

Second year of the Executive Master in EU Studies

Specialisation phase – Research track Political Science

Topic of Specialisation:	Individual research topic to be determined in cooperation with the thesis supervisor
Experts:	Prof. Wolfgang Wessels , University of Cologne (Jean Monnet Chair ad personam / CETEUS) Mr Thomas Traguth , MA (oxon), MA (College of Europe)
Character:	Individual research work within the chosen specialisation
ECTS Credits:	12 ECTS
Teaching methods:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intense supervision on a research topic;• readings and individual supervision through ICT-based technology;• interdisciplinary presentation and discussions during workshops;• research colloquium during the seventh workshop and peer evaluation of other research proposals;• final presentation of own research work.
Assessment methods:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exposé including an executive summary and outline, table of contents;• research paper (leading to a master thesis) including methodology, literature review and bibliography;• presentation of research paper during the third workshop of the second year;• presentation and defense of the master thesis at the final workshop.
Skills and competences:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interdisciplinary thinking and understanding across political science, law and economics;• scientific skills and methodological competences with regard to one special research topic;• fulfilling internationally accepted standards and methods of individual innovative research;• inclusion of theory-based approaches for studying the practice of EU-related policy and political processes;• writing and presenting an own research paper.

Learning outcomes, methods and course content:

The research track of this module allows the participant to develop their own and independent in-depth research on a topic to be decided in cooperation with their supervisor. The key skill is to develop a research design and conduct the study over the period of 6 months in the form of a full master thesis of 60 pages.

The process involves the following key steps:

- identification of relevant topics and gaps of research to be addressed in the current research environment;
- formulation of a new research question establishing causal relationships in order to elucidate underlying mechanisms of political developments and practice;
- review of the academic literature on the chosen topic;
- development of a theory-driven research approach which embeds the own research in an established framework within the contemporary academic environment;
- formulation of own hypotheses relating chosen indicators in a causal connection or valid context;
- selection of an appropriate methodology to conduct this individual research;
- in-depth empirical studies through qualitative and/or quantitative research, based on reliable sources of data or own methodological choices, including interviews where possible;
- discussion and evaluation of research findings and answering the research question;
- identifying shortcomings and omissions and further research desiderata following from the results of the inquiry;
- presenting and discussing own findings in a peer-review process to fellow researchers;
- commenting other researchers' work in a peer-review process