



Title	<u>European rule of law mechanisms</u>
Lecturer(s):	Viktor Zoltán Kazai
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Brief description	<p>This course provides a comprehensive examination of the European Union's mechanisms for upholding the rule of law—a foundational yet increasingly contested principle within the EU's legal framework. Students will trace the conceptual evolution and core elements of the rule of law, examine the causes and scope of the ongoing rule of law crisis in the EU, and critically assess the institutional responses developed in recent years.</p> <p>Through an in-depth analysis of both preventive and enforcement tools—including the EU Justice Scoreboard, the Rule of Law Cycle, Article 7 procedures, infringement and preliminary reference procedures, and conditionality mechanisms tied to EU funding—students will gain a clear understanding of how the EU seeks to monitor, protect, and sanction breaches of rule of law standards among Member States.</p> <p>Coursework involves active class participation, a written critical evaluation of a selected EU rule of law mechanism, and a final test. Readings include excerpts from foundational EU law texts and recent scholarly work, supplemented with official EU resources.</p> <p>By the end of the course, students will be equipped to critically analyze the strengths and limitations of the EU's rule of law toolbox and engage with key legal and political debates shaping the future of European integration.</p>
Schedule	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The rule of law puzzle: the meaning and evolution of a contested (?) term2. The core elements of the rule of law in the European legal space3. The beginnings and spread of the rule of law crisis in the EU4. The EU rule of law toolbox: general overview5. Preventive and monitoring tools I: EU Justice Scoreboard, European Semester6. Preventive/monitoring tools II: Annual Rule of Law Cycle7. Sanctioning/enforcement tools I: Article 7 procedure8. Sanctioning/enforcement tools II: Infringement procedures

	<p>9. Sanctioning/enforcement tools III: Preliminary reference procedures</p> <p>10. Sanctioning/enforcement tools IV: EU funding conditionality mechanisms</p> <p>11. Evaluation of the EU rule of law toolbox</p> <p>12. Consultation</p>
Materials/Recommended readings	<p>Students will be required to consult short written and audio-visual materials available on the website of EU institutions and excerpts from the following books:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paul Craig and Gráinne de Búrca, EU Law. Text, Cases and Materials, 8th ed. (OUP, 2024) - Cristina Fasone, Adriano Dirri and Ylenia Guerra (eds.), EU Rule of Law Procedures at the Test Bench (Palgrave, 2024) <p>The lecturer will provide all the reading materials.</p>
Assessment/Exam	<p>Students will be evaluated based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active participation in class (40%) - A written assignment that critically evaluates a tool related to the EU rule of law (30%) - A test assessing their overall knowledge of the topic at the end of the course (30%)