INTITULE DU COURS : Environmental decision-making in the EU: a practical insight

Course’s Title:

ENSEIGNANT(S) : Marjolaine Blondeau

FONCTION(S) :
Marjolaine Blondeau (Policy Officer, European Environmental Citizens’ Organisation for Standardisation)

PERIODE : ☑ Semestre 1 ☑ Semestre 2

RESUME DU COURS / OBJECTIFS (syllabus / targets)

Description
This course on European decision-making gives students a comprehensive understanding of how EU laws are made both through a theoretical approach and simulations of negotiations. Students will learn how the European institutions (Commission, Parliament and Council) work in practice, which other non-institutional actors exist, and how legislation is negotiated at the European level.

The course will be mainly based on a simulation of the development of a piece of EU legislation related to environment. To support students in this exercise, an introduction to EU environmental politics and to key issues at stake behind environmental legislation will also be presented (key concepts, “classic” opposition points between stakeholders, deconstructing discourses).

During the simulation exercises, students will take on different roles (Minister, Member of the European Parliament etc) and simulate meetings in the European Parliament and in the Council. They will learn to lead negotiations in a complex environment and will understand the impacts of bargaining and compromise-building on the policy-making process. To prepare the simulation exercise, students will need to undertake literature reviews, press reviews and documentary analyses taking into account the context in which negotiations and policy are made.

Main objectives of the course:
- Provide a theoretical and practical understanding of the functioning of the EU political system
- Experience how European institutions work in practice through simulations, become familiar with the different stages of the legislative cycle
- Give a first introduction to the EU’s environmental policy
- Provide tools and methodology to understand and analyse EU legislation with a focus on EU environmental policy (including sources of information, and understanding political issues behind legislation that often appears highly technical).
EVALUATION:
- Participation in class and simulation exercises (30%)
- Final report (50%): explaining how the student understood the issue and built his/her negotiation strategy, based on research done to prepare the simulations cases
- Other exercise: 20% (to be determined)

PLAN / SEANCES:

| Intro (2h) | General presentation of the course: objectives, practical organisation, simulations, evaluation etc
|           | Introduction to the EU institutional triangle: general presentation of the EU decision-making process
|           | The European Commission: role & objectives
| Theory (2h) | The European Council in the EU decision-making: role, rules of the game, negotiation and bargaining
| Theory (2h) | The European Parliament in the decision-making: political parties at stake and a practical insight: from the Committee meetings to the Plenary session
| Theory (2h) | Understanding the EU environmental policy: history & evolution, EU competences, policy framework, basic environmental principles & ecology, environmental communication etc.
| Theory (2h) | Presentation and analysis of the directive that will be used in the simulation exercise: introduction on the piece of legislation, how to read a directive, key issues at stake, lobbying, tips on how and where to look for information to prepare the simulation
| Simulation (3h) | EU Parliament simulation: first reading of the directive and negotiation (simulation of the ENVI Committee meeting and of the plenary session)
| Simulation (3h) | EU Council simulation
| Simulation (2h) | Second reading at the Parliament and trilogue simulation
|           | OR Visit of the EU institutions in Brussels |
BIBLIOGRAPHIE :

Blühdorn, I. (1997), A Theory of Post-Ecologist Politics, Environmental Politics, Vo.6, N°3, 125-147
Blühdorn, I. (2007), Sustaining the Unsustainable: Symbolic Politics and the Politics of Simulation, Environmental Politics, Vo.16, N°2, 251-275
Benson D. & Jordan A. (2010), European Union Environmental Policy after Lisbon: Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose?, Environmental Politics, Vo.19, N°3, 468-474
Warner, R. (2010), Ecological Modernisation Theory: Towards a Critical Ecopolitics of Change, Environmental Politics, Vo.19, N°4, 538-556