

EUROPEAN UNION LAW

Cours fondamental 3^{ème} année – 2026/27

Fabien Terpan
Professeur de droit public
Sciences Po Grenoble-UGA, CESICE
Chaire Jean Monnet
fabien.terpan@sciencespo-grenoble.fr

In the context of multiple crises, is the European Union (EU) becoming more influenced by its member states, particularly the most powerful ones? Has the traditional 'Community method', a central feature of European integration, given way to modes of governance that respect state sovereignty more? Is the extension of competencies turning the Union into a quasi-federal organisation, or are we witnessing a more intergovernmental approach, particularly in sensitive policy areas such as migration, security, and economic governance?

Despite not being a state, can the EU be both a democracy and an international power? What achievements has the EU made in key areas such as the internal market, social policy, environmental protection, human rights and external relations, and what challenges remain in these fields? How does the EU position itself on the global stage in an increasingly competitive international environment?

This course aims to provide an analytical framework for answering these questions and others like them. It seeks to equip students with the conceptual tools necessary to understand the evolution of European law and the tensions that shape it. The course not only describes the European Union, its functioning and policies, but also analyses it in depth, explaining its transformations and identifying its main driving forces, moving beyond caricatures and approximations. Particular attention will be paid to recent developments and current debates surrounding the future of European integration.

Although this is a law course, elements of context from other social science disciplines will also be considered.

Teaching material

This course is linked to the following textbook:

- Fabien Terpan, *Droit et politique de l'Union européenne*, 4^e éd., Bruylant, 2025.

Please note that the course does not simply reproduce the textbook. However, we recommend reading the textbook alongside the course.

You can also consult the following sources (available in: [Ressources numériques](#), Bibliothèque de Sciences Po Grenoble):

- Koenraad Lenaerts, Piet Van Nuffel, and Tim Corthaut. *EU constitutional law*, Oxford University Press, 202.
- [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)

In addition, for each session one or more readings are suggested. You are advised to use the suggested readings - or other readings of your choice - as a basis for further study of the course and refer to them in your written assignments.

Journal articles and book chapters are available on the Sciences Po Grenoble Library website ([Ressources numériques](#)) or on [Google Scholar](#).

PowerPoint presentations linked to the different sessions will be uploaded by the Professor before the start of each session.

Final exam (first and second session)

The final exam (2 hour) will consist of either an essay or a set of questions.

When the exam takes the form of an essay, two topics are proposed, students may choose from two topics. These may be cross-curricular (covering several chapters of the course) or specific to one chapter (in which case, it is advisable to use knowledge from other chapters as long as it is relevant). Please explicitly label the titles of the main parts and sub-parts in your essay and write a conclusion. Essays are limited to four pages (one double-sided sheet).

The compulsory readings, like the oral course, must be revised for the final exam.

Course outline

1. European integration in perspective

THE INSTITUTIONAL LAW OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE UNION AS A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM

2. Democracy through the representation of States
3. Democracy through supranational institutions
4. Democracy in action : Modes of governance – Nature of the Union
5. The application of EU law by the Member States: Europeanisation and resistance
6. Competences, subsidiarity and public policy

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAW OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE UNION AS A NORMATIVE ACTOR

7. Economic policies
8. Social policy
9. Human rights
10. Environment
11. External action
12. Defence - Conclusion

Readings

1- European Integration in Perspective

Suggested readings :

- Chapitre 1 – Le processus d'intégration européenne, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, 15.
- Part 1. The Background, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)
- Enlargement, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)
- Saurugger, S., *Théories et concepts de l'intégration européenne*, Presses de Sciences Po, 2020.

THE INSTITUTIONAL LAW OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE UNION AS A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM

2- Democracy through the representation of States

Suggested readings:

- Le Conseil européen, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.75.
- Le Conseil, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.77.
- The Council of the European Union, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)
- The European Council, in The Council of the European Union, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)

3- Democracy through supranational institutions

Suggested readings:

- La Commission, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.83.
- Le Parlement, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.91.
- Les acteurs de la gouvernance élargie, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.99.
- Oliver, P., and B. Martenczuk, The Commission, in R. Schütze and T. Tridimas (eds), *Oxford Principles Of European Union Law: The European Union Legal Order: Volume I*, 2018, online, <https://doi-org.iepnomade-1.grenet.fr/10.1093/oso/9780199533770.003.0020>.
- Bradley, Kieran, The European Parliament, in R. Schütze and T. Tridimas (eds), *Oxford Principles Of European Union Law: The European Union Legal Order: Volume I*, 2018, online, <https://doi-org.iepnomade-1.grenet.fr/10.1093/oso/9780199533770.003.0017>

4- Democracy in action : Modes of governance – Nature of the Union

Suggested readings:

- Les modalités de la gouvernance européenne, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.107.
- Armstrong, K. A. The character of EU law and governance: from 'community method' to new modes of governance. *Current Legal Problems*, 64(1), 2011, pp.179-214.
- Decision-Making procedures in the EU, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)
- Chapitre 8 – La nature politique et juridique de l'Union européenne, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025.

5- The application of EU law by the Member States: Europeanisation and resistance

Suggested readings:

- Chapitre 3 – Le système juridique de l'Union européenne, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.135.
- Saurugger, S., Terpan, F., European Court of Justice (ECJ), *Oxford Encyclopedia of European Union Politics*, Oxford University Press, December 2019
- Saurugger, S., Terpan, F., *The Court of Justice of the European Union and the Politics of Law*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Saurugger, S., Terpan, F., The Politics of the Court of Justice of In. P.J. Cardwell & M.-P. Granger (eds.), *Research Handbook on The Politics of EU Law*, Edward Elgar, 2020, 31-49.
- Curtin, D., Manucharyan, T., Legal Acts and Hierarchy of Norms in the European Union, in *Oxford Handbook on European Union Law*, 2015.
- Terpan, F., Soft Law in the European Union, *European Law Journal*, 21(1), January 2015, pp.68–96.

6- Competences, subsidiarity and public policy

Suggested readings:

- Les compétences de l'Union européenne, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.186.
- Öberg, J., The Rise of the Procedural Paradigm: Judicial Review of EU Legislation in Vertical Competence Disputes. *European Constitutional Law Review*, 2017, 13(2), 248-280.
- Cooper, I., A yellow card for the striker: national parliaments and the defeat of EU legislation on the right to strike. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 2015, 22(10), p. 1406-1425.
- Federico Fabbrini, The Principle of Subsidiarity, in Robert Schütze and Takis Tridimas (eds), *Oxford Principles Of European Union Law: The European Union Legal Order: Volume I* online edn, Oxford Law Pro.

THE SUBSTANTIVE LAW OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE UNION AS A NORMATIVE POWER

7- Economic policies

Suggested readings:

- Chapitre 5 - Les politiques internes, du marché à la gouvernance économique, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.211.
- The Internal Market, in Koenraad Lenaerts, Piet Van Nuffel, and Tim Corthaut. *EU constitutional law*, Oxford University Press, 2021
- Saurugger, S., Terpan, F., Do crisis lead to the hardening of soft law? The Multiple-streams framework and the EU's economic governance instruments, *Policy Sciences*, 49(1), 2016, pp.35-53.
- The internal or single market, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)

- Competition policy, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)
- Economic and Monetary Policy, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)

8- Social policy

Suggested readings:

- Politique sociale, in Fabien Terpan, *Droit et politique de l'Union européenne*, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.251.
- Garben, S., The European Pillar of Social Rights: Effectively Addressing Displacement?. *European Constitutional Law Review*, 2018, 14(1), 210-230.
- Worker's rights, employment and social policy, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)

9- Human rights

Suggested readings:

- L'Union de droit, in Fabien Terpan, *Droit et politique de l'Union européenne*, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.334.
- Pech, L. The rule of law as a well-established and well-defined principle of EU law. *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, 14(2), 2022, pp.107-138.
- Kelemen, R. D. Will the European Union escape its autocracy trap?. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 32(2), 2025, pp.341-364.
- Fundamental rights, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)
- The rule of law, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)
- Gender equality, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)

10- Environment

Suggested readings:

- Protection de l'environnement, énergie et climat, in Fabien Terpan, *Droit et politique de l'Union européenne*, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.259.
- Schreurs, M., Environmental Policy, in *Heinelt, H., Münch, S., Handbook of European Policies*, Edwar Elgar (online).
- The Environment, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)
- Energy and climate change, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)

11- External action

Suggested readings:

- Chapitre 7 – Les politiques externes, in Fabien Terpan, *Droit et politique de l'Union européenne*, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.281.
- L'affirmation d'une actrice internationale, in Fabien Terpan, *Droit et politique de l'Union européenne*, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.344.
- External Action of the EU, in Koenraad Lenaerts, Piet Van Nuffel, and Tim Corthaut. *EU constitutional law*, Oxford University Press, 2021, p.336.

- The EU's place in the world, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)

12- Defence - Conclusion

Suggested readings:

- La politique de sécurité et de défense commune, in Fabien Terpan, Droit et politique de l'Union européenne, 4e éd., Bruylant, 2025, p.300.
- Foreign, security and defence policy, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)
- Defence Industry and space, in [Dick Leonard, Robert Taylor. *The Routledge Guide to the European Union*. Routledge, 2025.](#)