

**Jean-Monnet Module ADVANCE-EUiUA**  
**“Past and Present of EU Enlargement and Ukraine’s Integration”**



**EU Enlargement and Transformation in Times of Crisis:  
Lessons Learned from Pre- and Post-Experiences in Eastern Europe and the Western  
Balkans**

**AY 2025/2026, Spring Term**

**Course Directors: Prof. Dr. Inna Melnykovska, European University Institute and  
Prof. Dr. Laszlo Bruszt, CEU Democracy Institute**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

**<https://ceu-edu.zoom.us/j/96494930308?pwd=WRmyKeL3PRGvNYbRbjZnFSJ5KnDaKo.1>**

**Meeting ID: 964 9493 0308**

**Passcode: 336859**

**Course description:**

The European Union’s renewed commitment to enlargement marks a decisive moment in the reconfiguration of Europe’s political order. Triggered by Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the EU’s decision to advance accession processes with Ukraine, Moldova, and the Western Balkans has reopened fundamental scholarly and policy questions: Can enlargement still function as a transformative instrument under conditions of geopolitical rivalries, war and democratic backsliding? How do emergency-driven, *ad hoc* instruments reshape the Union’s established enlargement logic, and what are the implications for EU internal reforms?

This research seminar invites participants to engage critically with the evolving political economy and governance of EU enlargement. Building comparative insights from previous waves in Central and Eastern Europe and ongoing processes in the Western Balkans, participants will explore how conventional tools – conditionality, benchmarking, *acquis* adoption – are increasingly complemented or substituted by context-specific mechanisms such as phased integration, reconstruction-linked assistance, and security-oriented pre-accession frameworks.

**Key themes include:**

- The theoretical rethinking of enlargement as a process of *mutual transformation* between the EU and candidate states;
- The interaction between geopolitical pressures, institutional constraints, and normative commitments in shaping enlargement strategies;
- The political economy of EU support for wartime and post-war reconstruction in Ukraine;
- The interplay between enlargement and internal EU reforms, including decision-making, budgetary solidarity, and rule-of-law mechanisms;
- The comparative experiences of the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership countries as laboratories for policy innovation and institutional adaptation.

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The seminar emphasizes **research design and methodological pluralism**. Students will develop and present their own research projects addressing contemporary policy challenges, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative approaches, from process tracing and discourse analysis to network and institutional modeling. Interventions from EU policymakers and practitioners will complement academic discussions, linking theoretical inquiry to real-world governance dilemmas.

**Learning outcomes:**

By the end of the seminar, participants will have advanced their capacity to formulate original research questions, situate them within broader scholarly debates on European integration, and contribute empirically grounded insights into how enlargement is redefining the EU’s identity, boundaries, and global role in times of crisis.

**Learning activities and teaching formats:**

The seminar combines thematic lectures, research-focused discussion seminars, and a summer school with policymakers and scholars. This structure allows students to engage with both theoretical debates and applied policy perspectives, encouraging dialogue between academic research and practice

This course begins with two components: lectures and seminars. Lectures will be given by the course directors, scholars participating in EU Enlargement Hub and other invited guest speakers from the EU and Ukraine, who are usually experts or practitioners in the topic of the week. Lectures will be interactive, involving round-table conversations with the guests and discussions with students. The seminars' main goals will be to discuss the concepts, arguments, follow-up questions, etc. brought up in the lectures and critically reflect on the reading(s) assigned for the week. To facilitate participation, students are requested to cover core English-language readings before seminars. A larger selection of readings is offered, covering topics from the perspectives of political science, political economy, and law.

The course finishes with the summer school taking place at the CEU Democracy Institute in Budapest and online. The summer school will give participants the opportunity to present and receive feedback on their research projects (proposal, chapter or paper) from senior scholars in their fields; as well as improve their methodological, writing, etc. skills.

**Overview of class sessions**

<b>LECTURES</b> <b>[online]</b>	<b>Regular time slot is 15:30-17.10 CET (see time changes in red)</b>
<b>20.04.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Digital Public Services on the Road to the EU: Tilting the Playing Field for Ukrainian Businesses and Its Social Costs
<b>27.04.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Agri-Food Sector – Between Market Access and Exclusion

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<b>04.05.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Enhancing EU Connectivity In Times of War and Geopolitics
<b>11.05.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Developmental Banks in the Enlargement Process. Ukraine Investment Facility
<b>18.05.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Critical Minerals (tbc)
<b>01.06.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Accession as Transformation: EU Finance, Conditionality, and Local Governance Capacity in Ukraine
<b>08.06.2026,</b> <b>14:00-15:30 CET</b>	The Integration of Ukraine and EU’s Future
<b>RESEARCH SEMINARS [online]</b>	
<b>04.06.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Europeanization & Diffusion Approaches in Studying EU Enlargement
<b>08.06.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	"Localization" & Coalitions Approaches in Studying EU Enlargement
<b>15.06.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Explaining EU Integration Methodologically: Comparative Studies
<b>22.06.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Explaining EU Integration Methodologically: Process Tracing
<b>22.06.2026,</b> 15:30-17.10 CET	Doing Field Research on EU Enlargement
<b>Summer Seminar, IUFU Summer School at CEU Democracy Institute</b> <b>Budapest and online, July 6-8, 2026</b>	