The public politicization of the European Union

Syllabus

Advanced, research-oriented B.A. seminar
Winter semester 2025, University of Potsdam

Wednesdays 12–14 pm, Room 3.06. S13

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Contents

1. SHORT OUTLINE AND LEARNING GOALS

Political decisions of the European Union (EU) increasingly permeate national politics but are often taken in rather closed settings dominated by executive or technocratic actors. Yet, this mode of decision-making is increasingly challenged by controversial public debates. Decisions taken on levels beyond the nation state figure prominently in the news, the respective public opinion is much more aware but also more diversified, and various societal actors ranging from social movements to political parties, in particular, actively mobilize on European questions.

Based on the current research agenda, the seminar provides students with a systematic overview of this public EU politicization. By reading and discussing recent and mostly empirical literature, the participants delve into the different arenas in which EU politicization takes place, carve out the emerging lines of political conflict on governance beyond the nation state, and finally discuss the resulting challenges for decision-making in the EU. This should enable participants to assess and to apply the politicization concept to various questions of contemporary European politics (and to support own research projects in this regard).

As a participant, you should be willing to engage in both the substantial and methodological issues of the literature to be read, and be prepared to actively participate during the individual sessions. Besides regular participation, assignments include one active participation role (presenter, minute-taker, or debater) and a term paper which applies one of the discussed aspects to a freely chosen empirical issue of (contemporary) EU politics.

2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND SEMINAR ORGANISATION

The seminar addresses advanced Bachelor students in political science and related disciplines (e.g. international relations, comparative politics, public administration, or political sociology) who already control some basic knowledge on EU decision-making.

Prospective participants should be willing to:

- Engage with the substantive and methodological aspects of political science literature,
- Invest in active self-learning based on the various materials provided,
- Contribute their knowledge, views, and questions to our active learning in class.

The seminar is largely organized around the idea of an inverted or flipped classroom. Contrary to traditional teaching in class, I will offer the lecture and content delivery part of the seminar *before* our meetings. This will typically be one or two introductory texts for your own reading and a lecture video shared via Moodle roughly three days before each session. For you, this approach has *two key advantages*. First, it allows you to learn about the key contents of each session at your own speed. Second, it frees up *in-class time* for joint, active learning: together we will deepen the key contents of each session on the basis of your questions, group discussions and debates, as well as presentations of more advanced topics.

To realize these advantages all participants should take both their own preparation phase as well as our joint in-class work seriously along the following *seminar participation steps*:

Preparation (self-learning)

1. Scan the brief outline/topics for the respective session.
2. Carefully read the obligatory introductory text(s) provided for the session.
3. Watch the lecture video (~60 mins) offered for the session and mark this task as completed on Moodle.
4. List what you consider as key questions and concepts for the session's topic.
5. Share your questions, discussion points, or research ideas via the collaborative document provided for each session on Moodle. This will be the first input for our in-class exchanges. Any factual, political or methodological question as well as ideas for research projects is welcome here!

In-class activities (joint active learning)

6. Participate actively and regularly during the in-class discussions and activities and cooperate with your fellow students. We will a.o. work with the "Think–Pair-Share" method, e.g., where you can make up your own mind, discuss in smaller groups, to then engage in the plenum. If you have to miss an individual session, please notify me briefly via email beforehand.
7. Take up *one of the active participation roles* specified for each individual seminar session. Students wishing to collect at least 4 ECTS for this seminar have to take up one of these roles at least once during seminar. A respective booking tool will be offered via Moodle.

The following active participation roles are available to you in individual sessions:

- *Presenter:* Prepare a ppt/pdf presentation (12-15 mins) on one published study on the topic of the seminar session. Your presentation summarizes the motivation, research design, and results of the study to then engage your fellow students in a short discussion about the implications (or shortcomings of that research). In section 4 below I suggest suitable studies marked with (P) for each session, but if you have other ideas or if you want to present an own research design (e.g. for your term paper or a potential BA thesis project), I am very happy to talk about this!
- *Debater:* Two sessions will be organized as group debates. To kick off the debates there will be *two teams of two seminar participants* each that argue for and against respective 'motions'. As part of one of these teams, you will search for and collect arguments on the side you are defending during preparation to then exchange them with the opposing team during class. I will provide relevant scientific sources on this debate and I am also happy to talk to your team beforehand.
- *Minute-taker:* As a minute taker you will prepare an overview document of an individual in-class session that will be shared with your fellow students via Moodle (pdf, ~ 3-4 pages, a template will be provided). During class you take notes and ask your fellow students if something was unclear, afterwards you summarize the main points and views discussed in class where you may also include links to materials or sources that were mentioned during the discussions. **Note**: The minute-taker role will only be accepted for sessions in which the other participation roles are already filled. If you are targeting a "Portfolioprüfung" in a module for this seminar, you should take a debater or presenter role in any case!

Students wishing to collect 6 ECTS will hand in a ***term paper*** that either studies one self-chosen question related to EU politicization or proposes a research design to that end after the seminar (deadline March 31, 2026). The length of the term paper is typically around 5.000 to 6.000 words, depending on the module under which you are enrolled in the seminar. More detailed paper guidelines are available via Moodle and my website.

We will jointly start thinking about suitable term papers early in this seminar which also features a dedicated session on how to develop research questions in the third block. You are expected to hand-in a very short exposé sketching your initial ideas in early January. Term papers can come in the format of a research design which will be further specified in class but in principle it consists of developing a research question on contemporary EU politicization, discussing relevant political science literature to develop expectations/hypothesis for answering the question, to finally discuss empirical sources and methods that could (!) be used for assessing the developed expectations. In other words, you are expected to plan (rather than to execute) a research project. This format is particularly suited to develop and to asses first ideas for a bachelor thesis (independent from whether it is realized later or not).

Registration takes place via PULS in the first three weeks of the seminar. The main means of communication and seminar organization will be a respective course on Moodle.UP with the short title "EUpoliticization25" (ID: 47189). The self-enrollment key will be shared during the first session of the seminar.

I am very much looking forward to work with and to learn from you!

3. COURSE CONTENTS AND SESSIONS

The contents of the seminar are split into three blocks. The *first block* introduces the basic concepts and presents the most prominent arguments on the drivers and consequences of the politicization of supranational governance. The *second block* then looks into the actual dynamics of politicization in different arenas of domestic politics, mainly by discussing the recent empirical (and often quantitative) research literature. The *third block* then pulls the strings together and aims at an aggregate perspective which enables us to discuss the normative and pragmatic consequences that politicization has for intergovernmental and supranational decision-making in the EU. The following table lists the respective structure session by session.

Block 1	*The EU and Its Public Politicization: What to expect?*
15.10.2025	Seminar introduction
22.10.2025	Basics: European Integration and EU decision-making
29.10.2025	*No in-class session*
05.11.2025	Theory: What is EU politicisation and why might it occur?
12.11.2025	*Debate session*: Does the EU need more or less public debate?
Block 2	*How the EU is politicized in domestic political arenas*
19.11.2025	Public opinion: What structures citizens' perspectives on the EU
26.11.2025	Party politics I: The EU in national party competition
03.12.2025	Party politics II: National parliaments and EP elections
10.12.2025	Media: The EU in the news
17.12.2025	Independent work: Developing your term paper ideas (no in-class session)
24.12.2025	*No in-class session (Christmas)*
31.12.2025	*No in-class session (New Years' eve)*
Block 3	*Implications and effects of public EU politicization*
07.01.2026	Recap and aggregate perspectives: Is EU politicization here to stay?
14.01.2026	Studying aspects of EU politicisation: Your research questions and research designs
21.01.2026	*Debate session*: Is politicization boon or bane for further political EU integration?
28.01.2026	Institutional responsiveness to politicization: Policy and Communication
04.02.2026	Conclusions and feedback

The following pages outline the contents and lists the respective literature for each session along the following codes:

(O) Indicates ***obligatory*** readings that all of you have to read before the session!

(P) Indicates further readings that are also available for individual *presentations* (other suggestions fitting the session topic are welcome but please check back first!)

(F) Indicates further readings for students wishing to dig deeper into a session's topic

The literature will be provided mostly directly via Moodle, a respective Zotero group library can be accessed here.

4. Session-by-session outlines and literature

Block 1: The EU and Its Public Politicization: What to expect?

15.10.2025 Seminar introduction

This kick-off meeting will present the course outline, seminar organisation and assignments. This is meant to clarify the expectations of the students and the lecturer, and will already involve a little brainstorming on key concepts of the course. Use this session to decide whether this seminar is of interest to you!

22.10.2025 European Integration and EU decision-making

This is first and foremost a recap session to refresh your basic knowledge on why the EU exists and how it normally takes decisions. The lecture video briefly recaps key theories of European integration and the roles of the different EU institutions. In class, we will discuss your basic perspectives on the EU – also based on a short survey. This sets the scene and provides us with the necessary background to understand whether and how public politicisation might affect this political system beyond the nation state.

(O) **Hix, Simon (2015) *The political system of the European Union,* 2nd edition, London: Palgrave Macmillan*:* Chapter 1: pp. 1-26.**

29.10.2025 No in-class session

05.11.2025 Theoretical perspectives: What is politicisation and how does it happen?

In this session we look at influential theoretical arguments about the politicization of supra- and international governance. This sets the scene for the subsequent and more empirically oriented sessions – not the least as we derive a working definition of politicization.

Active participation roles available: *2x presenter (1x minute taker)*

(O) **De Wilde, P. (2011) 'No Polity for Old Politics? A Framework for Analyzing the Politicization of European Integration', *Journal of European Integration* 33(5): 559–575.**

(P) Zürn, Michael, Martin Binder, and Matthias Ecker-Ehrhardt (2012) 'International authority and its politicization', *International Theory* 4(01): 69-106

(P) Hooghe, Liesbet, and Gary Marks (2009) 'A Postfunctionalist theory of European integration: From permissive consensus to constraining dissensus', *British Journal of Political Science* 39(1): 1-23.

(F) Moravcsik, Andrew (2006) 'What can we learn from the collapse of the European constitutional project?', *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 47(2): 219-241

(F) Rauh, Christian, and Michael Zürn (2014) 'Zur Politisierung der EU in der Krise'. In: M. Heidenreich (ed.) *Krise der europäischen Vergesellschaftung? Soziologische Perspektiven*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

12.11.2025 ***Debate session*: Does the EU need more or less public debate?**

This session invites you to speculate whether controversial public debates are a good or a bad thing for decision-making in and of the EU. Your normative, empirical or strategic perspectives are highly welcome here. We will get the discussion started along a *House-of-Commons style debate* debate triggered by *two opposing teams of two seminar participants*. The 'motion' we will debate is: The European needs more controversial public debates.
Team 1 will prepare and defend arguments in favor of that motion. *Team 2* will prepare and defend arguments against that motion. The *other course participants* may intervene in favor of one side or the other, can raise 'points of interest', and may 'vote' for the most convincing argument.

Active participation roles available: *4x debater, 1x minute taker*

BLOCK 2: HOW THE EU IS POLITICIZED IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL ARENAS

19.11.2025 **Public opinion: What structures citizens' perspectives on the EU**

This session provides students with the basic structures of the public opinion about the EU. We will discuss the 'permissive consensus' assumption and its potentially declining validity over time. Furthermore, we tap into the different explanations for individual citizens' support of the EU. We also briefly discuss data sources along which you can study public opinion on the EU yourself.

Active participation roles available: *3x presenter, 1x minute taker*

(O) Eichenberg, Richard C., and Russell J. Dalton (2007) 'Post-Maastricht Blues: The Transformation of Citizen Support for European Integration, 1973-2004', *Acta Politica* 42(2-3): 128–152.

(O) Hooghe, Liesbet, and Gary Marks (2004) 'Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration?', *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37(03): 415–420.

(P) Bremer, B., Kuhn, T., Meijers, M. J. and Nicoli, F. (2024) 'In this together? Support for European fiscal integration in the COVID-19 crisis', *Journal of European Public Policy* 31(9): 2582–2610.

(P) Borz, G., Brandenburg, H. and Mendez, C. (2022) 'The impact of EU Cohesion Policy on European identity: A comparative analysis of EU regions', *European Union Politics* 23(2): 259–281.

(P) Wang, C. and Moise, A. D. (2023) 'A unified autonomous Europe? Public opinion of the EU's foreign and security policy', *Journal of European Public Policy* 30(8): 1679–1698.
(P) Unan, A. and Klüver, H. (2025) 'Europeans' attitudes toward the EU following Russia's invasion of Ukraine', *Political Science Research and Methods* 13(4): 1025–1030.
(F) Malloy, B., Ozkok, Z. and Rosborough, J. (2024) 'Is Brexit an outlier? Euroscepticism and public support for European integration', *European Politics and Society* 25(2): 286–309.
(F) Hobolt, Sara, and James Tilley (2013) 'Who's in Charge? How Voters Attribute Responsibility in the European Union', *Comparative Political Studies* 47(6): 795-819
(F) Braun, D., and Tausendpfund, M. (2014) 'The Impact of the Euro Crisis on Citizens' Support for the European Union', *Journal of European Integration* 36(3): 231-245.
(F) Sánchez-Cuenca, Ignacio (2000) 'The Political Basis of Support for European Integration', *European Union Politics* 1(2): 147-171.
(F) Lindberg, Leon, and Stuart Scheingold (1970) *Europe's Would–be Polity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall: pp. 249-78 (chapter 8: The permissive consensus)
(F) Down, Ian, and Carole Wilson (2008) 'From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus: A Polarizing Union?', *Acta Politica* 43(1): 26-49.
(F) Van Ingelgom, V. (2013) *Integrating Indifference: A Comparative, Qualitative, and Quantitative Approach to the Legitimacy of European Integration*, Colchester, UK: European Consortium for Political Research Press.

26.11.2025 **Party politics I: The EU in national elections**

In this session we discuss the mobilising potential of the EU for partisan competition in national elections. Which parties have incentives to mobilize for or against the EU in their national election campaigns? I will also introduce you briefly to data sources for systematically comparing party positions regarding the EU.

Active participation roles available: max. *4x presenter*, *1x minute taker*

(O) Van der Eijk, Cees, and Mark N. Franklin (2004) 'Potential for Contestation on European Matters at National Elections in Europe'. In: M. R. Steenbergen and G. Marks (ed.) *European Integration and Political Conflict*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
(O) Hutter, Swen, and Grande, Edgar (2014) 'Politicizing Europe in the national electoral arena: A comparative analysis of five West European countries, 1970–2010', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52(5): 1002-1018.

(P) Steenbergen, M. R., Edwards, E. E., and de Vries, C. E. (2007) 'Who's Cueing Whom?: Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration', *European Union Politics* 8(1): 13-35.
(P) De Vries, C. (2007) 'Sleeping Giant: Fact or Fairytale?', *European Union Politics* 8(3): 363-385.
(P) Green-Pedersen, Christoffer (2012) 'A Giant Fast Asleep? Party Incentives and the Politicisation of European Integration', *Political Studies* 60(1): 115-130.
(P) Marks, G., Hooghe, L., Nelson, M. and Edwards, E.E. (2006) 'Party Competition and European Integration in the East and West: Different Structure, Same Causality', *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(2): 155-175.
(P) Hoeglinger, D. (2016) 'The politicisation of European integration in domestic election campaigns', *West European Politics* 39(1): 44–63.
(F) Goldberg, A. C., Elsas, E. J. van and Vreese, C. H. de (2021) 'Mismatch? Comparing elite and citizen polarisation on EU issues across four countries', in *Domestic Contestation of the European Union*. Routledge.

03.12.2025 **Party politics II: National parliaments and EP elections**

In this session we will look into how the EU figures in parliaments as key institutions of representative democracy. We will briefly discuss how European integration challenges parliamentary democracy at the national level to then look at empirical patterns of EU politicization in parliamentary debates. And then we consider elections to the European parliament which have often been claimed to be of 'second-order' to voters only (in comparison to national elections) and we shall discuss whether this claim still holds true today.

Active participation roles available: max. *4x presenter, 1x minute taker*

(O) Rauh, C. and De Wilde, P. (2018) 'The opposition deficit in EU accountability: Evidence from over 20 years of plenary debate in four member states', *European Journal of Political Research* 57(1): 194–216.
(O) Reif, K., and Schmitt, H. (1980) 'Nine Second-Order National Elections – A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results', *European Journal of Political Research* 8(1): 3-44.
(P) Winzen, T. (2012) 'National Parliamentary Control of European Union Affairs: A Cross-national and Longitudinal Comparison', *West European Politics*, 35(3): 657-672.
(P) Winzen, T., de Ruiter, R. and Rocabert, J. (2018) 'Is parliamentary attention to the EU strongest when it is needed the most? National parliaments and the selective debate of EU policies', *European Union Politics* 19(3): 481–501.
(P) Braun, D., Hutter, S. and Kerscher, A. (2016) 'What type of Europe? The salience of polity and policy issues in European Parliament elections', *European Union Politics*.

(P) De Wilde, P., Michailidou, A. and Trenz, H.-J. (2014) 'Converging on euroscepticism: Online polity contestation during European Parliament elections', *European Journal of Political Research* 53(4): 766–783.
(F) Lehmann, F. (2023) 'Talking about Europe? Explaining the salience of the European Union in the plenaries of 17 national parliaments during 2006–2019', *European Union Politics* 24(2): 370–389.
(F) Hunter, T. (2024) 'Disintegration and party competition: evidence from parliamentary speeches on Brexit', *Journal of European Public Policy*: Online First.
(F) Raunio, T. and Hix, S. (2001) 'Backbenchers Learn to Fight Back: European Integration and Parliamentary Government', in K.H. Goetz and S. Hix (eds) *Europeanised Politics? European Integration and National Political Systems*, London: Frank Cass, pp. 142-168.
(F) Auel, K. (2007) 'Democratic Accountability and National Parliaments: Redefining the Impact of Parliamentary Scrutiny in EU Affairs', *European Law Journal*, 13(4): 487-504.
(F) Wendler, F. (2013) 'Challenging Domestic Politics? European Debates of National Parliaments in France, Germany and the UK', *Journal of European Integration* 35(7): 801-817.
(F) Winzen, T. (2022) 'The institutional position of national parliaments in the European Union: developments, explanations, effects', *Journal of European Public Policy* 29(6): 994–1008.
(F) Braun, D. and Carteny, G. (2024) 'How Does Eurosceptic Party Consolidation Transform Party Competition Over European Issues?', *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*.
(F) Hobolt, S. (2014) 'A vote for the President? The role of Spitzenkandidaten in the 2014 European Parliament elections', *Journal of European Public Policy* 21(10): 1528–1540.
(F) Koepke, Jason, and Nils Ringe (2006) 'The Second-order Election Model in an Enlarged Europe', *European Union Politics* 7(3): 321-346.
(F) Meijers, Maurits, and Rauh, Christian (2016) 'Has Eurosceptic mobilization become more contagious? Comparing the 2009 and 2014 EP election campaigns in The Netherlands and France', *Politics and Governance* 4(1): 83-103.

10.12.2025 **Media: The EU in the news**

Besides potential polarisation among voters and parties, public visibility of the EU is one key component of politicization. We thus discuss studies that empirically capture and explain the media presence of the EU, building especially on 'news value' theory and arguments about the Europeanization of the public spheres.

Active participation roles available: *4x presenter, 1x minute taker*

(O) De Wilde, P. (2019) 'Media logic and grand theories of European integration', *Journal of European Public Policy* 26(8): 1193–1212.

(P) Rauh, C. and Parízek, M. (2024) 'Converging on Europe? The European Union in mediatized debates during the COVID-19 and Ukraine shocks', *Journal of European Public Policy* Online First.
(P) Boomgaarden, Hajo, Rens Vliegenthart, Claes De Vreese, and Andreas Schuck (2010) 'News on the move: exogenous events and news coverage of the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy* 17(4): 506-526.
(P) Koopmans, Ruud (2007) 'Who inhabits the European public sphere? Winners and losers, supporters and opponents in Europeanised political debates', *European Journal of Political Research 46(2)*: 183-210.
(P) Silva, T., Kartalis, Y. and Costa Lobo, M. (2022) 'Highlighting supranational institutions? An automated analysis of EU politicisation (2002–2017)', *West European Politics* 45(4): 816–840.
(P) Heidenreich, T., Eisele, O., Watanabe, K. and Boomgaarden, H. G. (2022) 'Exploring Engagement With EU News on Facebook: The Influence of Content Characteristics', *Politics and Governance* 10(1): 121–132.
(F) Gattermann, Katjana (2013) 'News about the European Parliament: Patterns and external drivers of broadsheet coverage', *European Union Politics* 14(3): 436-457.
(F) Meyer, C. (2009) 'Does European Union politics become mediatized? The case of the European Commission', *Journal of European Public Policy* 16(7): 1047–1064.

17.12.2025 **Independent work: Develop your term paper ideas (no in-class session)**

Please use this week without a session start developing your own research ideas (be it for the term paper, a thesis, or just for training). Look back over the topics, readings and discussions in our seminar so far and identify one aspect or question of EU politicization that especially caught your interest. Draft a short exposé (½–1 page) outlining:

1. Your preliminary research question
2. The empirical focus or case you might want to examine
3. One or two readings from the course that help frame your idea
4. What kind of data or empirical approach you might use

Upload your exposé to Moodle by 4 January 2026 so everyone can read each other's ideas before our meetings in the final seminar block. This exercise will help you consolidate what we've learned and prepare for our discussions in January.

24.12.2025 No in-class session (Christmas)

31.12.2025 No in-class session (New Year's eve)

07.01.2021 **Aggregate perspectives on EU politicization: here to stay?**

After the winter break, this session brings us back together to reconnect the different strands of the seminar and to discuss long-term trends in EU politicization. We will start with a short recap exercise based on your submitted exposés to then return to the bigger picture as we consider more or less recent aggregate perspectives on the long-term trajectories of EU politicisation, contrast them with our prior insights on individual domestic arenas, and start discussing what politicisation means for future politics in Europe.

Active participation roles available: max. *3x presenter, 1x minute taker*

(O) Grande, Edgar, and Hanspeter Kriesi (2016) 'Conclusions: the postfunctionalists were (almost) right'. In: S. Hutter, E. Grande and H. Kriesi (eds) *Politicising Europe: Integration and Mass Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press: pp. 279-300.

(O) De Wilde, P. and Zürn, M. (2012) 'Can the Politicization of European Integration be Reversed?', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 50(s1): 137–153.

(P) De Wilde, Pieter, and Christopher Lord (2016) 'Assessing actually-existing trajectories of EU politicisation', *West European Politics* 39(1): 145-163.

(P) Hooghe, L. and Marks, G. (2018) 'Cleavage theory meets Europe's crises: Lipset, Rokkan, and the transnational cleavage', *Journal of European Public Policy* 25(1): 109–135.

(P) Zürn, M. (2022) 'How Non-Majoritarian Institutions Make Silent Majorities Vocal: A Political Explanation of Authoritarian Populism', *Perspectives on Politics* 20(3): 788–807.

(F) Rauh, Christian (2016) '*A responsive technocracy? EU politicisation and the consumer policies of the European Commission*, Colchester, UK: ECPR Press: 'Chapter Two - The Public Politicisation of European Integration' pp. 7-26 & 243-246.

(F) Zürn, Michael (2016) 'Opening up Europe: next steps in politicisation research', *West European Politics* 39(1): 164-182.

(F) Zürn, Michael (2004) 'Global Governance and Legitimacy Problems', *Government and Opposition* 39(2): 260-287.

(F) Hurrelmann, Achim, Anna Gora, and Andrea Wagner (2015) 'The Politicization of European Integration: More than an Elite Affair?', *Political Studies* 63(1): 43-59.

(F) De Wilde, Pieter, and Hans-Jörg Trenz (2012) 'Denouncing European integration: Euroscepticism as polity contestation', *European Journal of Social Theory* 15(4): 537-554.

14.01.2025 **Studying aspects of EU politicisation: Your research questions and research designs**

This session focusses on pragmatic aspects of studying specific questions related to EU politicisation– primarily with a view to your term papers and/or BA theses. I will offer some insights and how to break down

bigger questions into manageable empirical research projects and highlight relevant information sources for studying politicisation aspects empirically.
To do this in a hands-on manner, we will work by example in smaller groups along the short exposés that you and your fellow students have supplied via Moodle.
For preparing the session, please briefly review the exposés by all participants and note down your ideas on (a) whether and how the research questions could be delineated further and (b) which empirical information you would initially consider to answer the specified research question.

21.01.2026 **Debate session: Is public politicization boon or bane for further political integration of the EU?**

In this session, you are invited to build on your newly gained knowledge about the patterns of EU politicization to argue about whether it is an opportunity or a constraint for further common decision-making in the EU or even the further transfer of competences to the supranational polity. Again, your normative, empirical or strategic perspectives are highly welcome here but they should now build on what we have learned together. Also this session will be organised as a *House–of–Commons style debate* debate triggered by *two opposing teams of two seminar participants*.
The 'motion' we will debate is: *Public politicization constrains further European integration*.
Team 1 will prepare and defend arguments in favor of that motion. *Team 2* will prepare and defend arguments against that motion. The *other course participants* may intervene in favor of one side or the other and can 'vote with their feet' by taking sides with either team.

Active participation roles available: max. *4x debater, 1x minute taker*

(O) Rauh, C. (2021) 'Between neo-functionalist optimism and post-functionalist pessimism: Integrating politicisation into integration theory', in N. Brack and S. Gürkan (eds). *Theorising the Crises of the European Union*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 119–137.
(O) Nicoli, F. and Zeitlin, J. (2024) 'Introduction: escaping the politics trap? EU integration pathways beyond the polycrisis', *Journal of European Public Policy* 31(10): 3011–3035.

28.01.2026 **Responsiveness: How EU institutions adapt policy-making in the face of politicization**

This session briefly explores how supranational EU institutions respond to the increasing politicization of European integration. We turn to the Council and especially the Commission to examine whether and how they adapt their policymaking and communication strategies in response to public controversy. Drawing on recent empirical studies, we will

discuss to what extent these responses enhance the EU's democratic legitimacy—or, alternatively, reveal persistent constraints and communication deficits within supranational governance.

Active participation roles available: max. *3x presenter*, *1x minute taker*

(O) Rauh, C. and Van der Veer, R. A. (2024) 'Responsiveness', in *Handbook on European Union Public Administration*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

(P) Christopher Wratil (2018) 'Modes of government responsiveness in the European Union: Evidence from Council negotiation positions', *European Union Politics* 19(1): 52–74.

(P) Rauh, C., Bes, B. J. and Schoonvelde, M. (2020) 'Undermining, defusing, or defending European integration? Assessing public communication of European executives in times of EU politicization', *European Journal of Political Research* 59(2): 397–423.

(P) Rauh, C. (2018) 'EU politicization and policy initiatives of the European Commission: the case of consumer policy', *Journal of European Public Policy* 26(3): 344–365.

(P) Van der Veer, R. A. and Haverland, M. (2018) 'Bread and butter or bread and circuses? Politicisation and the European Commission in the European Semester', *European Union Politics* 19(3): 524–545.

(P) De Bruycker, I. (2020) 'Democratically deficient, yet responsive? How politicization facilitates responsiveness in the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy* 27(6): 834–852.

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04.02.2026 **Conclusion and feedback**

In this session, we will wrap up by some aggregate conclusions and insights we have gained throughout the seminar. We will also try to carve out some of the blind spots and the future needs for a research agenda on the politicization of European integration, also leaving room for final questions on the term papers.
The session will furthermore provide the students with the opportunity to give feedback on the seminar and its organisation (we will also look at the evaluation results together).

Have a great spring break!

5. DATA ON EU DECISION-MAKING AND ITS POLITICIZATION

Further suggestions welcome!

D1. EU Databases & Archives

- **Eur-Lex**: Full access to European Law and the preparatory documents and procedures by which it has come about. For advanced searches you might acquaint yourselves with the CELEX (classifying document types) and directory codes (classifying policy areas) that structure the database.
- **OEIL**: Legislative Observatory of the European Parliament - very useful to study individual legislative procedures, including EP debates, amendments on Commission proposals etc.
- **EC Press Corner**: Press releases, speeches and other public communication of the European Commission since 1985 to today.
- **Register of Commission Documents**: Commission proposals, impact assessments, communications, delegated and implementing acts and other Commission decisions, agendas and minutes of meetings held by the College of Commissioners.
- **EU Whosiswho**: Contemporary organigrams and contact details for all major EU institutions
- **Eurobarometer**: Regular public opinion surveys by the EU (access via a free Gesis subscription), for more info also see the official EU website for Eurobarometer or the scholarly sources below.

D2. Scholarly data sources on European Union politics

- eudata: A crowd-sourced collection of readily available datasets and/or data collection tools related to European integration (initiative by Michal Ovadek)

D3. Specialized EU media

- Euractiv.com
- Euobserver.com
- Politico.eu
- European Politics and Policy Blog (London School of Economics EUROPP)
- General Newspapers with very good coverage of European Union Politics include *The Economist* and *The Financial Times*

D4. Think tanks focusing on European Union Politics

- Center for European Policy Studies (CEPS)
- Centre for European Reform (CER)
- European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)