

**Course title: Geopolitics of borders and migration in the European Union**

**Language of instruction:** English

**Professor:** Xavier Ferrer-Gallardo and Lorenzo Gabrielli

**Professor's contact and office hours:**

**Course contact hours:** 45

**Recommended credit:** 6 ECTS credits

**Course prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites for this course

**Language requirements:**

Recommended level in the European Framework B2 (or equivalent : Cambridge Certificate if the teaching language is English, DELE or 3 semesters in the case of Spanish)

**Course focus and approach:**

Through the cross-disciplinary lens of human geography and political science, this course examines the relationship between border securitization practices and migration dynamics in the European Union context.

**Course description:**

Through the scrutiny of current theoretical debates as well as of several case studies, the course sheds light on the radical anti-immigration and securitization turn EU border management has gone through over the last decades. Students will explore the political impact of the contemporary process of physical and symbolic bordering of Europe vis-à-vis human mobility. Lectures and class discussions will examine the evolution of EU migration and border management policies. Particular attention will be paid to ongoing processes of externalization and privatization of border management, and its impact in the changing geopolitical interaction between the EU and its neighborhood. The course has a strong focus on the impact of securitization dynamics at the southern external EU border and on the influence of border reinforcement strategies in identity shaping processes. Moreover, the course explores the societal implications of borders and immigration management on people on the move and refugees, also looking at racial bias of the political management of asylum right, comparing Syrian and Ukrainian refugee flows towards EU space. In so doing, students will analyze the interaction of current EU border policies with ongoing debates about European identity and the rise of both xenophobic discourses and anti-immigration rhetoric across Europe.

**Learning objectives:**

At the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Interpret the importance of physical and administrative borders in shaping migration policies and group identities
2. Identify the intergovernmental and supranational dynamics at play in the field of EU migration policies as well as the external dimension of EU migration and border policies
3. Interpret the global dimension of the political discourse on securitization vis-à-vis migration flows

**Course workload:**

- Lectures
- Class Discussion
- Case study analysis
- Mid-term and final exams

**Teaching methodology:**

Research paper: Students will submit a 2000–2250-word research paper on one of the topics analyzed in class. The paper will be presented in class orally.

Midterm exam: Multiple choice and open-ended questions on the readings and the topics analyzed in class.

Final exam: Multiple choice and open-ended questions on the readings and the topics analyzed in class.

**Assessment criteria:**

- Oral presentation – 10%
- Research paper – 30%
- Mid-term exam – 25%
- Final exam – 25%
- Class participation - 10%

**BaPIS absence policy:**

Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student's final grade as follows:

Absences	Penalization
Up to two (2) absences	No penalization
Three (3) absences	1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Four (4) absences	2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Five (5) absences or more	The student receives an INCOMPLETE ("NO PRESENTADO") for the course

The BaPIS attendance policy does not make a distinction between justified and unjustified absences. All absences—whether due to common short-term illnesses or personal reasons—are counted toward the total amount and cannot be excused. Therefore, students are responsible for managing all their absences.

Only in cases of longer absences—such as hospitalization, prolonged illness, traumatic events, or other exceptional situations—will absences be considered for exceptions with appropriate documentation. The Academic Director will review these cases on an individual basis.

Students must inform the Instructor and the International Programs Office promptly via email if serious circumstances arise.

**Classroom norms:**

- No food or drink is permitted in class.
- Students will have a ten-minute break after one one-hour session.
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**Weekly schedule:**

**Session 1 (Xavier and Lorenzo) (January 13<sup>rd</sup>)**

- **Introduction to the course**
  - Schapiro, J.J. (November 27, 2019). What are borders for? *The New Yorker*.  
<https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/what-are-borders-for>

### **Session 2 (Lorenzo) (January 15<sup>th</sup>)**

- **The border spectacle and the creation of the migrant ‘other’.**
  - De Genova, Nicholas (2013), “Spectacles of migrant ‘illegality’: the scene of exclusion, the obscene of inclusion”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36 (7), 1180-1198.

### **Session 3 (Xavier) (January 20<sup>th</sup>)**

- **What is a border? (I) Bordering, ordering and othering in Europe**
  - Popescu, G. (2011). *Bordering and ordering the twenty-first century: Understanding borders* (pp.-7-27). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

### **Session 4 (Lorenzo) (January 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

- **The loop of migration ‘crisis’ and the normalization of the exceptionality**
  - F Jeandesboz, J., et Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2015). Crisis, enforcement and control at the EU borders », in Lindley, A. (ed.), *Crisis and Migration. Critical perspectives*, Oxford, Routledge, 2015, pp. 115-135.

### **Session 5 (Xavier) (January 27<sup>th</sup>)**

- **Borders and identity building processes**
  - Diener, A. C., & Hagen, J. (2012). *Borders: A very short introduction* (pp.1-18). Oxford University Press.

### **Session 6 (Lorenzo) (January 29<sup>th</sup>)**

- **The externalisation of migration control**
  - Spijkerboer, Thomas (2018). The Global Mobility Infrastructure: Reconceptualising the Externalisation of Migration Control. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 20(4), 452-469.  
<https://doi.org/10.1163/15718166-12340038>

### **Session 7 (Xavier) (February 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

- **Research Papers (Brainstorming session) + review session**

**Session 8 (Lorenzo) (February 5<sup>th</sup>)**

- Research Papers (Brainstorming session) + review session
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**Session 9 (Xavier) (February 10<sup>th</sup>)**

- Mid Term exam

**Session 10 (Lorenzo) (February 12<sup>th</sup>)**

- The “external dimension” of European immigration policy: main pillars and negotiation process.
  - o Gabrielli (2023) The Genealogy of the External Dimension of the Spanish Immigration Regime: When A Bricolage National Policy Becomes A Driver of Europeanisation. In Finotelli C. and I. Ponzio (eds.) Migration Control Logics and Strategies In Europe: A North-South Comparison (91-108). Springer.

**Session 11 (Lorenzo) (February 13<sup>th</sup>, Friday)**

- Migration and border controls in cinema

**Session 12 (Xavier) (February 17<sup>th</sup>)**

- Migration and Demographic Change in the European Union

**Session 13 (Lorenzo) (February 19<sup>th</sup>)**

- The lethal consequences of border management. Violent borders and necropolitics.
  - o Tazreena Sajjad, Strategic Cruelty: Legitimizing Violence in the European Union's Border Regime, Global Studies Quarterly, Volume 2, Issue 2, April 2022, ksac008, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksac008>

**Session 14 (Xavier) (February 24<sup>th</sup>)**

- The physical and political rebordering of the European Union (I). The securitization of borders in the European Union

- o Van Houtum, H., & Bueno Lacy, R. (2020). The autoimmunity of the EU's deadly b/ordering regime; overcoming its paradoxical paper, iron and camp borders. *Geopolitics*, 25(3), 706-733.

### **Session 15 (Lorenzo) (February 26<sup>th</sup>)**

- **The 'autonomy of migration'; migrant and refugees' political agency and resistances**
  - o Scheel, S. (2019). Autonomy of migration? Appropriating mobility within biometric border regimes. Routledge (Introduction, pp 1-13)

### **Session 16 (Xavier) (February 27<sup>th</sup>, Friday)**

- **The physical and political rebordering of the European Union (II). Markets of migration control and the business of building walls**
  - o López-Sala, A., & Godenau, D. (2022). In private hands? the markets of migration control and the politics of outsourcing. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48(7), 1610-1628.

### **Session 17 (Xavier) (March 3<sup>th</sup>)**

- **The Spanish-Moroccan Border. Migration management and geopolitical disputes**
  - o The Spanish–Moroccan border complex: Processes of geopolitical, functional and symbolic rebordering (Ferrer-Gallardo, 2008)

### **Session 18 (Lorenzo) (March 5<sup>th</sup>)**

- **EU refugee management crisis, borders and xenophobia: The differential response to the arrival of Syrian refugees and Ukrainian refugees.**
  - o Esposito, Addie (2022). The Limitations of Humanity: Differential Refugee Treatment in the EU. Harvard International Review, September 14th.  
<https://hir.harvard.edu/the-limitations-of-humanity-differential-refugee-treatment-in-the-eu/>

### **Session 19 (Xavier) (March 10<sup>th</sup>)**

- **The EU border fences in Africa (Ceuta and Melilla)**
  - o Ferrer-Gallardo, Xavier and Gabrielli, Lorenzo (2024). The Fenced Off Cities of Ceuta and Melilla: Mediterranean Nodes of Migrant (Im) Mobility

**Session 20 (Lorenzo) (March 12<sup>th</sup>)**

- Research Papers oral presentations

**Session 21 (Lorenzo) (March 13<sup>th</sup>, Friday)**

- Research Papers oral presentations + review session

**Session 22 (Xavi) (March 17<sup>th</sup>)**

- Research Papers oral presentations + review session

**Session 23 (Lorenzo) (March 19<sup>th</sup>)**

- Final exam

**Recommended bibliography:**

Bourbeau, P. (Ed.). (2017). *Handbook on migration and security*. Edward Elgar Publ

De Haas, H. (2023). *How migration really works: a factful guide to the most divisive*  
Random House.

Diener, A. C., & Hagen, J. (2012). *Borders: A very short introduction*. Oxford Univers

Dodds, K. (2021). *Border wars: the conflicts that will define our future*. Random Hou

Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: lectures at the Collège de France*  
Springer.

Khosravi, S. (2010). *Illegal 'Traveller: An Auto-Ethnography of Borders*. Basingstoke:  
Macmillan.

Jacobsen, C. M., Karlsen, M. A., & Khosravi, S. (2021). *Waiting and the temporalities*  
*migration* (p. 229). Taylor & Francis.

- Jones, R. (2016). *Violent borders: Refugees and the right to move*. Verso Books.
- Nail, T. (2016). *Theory of the Border*. Oxford University Press.
- Popescu, G. (2011). *Bordering and ordering the twenty-first century: Understanding borders*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Razac, O. (2002). *Barbed Wire: a political history*. The New Press.
- Sassen, S. (2008). *Territory, authority, rights: From medieval to global assemblages*. Princeton university press.
- Squire, V. (Ed.). (2010). *The contested politics of mobility: Borderzones and irregularity*. Routledge.
- Torpey, J. C. (2018). *The invention of the passport: Surveillance, citizenship and the state*. Cambridge University Press.