

## Course Syllabus

### The European Union: An Introduction

*Name of Instructor:* **Richard Sanders**

*Time for the course:* EITHER eight sessions of 4 hours (2x2) per day over a two week cycle OR sixteen sessions of 2 hours per day over a four week cycle

*Course Description:* The European Union: An Introduction. This course will cover the history of the EU, its key economic policies and its primary political organisation and structure. It will discuss its reasons for existence, its steady growth in membership and functions, the advantages it provides for its members and the difficulties and problems that exist between its member nations from time to time. Thus, the primary objectives will be provide students with a framework within which to understand the workings of one of the most significant economic and political organisations in the world today.

#### ***Key Topics to be covered over sixteen 2-hour sessions:***

- (1) **History of the European Union** (two 2-hour sessions) : key stages: 1951 European Coal and Steel Community, 1957 European Economic Community, 1987 Single Market, 1992 European Union. Growth in membership from the original 6 members to today's 28 members comprising, by size of national income, the largest economic bloc in the world
- (2) **Key Economic Policies:** (six 2-hour sessions)
  - (i) Trade (two sessions) : the meaning and significance of the single market and the customs union
  - (ii) Agriculture (one session): the Common Agricultural Policy which supports the farming sector
  - (iii) Currency union (two sessions): the creation of the Eurozone across 19 (of the 28) members, binding them into a single currency – the Euro. Why did some members (to include the UK) remain outside the Eurozone?
  - (iv) Other policies (one session): to include regional, environmental and competition policies.
- (3) **Political Structure and its development** (two 2-hour sessions)
  - (i) The main institutions of the EU (one session): The European Parliament, The Council of Ministers, the Commission, the European Court of Justice
  - (ii) Decision-making in the European Union (one session): Qualified majority voting and the veto
- (4) **Contemporary Controversies:** (six 2-hour sessions)
  - (i) Currency Union (two sessions): the difficulties for many members – and in particular for Greece- of remaining a member of the Eurozone

- (ii) Free movement and migration (one session) : tensions between members as a result of the migration and refugee crises over the last few years resulting from wars and conflict in the Middle East and North Africa; Schengen Agreement
- (iii) Brexit (two sessions): the reasons why the British Government held the referendum on EU membership in 2016, the controversies over British membership and the immediate aftermath of the result
- (iv) The future of the European Union (one session): new problems, new members, new policies?

**Teaching methods:** Each 2-hour session will comprise one lecture (with powerpoint) and one seminar, the latter being student-centred, allowing discussion based on prior reading.

**Assessment:** The primary form of assessment (80%) will be an end-of-course examination, although attendance (10%) and participation (10%) will also be assessed.

**Required and/or recommended reading:** Students will be provided with specific and appropriate reading for each class, chosen by the lecturer. Key texts will be:

John McCormack, 2014, *Understanding the European Union: A Concise Introduction*, (6<sup>th</sup> Ed) Palgrave

John McCormack, 2015, *European Union Politics*, Palgrave (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed)

Denis McShane, 2016, *How Britain Left Europe*, I.B Tauris and Co.Ltd

Larry Elliot and Dan Atkinson, 2016, *Europe Isn't Working*, Yale  
December 2016

*Richard Sanders*