

International Relations of the EU's Southern Neighbourhood

Compact seminar – 4 h

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The aim of this compact seminar will be to provide students with a deeper understanding and analytical tools to study the international relations of EU Southern neighbourhood countries from an endogenous, non-EU perspective, which may substantially complement and enrich courses on EU foreign policy. The two salient aspects addressed, with references to relevant theoretical literature, will be phenomena of regionalism and foreign policies of individual states. Firstly, the discussion of regionalism will start from a reflection on the concept of "new regionalism" and criteria defining a region, in order to weigh up to what extent they are met in the EU's southern neighbourhood. This will lead to the analytical problem of geopolitical scale (which is the most relevant or constraining environment for the individual states' foreign and domestic policies?). The ups and downs of Arab nationalism as the identity factor shaping historically an Arab region/nation will be examined according to constructivist accounts of the "norms of Arabism", including the stage of fragmentation and decline of the Arab regional system starting from the 80s and the emergence of new competing geopolitical scales or attempts at region-building in this area. The main existing regional organisations (Arab League, OIC, GCC, AMU) will be approached as well from this mixed historical and political angle.

Secondly, the presentation of national foreign policies will build on a brief introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis and its basic tripartite analytical framework, distinguishing sources or constraints (in international, regional, sub-regional and domestic environments), political processes or policymaking, and behaviour. The singularities of foreign policies in this area (economic sub-development and dependence, concentration of oil resources, unfinished state-building processes, influence of sub-state identities and transnational ideologies) will be connected with the most explanatory theoretical approaches, respectively: structuralism (dependence), realism, and constructivism. Examples will be drawn from foreign policy events or trends observed in recent years, most particularly since the political transformations of 2011.