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UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
FIRENZE

**Scuola di  
Scienze Politiche  
Cesare Alfieri**

# Policy-making in the EU multilevel system 2024-25

**B032769 (B087) – 6 CFU**

1<sup>a</sup> Semester 2024/2025

**Class Hours:**

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

**Main instructor:**

Enrico Borghetto ([enrico.borghetto@unifi.it](mailto:enrico.borghetto@unifi.it))

**Teaching assistant:**

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**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 formulation 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. 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 with 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 analyzing the formulation and 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 how EU institutions and policies function 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 on the course's Moodle webpage.

## **V. Type of assessment:**

- Attending students will be assessed based on a group project (25%) and a written exam (75%).
- Non-attending students (attending less than 80% of the classes) will be assessed based on a final 2500-word research essay (25%) and a final written exam (75%). A detailed outline of the research essay should be discussed with the instructors.



## VI. Course program:

### FIRST SECTION (Weeks 1-2-3):

This section focuses on presenting the structure, funding, and governance mechanisms of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), as well as the main theoretical approaches and findings in EU studies and comparative politics literature. The main topics covered include:

1. The historical perspective of the RRF and the political dynamics involved in its negotiation
2. The governance of the RRF, with special attention to the European semester, within which the RRF is legally and operationally embedded
3. EU and national factors that are likely to influence the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs)
4. A comparison of NRRPs

#### Week 1

- How new is NGEU?
- The path to NGEU: From the Eurocrisis to the pandemic emergency

##### Readings:

- 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>
- Fabbrini, S. (2023). Going beyond the pandemic: ‘Next generation eu’ and the politics of sub-regional coalitions. *Comparative European Politics*, 21(1), 64–81. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41295-022-00302-8>

#### Week 2

- Comparing and assessing recovery and resilience plans
- The Italian recovery plan

##### Readings:

- Ceron M (2023) The National Recovery and Resilience Plans: Towards a Next Generation of Fiscal Coordination? *Politics and Governance* 11(4): 324–338.

##### Only non-attending students:

- Di Mascio F, Natalini A and Profeti S (2024) Upstream and downstream implementation arrangements in two-level games. A focus on administrative simplification in the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan. *Review of Policy Research*. Epub ahead of print 2024. DOI: 10.1111/ropr.12594

#### Week 3

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

##### Readings:

- Zeitlin J, Bokhorst D and Eihmanis E (2024) Governing the European Union’s recovery and resilience facility: National ownership and performance-based financing in theory and practice. *Regulation & Governance*. John Wiley & Sons, ahead of print 11 September 2024. DOI: [10.1111/rego.12619](https://doi.org/10.1111/rego.12619).



## SECOND SECTION (Weeks 4-5-6):

3 subsections, each focusing on one fundamental policy pillar 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 these 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:

- Profiroiu CM, Negoită CI and Costea AV (2024) Digitalization of public administration in EU member states in times of crisis: the contributions of the national recovery and resilience plans. *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 90(2). SAGE Publications Ltd: 336–352.

##### Only non-attending students:

- Lulyanova V (2024) The digital dimension of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans. *EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service* PE 762.367. 1-10

### Week 5

#### • Social and territorial cohesion

##### Readings:

- Corti, F., & Vesan, P. (2023). From austerity-conditionality towards a new investment-led growth strategy: Social Europe after the Recovery and Resilience Facility. *Social Policy & Administration*, 57(4), 513–548. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12906>

##### Only non-attending students:

- Magdalena S (2024) Social and territorial cohesion in the Recovery and Resilience Facility. *EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service* PE 757.590. 1-8

### Week 6

#### • The green transition

##### Readings:

- Bocquillon P, Brooks E and Maltby T (2024) Talkin' Bout a Revolution? Institutional Change in the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility: The Case of Climate Policy. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*

##### Only non-attending students:

- D'Alfonso A (2022) Energy policy in the national recovery and resilience plans. *EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service*. 1-12



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### **THIRD SECTION (Weeks 7-8):**

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

#### **Week 7 and 8**

##### **Readings:**

- Buti, M., & Fabbri, S. (2023). Next generation EU and the future of economic governance: Towards a paradigm change or just a big one-off? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 30(4), 676–695. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2022.2141303>