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UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE

Scuola di
Scienze Politiche
Cesare Alfieri

Politics of European Integration 2022-23

B026821 – 6 CFU

1^a Semester 2022/2023

Class Hours:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays 12:00-14:00 in Building D5, classroom 0.11

Main instructor:

Valeria Fargion (valeria.fargion@unifi.it)
Enrico Borghetto (enrico.borghetto@unifi.it)

I. Course content:

The course “Politics of European Integration” coincides with the Jean Monnet module REPLAN-EU “Implementing Resilience and Recovery Plans in Italy and beyond” ([link to the website](#)). The module focuses on the definition and implementation of National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) promoted within the Next Generation EU program (NGEU). The reforms and investments identified in these plans are expected to trigger a profound transformation of EU member states’ societies and economies for the next decades and, if successful, their implementation will undoubtedly have positive ripple effects for EU legitimacy. Yet, to our knowledge, there is still little systematic teaching on this subject in EU studies curricula in Italy and Europe.

The module fills this gap by renovating the program of the master’s course “Politics of European Integration” at the University of Florence. The new curriculum will address a) the structure, funding and governance mechanisms of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) in general and b) key issues in the implementation of reforms in three policy pillars of NRRPs, namely: the green transition, the digital transformation and social & territorial cohesion. National reforms and investments in these areas are having and will have a significant impact on work, education and, more in general, on the way Europeans live in the next decade. As new jobs requiring new green and digital competences emerge and some professions become obsolete, university curricula are required to adapt to better equip students with the right skills to surf this tide. While the main study case will be the Italian recovery plan “Italia Domani”, being Italy the biggest recipient of RRF funding (191,5 billion Euros), the overall approach will include systematic comparisons with other national cases.



II. Learning objectives:

Provide students with the theoretical, methodological, and empirical instruments to understand EU and domestic political processes associated to the RRF and the national plans.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Master the main theoretical concepts and analytical tools for analysing the formulation and the implementation of NRRPs
- Understand the institutions and governance of NRRPs
- Get insights into the three main policy pillars of NRRPs: green transition, digital transition and social and territorial cohesion
- Find the relevant information concerning the politics and policies of NRRPs based on a plurality of reliable sources

III. Prerequisites

Students should have a solid knowledge of the functioning of EU institutions and policies and have advanced reading, oral and writing skills in English.

IV. Teaching methods:

Classes will incorporate both lectures and seminar-like discussions, so it is crucial that attending students keep up with the readings and be prepared to discuss them in class. Participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged and will be awarded extra points. Additional guest seminars and lectures are included in the schedule.

IV. Suggested Readings:

The readings will be made available in the Moodle webpage of the course.

V. Type of assessment:

- Attending students will be assessed based on a group project (30%) and a 4000-word final essay (70%). Participation in class discussion will be awarded extra points.
- Non-attending students (attending less than 80% of the classes) will be assessed based on a final 5000-word research essay (50%) on a topic chosen from a list and a final written exam (50%). A detailed outline of the research paper should be discussed with the instructors.



VI. Course program:

FIRST SECTION (Weeks 1-2-3):

Section devoted to a presentation of the structure, funding and governance mechanisms of the Recovery and Resilience Facility RRF, as well as the main theoretical approaches and findings to be found in the EU studies and comparative politics literature. Main topics include:

- The RRF in historical perspective and the political dynamics underlying its negotiation
- The governance of the RRF (with a special attention for the European semester within which the RRF is legally and operationally embedded)
- EU and national factors that are likely to shape the formulation, implementation and evaluation of NRRPs
- Comparing NRRPs

Week 1

- **From the Eurocrisis to the pandemic emergency**
- **NGEU: a game changer?**

Relevant websites:

- [NextGenerationEU \(Portal\)](#)
- [Conclusions of the special meeting of the European Council \(17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 July 2020\)](#)
- [The Recovery and Resilience Facility](#)
- [The Recovery and Resilience Plan in Italy: Italia Domani](#)

Readings:

- de la Porte, C., & Jensen, M. D. (2021). The next generation EU: An analysis of the dimensions of conflict behind the deal. *Social Policy & Administration*, 55(2), 388–402. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12709>
- Krotz, U., & Schramm, L. (2022). Embedded Bilateralism, Integration Theory, and European Crisis Politics: France, Germany, and the Birth of the EU Corona Recovery Fund*. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 60(3), 526–544. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13251>
- Schramm, L., Krotz, U., & De Witte, B. (2022). Building ‘Next Generation’ after the pandemic: The implementation and implications of the EU Covid Recovery Plan. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, n/a(n/a). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13375>

Week 2

- **Implementing NRRPs: from the supranational to the national level of government**
- **The governance of NRRPs**

Relevant websites:

- [Recovery and resilience scoreboard](#)
- [Review report on the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility](#) (Brussels, 29.7.2022, COM(2022) 383 final)

Readings:

- Corti, F., & Ferrer, J. N. (2021). Steering and Monitoring the Recovery and Resilience Plans. *CEPS Reflection Papers*, 2, 20.



- Fabbrini, F. (2022). The Legal Architecture of the Economic Responses to COVID-19: EMU beyond the Pandemic*. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 60(1), 186–203. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13271>
- Knill, C. (2015). Implementation. In J. J. Richardson & S. Mazey (Eds.), *European Union: Power and policy-making* (4th ed., pp. 373–394). Routledge.

Week 3

• Comparing and assessing recovery and resilience plans

Relevant websites:

- <https://ethinktank.eu/2022/02/03/national-recovery-and-resilience-plans-latest-state-of-play/>
- <https://www.bruegel.org/dataset/european-union-countries-recovery-and-resilience-plans>

Readings:

- Corti, F., Núñez Ferrer, J., Ruiz de la Ossa, T., & Liscai, A. (2022). Comparing and assessing recovery and resilience plans – Second edition. In *CEPS Papers* (No. 35879; CEPS Papers). Centre for European Policy Studies. <https://ideas.repec.org/p/eps/cepswp/35879.html>
- Licchetta, M., Mattozzi, G., Raciborski, R., & Willis, R. (2022). *Economic Adjustment in the Euro Area & the United States during the COVID-19 Crisis* (DISCUSSION PAPER 160). Directorate General Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN).

SECOND SECTION (Weeks 4-5-6):

3 subsections each focusing on one fundamental policy pillars of the RRF:

- The digital transformation and RRF
- Social & territorial cohesion and RRF
- The green transition and RRF

Each subsection will be presented by one or more scholars/practitioners working on the topic. The goal is to provide students with background theoretical and substantive insights into the content of the RRF and NRRPs in this specific fields. They will also learn how the interaction between member states' governments and EU institutions, as well as societal actors like interest groups and political parties, affect NRRPs and the impact of such dynamics in politics and society.

Week 4

• The digital transition

Readings:

- Lulyanova, V. (2022). The digital dimension of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans. EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service, PE 733.606, 17.
- Ringhof, J., & Torreblanca, J. I. (2022). The geopolitics of technology: How the EU can become a global player. European Council on Foreign Relations - Policy Brief, 450, 37.



Week 5

- **Social and territorial cohesion**

Readings:

- Corti, F., Morabito, C., Ruiz, T., & Luongo, P. (2022). *The role of recovery and resilience facility in strengthening childcare policies*. FEPS Foundation for Progressive European Studies Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Guillén, A. M., León, M., & Pavolini, E. (2022). Are ‘carrots’ better than ‘sticks’? New EU conditionality and social investment policies in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy and Spain. *Comparative European Politics*, 20(2), 220–237. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41295-022-00281-w>

Week 6

- **The green transition**

Readings:

- Filipović, S., Lior, N., & Radovanović, M. (2022). The green deal – just transition and sustainable development goals Nexus. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 168, 112759. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rser.2022.112759>
- Mišík, M., & Oravcová, V. (2022). Ex Ante Governance in the European Union: Energy and climate policy as a ‘test run’ for the post-pandemic recovery. *Energy Policy*, 167, 113076. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2022.113076>

THIRD SECTION (Weeks 7-8):

In this last section, groups of students will present their team project on a NRRP

Week 7 and 8

Group projects - Germany and France
Group projects - Poland and Spain
Group projects - Belgium and Austria