activities such as reading books or other recommended publications of interest; watching movies or documentries will be part of the graded activities	Practical sessions
Week 1 to Week 15	(Ad) Critical approach to suggested texts will be done during the course	Tests and/or exams

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VII.-Assessment methods

The general assessment method is continuous as established in the *Regulation for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes* of Rey Juan Carlos University.
All the assessment systems established in the degree report must be employed, except for those that have a minimum weight of 0%, which can be used by professors in the academic years they consider relevant. Each assessment system may be applied through one or more assessment activities, consistent with the system. No assessment activity can exceed individually 60% of the overall grade for the subject.
The sum of non re-evaluable activities cannot exceed 40% of the overall grade for the subject and, in general, should not have an established minimum grade (except for practical activities in which, strictly speaking, the conditions of the ordinary call cannot be reproduced in the extraordinary call).
Those students who do not manage to pass the subject in the ordinary call, or do not attend this first call, may attend the extraordinary call only for failed re-evaluable assessment activities.
The distribution and characteristics of the assessment activities are described below.

VII.A.-Description and weight of the assessment activities

There will be an exam on every required book in addition to the two official exams set by URJC in its official calendar.

VII.B. Assessment of students with academic exemption from class attendance

Having Academic Exemption from Class Attendance (DAAC) does not imply that students are automatically exempt from participating in the continuous assessment activities or in the training activities of compulsory attendance as established in the teaching guide. Once the exemption has been granted, students must contact the subject's teaching staff, who will propose the adaptations he/she may consider relevant, as long as they guarantee the acquisition and adequate assessment of the learning goals established. Students must maintain adequate communication with the teaching staff so that they may provide information on the dates for training and assessment activities, if these are not established in the programme and available for students at the time of achieving the exemption.
Subject with possibility of academic exemption: Yes.

VII.C. Review of assessment activities

In accordance with the Regulation for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes of Rey Juan Carlos University.

VII.D.-Students with a disability or special educational needs

In order to guarantee equal opportunities, non-discrimination, universal accessibility and academic success, students with disabilities or especial education needs may request curricular adaptations to follow their studies. These adaptations will be provided by the Unit of Attention to People with Disabilities of Rey Juan Carlos University, in accordance with the regulation which regulates the service for the Attention of People with Disabilities at the University. This Unit will issue a report for curricular adaptations, so that students with disabilities or special education needs must contact the service (at e-mail discapacidad.programa@urjc.es) in order to provide relevant information for different educational alternatives.

VII.E.-Academic behaviour, academic integrity and honesty

Rey Juan Carlos University is fully committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty, so studying at the URJC means assuming and subscribing to the values of integrity and academic honesty set out in the University's Ethical Code. To support this process, the University has Rey Juan Carlos University's Academic Conduct Regulation as well as different tools (anti-plagiarism, supervision...) that offer a collective guarantee for the full development of these essential values.

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VIII.-Teaching resources and materials

Basic bibliography

AGUILERA-BARCHET, B., *A History of Western Public Law. Between Nation and State*. Springer 2015.
AGUILERA-BARCHET, B. *Tratado de Derecho Pop.* Aranzadi Thomson Reuters 2021.
AGUILERA-BARCHET, B. Demystifying the Legal Art of Order, Power and Fun. Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2025.
ARON, Raymond *In Defense of Decadent Europe* Regnery/Gateway Inc South Bend, Indiana 1977.
CAENEGEM, R. C. van *An Historical Introduction to Western Constitutional Law.* Cambridge University Press 2003.
COE, Jonathan *Middle England*. Penguin, 2019.
FIGES, Orlando *The Europeans. Three Lives and the Making of a Cosmopolitan Culture*. Allen Lane, 2019.
GEARY, P. J. *The Myth of Nations. The Medieval origins of Europe*. Princeton University Press 2002.
GELLNER, E. *Nations and Nationalism*. Blackwell Publishing 2006.
GUR, Batya *Murder in the Kibbutz. A communal case*. HarperCollins, 1994.
HARRIS, Robert *An officer and a Spy*. Cornerstone Digital, 2013.
HOBSBAWM, E. J. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality.* Cambridge University Press. 2010.
JONES, Owen *The Establishment: And how they get away with it* Melville House 2015.
JUDT, T. *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* Penguin Books 2005.
LANCHESTER, JOHN *Capital* Faber and Faber 2012.
MENASSE, Robert *The Capital* MacLehose Press 2020
MENDELSOHN, Daniel *The Lost: The Search for Six of Six Million.* Harper Perennial, 2013.
MISHRA, Pankaj *The Age of Anger. A History of the present.* Farrar, Strauus and Giroux. 2017.
POLIAKOV, Leon *The History of Anti-Semitism.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.
SANDS, Philippe East West Street. Orion Group 2017.
SCHWARZ, Geraldine Those who forget. One Family's History. A Memoir, a History, a Warning. Pushkin Press, 2021.
WAGENSTEIN, Angel Isaac's Torah. Other Press, 2022.
ZWEIG, Stefan The World of Yesterday. Memoirs of a European. Independently Published, 2022.
The three compulsory litterary readings will be:
- Ian McEwan Lessons (2022)
- Emmanuel Carrère *Limonov* (2011)
- Lea Ypi *Free: Coming of Age at the end of History* (2023)

After the reading the students will pass an exam for every book and participate in an open debate.

Consultation bibliography

IX.-Professors

Name and surname	BRUNO AGUILERA BARCHET
E-mail address	bruno.aguilera@urjc.es
Department	Derecho Privado
Campus	Madrid - Vicálvaro
Category	Catedrático/a de Universidad
Academic degree	Doctor
Person responsible for the subject	Yes
Tutorial timetable	Para consultar las tutorias póngase en contacto con el/la profesor/a a través de correo electrónico

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Number of quinquennia	6
Number of sexennia	5
No. of positive evaluations by Docentia	2

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