

EUS 4931/POS 4931: Oversight, Accountability & Democratic Governance in Europe (Spring 2026)

Course Day & Times

- Tuesday 8th-9th period (3:00pm – 4:55pm) & Thursday 9th period 4:05-4:55pm)
- Matherly Hall, Room 0116
- Office Hours
 - Thursdays 3:00pm – 4:00pm - Anderson Hall, Rm. 211
 - Wednesdays 10:00am – 11:00am via [Zoom](#)
 - By Appt.
- **Email via Canvas ONLY.** *Please do not use my UFL email.*

Course description and objectives

This course introduces the concepts of political oversight and accountability in the context of democratic governance. The goal is to provide a basic understanding of these core concepts, and the tools used in their implementation and then apply this information within the context of the European Union (EU). The course is designed to engage with the broader discourses on the democratic deficit in the EU and the character of the EU political system more generally. Through both general and EU specific readings as well as in course activities students will learn about the oversight and accountability processes that undergird democratic governance and their applicability to the EU context.

Prerequisites

A basic “Introduction to Comparative Politics” course (such as CPO 2001) is strongly recommended, though not required. Completion of the EUS 4210 course is beneficial, but not required.

Attendance

Class attendance is required for this course. During lectures the professor may provide insider information for exams and otherwise incentivize regular attendance. Repeated absences will unquestionably affect your performance on assignments and quizzes. Lecture notes and other related course materials discussed or distributed during class will NOT be posted online or otherwise distributed (except in the case of an *excused* absence).

This course complies with all UF academic policies on

- Attendance and make-up policies
- DRC information
- Assigning grade points
- Gator Evals
- Honesty policy
- In-class recording
- Academic and wellness resources

For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#).

Grading & Assessment

Students are responsible for completing all readings for the topic in question prior to attending the class.

- Thematic short papers (20% each, 40% total)
- Weekly quizzes (30%) The two lowest quiz grades will be dropped **Note there are no make-up quizzes. Those with excused absences will have their quiz score denominator adjusted accordingly.*
- Course simulation/presentation Project Additional details TBD based on enrollment and interests (20%)
- Participation **not just attendance** (10%) - active engagement in discussions

Grading Scale

94.0% - 100% = A 90.0% - 93.99% = A- 87.0% - 89.99% = B+ 84.0% - 86.00% = B 80.0% - 83.99% = B- 77.0% - 79.99% = C+ 74.0% - 76.99% = C 70.0% - 73.99% = C- 67.0% - 69.99% = D+ 64.0% - 66.99% = D 60.0% - 63.99% = D- < 60.0% = F

****Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus as needed during the course of the semester. As much advance warning as possible will be provided to students. Changes can be made to the schedule, assigned reading or other aspects as deemed necessary. No changes will be made to grading scale or core UF policies as noted above. ****

REQUIRED BOOK & MATERIALS

All readings (articles, reports, book chapters, etc.) assigned in detailed syllabus will be available via link, through library reserves or within Canvas.

Books used (multiple chapters from each):

- Bellamy, Richard and Antonino Palumbo, Eds. (2016) Political Accountability, Routledge.
- Bovens, Goodin and Schillemans, Eds. (2016) The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability, Oxford University Press.
- Przeworski, Adam, Bernard Manin, and Susan C. Stokes, Eds. (1999): Democracy, Accountability and Representation. Cambridge University Press
- Olsen, Johan (2017) Democratic Accountability, Political Order, and Change: Exploring Accountability Processes in an Era of European Transformation, Oxford University Press.
- Papadopoulos, Yannis (2023) Understanding Accountability in Democratic Governance, Cambridge University Press.
- Pelizzo, Riccardo and Rick Staphenurst (2014) Government Accountability and Legislative Oversight, Routledge Press

Other Articles, Chapters & Reports – Various – see detailed syllabus

Brandsma, Gil. Ed. (2024) Handbook on European Union Public Administration, Elgar Press.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1 (Jan. 13 &15): Introduction to the class

- Basic review of syllabus and course
- Why study oversight and accountability
- Why oversight and accountability matter for the EU

Readings:

1. Papadopoulos, Yannis (2023) Understanding Accountability in Democratic Governance, Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (pp.1-6)
2. Olsen, Johan (2017) Democratic Accountability, Political Order, and Change: Exploring Accountability Processes in an Era of European Transformation, Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 (pp. 1-26).
3. Bovens, M, T. Schillemans and R. Goodin (2016) “Public Accountability” Chapter 1 (pp. 1-22) in Bovens, Goodin and Schillemans (Eds) The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability, Oxford University Press.

PART I: Core Concepts

Week 2 (Jan.20 &22): Defining Core Concepts

- Introduction to basic understandings of democratic governance
- Introduction to basic understandings of political oversight and accountability
- Introduction to oversight and accountability in the EU

Readings:

1. Pettit, Philip (2008) Three Conceptions of Democratic Control, *Constellations*, Vol. 15, pp. 46-55, in Richard Bellamy and Antonino Palumbo (Eds.) Political Accountability, Routledge. Chapter 2.
2. Lindberg, Staffan (2009) “Accountability: the core concept and its subtypes” Working Paper, Africa Power and Politics Programme, DFID, UK.
3. Wille, Anchrut (2015) “The Evolving EU Accountability Landscape: Moving to an ever-denser union” *Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 83 No.4, pp. 694-717.

Week 3 (Jan. 27 & 29): Types of Political Oversight

- Public/external oversight
- Intra-institutional oversight
- Inter-institutional oversight

Readings:

1. Papadopoulos, Yannis (2023) Understanding Accountability in Democratic Governance, Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 (pp. 6-14) & Chapter 4 (21-37).
2. Pelizzo, Riccardo and Rick Stapenhurst (2014) Government Accountability and Legislative Oversight, Routledge Press, Chapter 2 (What can be Overseen by a Legislature).
3. Damgaard, B and J.M. Lewis (2016) “Accountability and Citizen Participation,” Chapter 16 (pp. 258-272) in Bovens, Goodin and Schillemans (Eds) The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability, Oxford University Press.

Week 4 (Feb. 3 & 5): Types of Political Accountability

- Public/external accountability
- Intra-institutional & interinstitutional accountability
- Horizontal accountability

Readings:

1. Palumbo, Antonino (2016) “Political Accountability Reconsidered: Debates, Institutions, Rationale” ‘Introduction’ in Political Accountability, (edited by Richard Bellamy and Antonino Palumbo), Routledge Press, New York.
2. Pelizzo, Riccardo and Rick Stapenhurst (2014) Government Accountability and Legislative Oversight, Routledge Press, Chapter 1 (Evolving Accountability – Implications for Legislative Oversight).
3. Patil, S., F. Vieider, and P. Tetlock (2016) “Process versus Outcome Accountability” Chapter 5 (pp. 69-89) in Bovens, Goodin and Schillemans (Eds) The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability, Oxford University Press.
4. Papadopoulos, Yannis (2023) Understanding Accountability in Democratic Governance, Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3 (pp.14-21).
5. Franklin, M, S. Soroka and C. Wlezien (2016) “Elections” Chapter 24 (pp.389-404) in Bovens, Goodin and Schillemans (Eds) The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability, Oxford University Press.

Week 5 (Feb. 10 & 12): Connecting Oversight, Accountability and Democratic Governance

- Why is oversight necessary for democratic governance
- Why is accountability necessary for democratic governance
- Challenges to democratic governance

Readings:

1. Pelizzo, Riccardo and Rick Stapenhurst (2008) “Oversight and Democracy Reconsidered” Chapter 2, pp. 29-43) in Legislative Oversight and Budgeting: A World Perspective, The World Bank.
2. Warren, Mark (2016) “Accountability and Democracy” Chapter 3 (pp. 39-54) in Bovens, Goodin and Schillemans (Eds) The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability, Oxford University Press.
3. Olsen, J.P. (2015), Democratic Order, Autonomy, and Accountability. *Governance*, 28: pp. 425-440.

PART II: OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PRACTICE

Week 6 (Feb. 17 & 19): Tools of Oversight

- Internal tools for legislative oversight (of executive) & Post-legislative scrutiny
- Comparative oversight tools
- External oversight factors

Readings:

1. Yamamoto, Hironori (2007) Tools for Parliamentary Oversight: A Comparative Study, Interparliamentary Union. Parts 1-3, pp. 9-77.
2. Pelizzo, Riccardo and Rick Stapenhurst (2014) Government Accountability and Legislative Oversight, Routledge Press, Chapters 3 and 4 (Internal Oversight Tools and External Oversight Factors).
3. Griglio, Elena (2019) Post-Legislative Scrutiny as a form of executive Oversight Tools and Practices in Europe, *European Journal of Law Reform*, Vol. 3, pp. 118-136

Week 7 (Feb 24 & 26): Tools of Accountability

- Elections and representation
- Accountability of non-elected officials
- Quality versus quantity in accountability mechanisms
- Accountability in times of change
- **Paper 1 due February 28th**

Readings:

1. Manin, B. A. Przeworski, and S. C. Stokes (1999): "Elections and Representation." Chapter 1 (pp. 29-54) in: Adam Przeworski, Bernard Manin, and Susan C. Stokes (Eds): *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Dunn, John (1999) "Mixing Elected and Non-elected Officials in Democratic Policy Making: Fundamentals of Accountability and Responsibility" Chapter 10 (pp.297-326) in: Adam Przeworski, Bernard Manin, and Susan C. Stokes (Eds): *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*. Cambridge University Press
3. Leidorf-Tidå, B. and G.J. Brandsma (2025) *Account Holding Intensity: Six Reasons Why We Need to Look at Frequency and Diligence, Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*, Vol. XX, pp. 1-15.
4. Olsen, Johan (2017) Democratic Accountability, Political Order, and Change: Exploring Accountability Processes in an Era of European Transformation, Oxford University Press. Chapter 3, pp. 53-73.

PART III: OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE EU

Week 8 (March 3 & 5): External Oversight and Accountability in the EU

- Types of external oversight
- Efficacy of external oversight
- Challenges to external oversight

Readings:

1. Kohler-Koch, Beate (2010) How to Put Matters Right? Assessing the Role of Civil Society in EU Accountability, *West European Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 5, pp. 1117-41.
2. Lord, Christopher and Johannes Pollak (2010) Representation and Accountability: Communicating Tubes? *West European Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 5, pp. 968-988
3. Vogiatzis, Nikos (2024) "The European Ombudsman in the EU's Administrative and Institutional Framework," Chapter 13 (pp. 203-214) in Gil Brandsma (Ed.) Handbook on European Union Public Administration, Elgar Press.
4. Ponzano, Paolo (2016), 'The Reform of Comitology and Delegated Acts: An Executive's View', in Carl Fredrik Bergström, and Dominique Ritleng (eds), Rulemaking by the European Commission: The New System for Delegation of Powers, Oxford Academic.

Week 9 (March 10 & 12): Intra-institutional Oversight and Accountability in the EU

- Accountability within the Commission
- Accountability with the EP
- Evaluating legislative quality and impacts

Readings:

1. Wille, Anchrit (2010) Political–Bureaucratic Accountability in the EU Commission: Modernising the Executive, *West European Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 5, pp. 1093-1116.

2. Pollex, Jan (2024) "Impact Assessments," Chapter 15 (pp.229-238) in Gil Brandsma (Ed.) Handbook on European Union Public Administration, Elgar Press.
3. Brandsma, Gijs Jan (2019) Transparency of EU informal trilogues through public feedback in the European Parliament: promise unfulfilled, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 26, No.10, pp.1464-1483.
4. Font, Nuria (2015), "Designing Accountability Regimes at the European Union Level," Chapter 6 (pp. 123-142) in A. C. Bianculli et al. (eds.), Accountability and Regulatory Governance, Palgrave Macmillan.

Week 10 (March 17 & 19): SPRING BREAK

Week 11 (March 24 & 26): Inter-institutional Oversight and Accountability in the EU

- EP oversight tasks
- Commission oversight tasks
- Other oversight institutions in the EU (ECA, Ombudsman)

Readings:

1. Hillebrandt, M., & Leino-Sandberg, P. (2020). Administrative and judicial oversight of trilogues. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(1), 53–71.
2. Rebasti, Emanuele (2021) Return to *De Capitani*: The EU Legislative Process between Transparency and Effectiveness, *Politics and Governance* Vol. 9, Issue. 1, pp. 296–299.
3. Maricut-Akbik, A. (2021), Q&A in legislative oversight: A framework for analysis. *European Journal of Political Research*, 60: 539-559.
4. European Court of Auditors (2014) "Gaps, overlaps and challenges: a landscape review of EU accountability and public audit arrangements" Report of the ECA. Part 1 (pp. 7-24) and selections from Part II (***TBD).
5. Judge, D. and Earnshaw, D. (2002), The European Parliament and the Commission Crisis: A New Assertiveness? *Governance*, 15: 345-374.

Week 12 (Mar. 31 & Apr. 2): Oversight, Accountability & Democratic Governance in EU

- Are oversight and accountability sufficiently developed in the EU for democratic governance?
- Outstanding areas of weakness
- Possible opportunities to strengthen accountability and oversight in the EU
- **Paper 2 due April 4th**

Readings:

1. Olsen, Johan (2017) Democratic Accountability, Political Order, and Change: Exploring Accountability Processes in an Era of European Transformation, Oxford University Press. Chapters. 5-6, pp. 97 -149.
2. Habermas, Jurgen (2001) Why Europe Needs a Constitution *New Left Review*, Vol. 11, pp. 5-26 in in Richard Bellamy and Antonino Palumbo (Eds.) Political Accountability, Routledge. Chapter 16.
3. Papadopoulos, Yannis (2014) "Accountability and Multi-Level Governance" Chapter 17 (pp. 273-288) in M. Bovens, R. Goodin, and T. Schillemans (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Public Accountability, Oxford University Press
4. Bovens, M (2010) Two Concepts of Accountability: Accountability as a Virtue and as a Mechanism, *West European Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 5, pp. 946-967

PART IV: APPLYING CORE CONCEPTS

Week 13 (April 7 & 9): Simulation papers/presentations

- Trilogue simulation presentations
- Trilogue simulation discussion
- **Simulation Briefing due April 9th**

Readings:

1. Simulation materials (***TBD***)
2. Simulation materials (***TBD***)
3. EP Briefing - Understanding Trilogue: Parliament's rules and practices for reaching provisional agreement on legislation.
4. Pennetreau, D, and T. Laloux (2021) Talkin' 'bout a Negotiation: (Un)Transparent Rapporteurs' Speeches in the European Parliament, *Politics and Governance*, Vol.9, Issue 1, pp. 248-260.
5. Panning, L (2021) Building and managing the European Commission's position for trilogue negotiations, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28:1, 32-52.

Week 14 (April 14 & 16): Simulation or papers/presentations

- Commission confirmation hearings simulation presentations
- Commission confirmation hearings simulation discussion
- **Simulation Briefing due April 16th**

Readings:

1. Simulation materials (***TBD***)
2. Simulation materials (***TBD***)
3. CEPS, Confirmation Hearings and Voting in the new Commission: What is the European Parliament's role?
4. Ponzano, Paolo (2024) "The Accountability of the Commission as the EU's Executive" Chapter 7 pp. 71-83 in Morabito, Marcel, and Guillaume Tusseau. *Regional Accountability and Executive Power in Europe*. Oxford: Routledge.

Week 15 (April 21): Conclusions and Final thoughts

- What are the most effective tools of oversight and accountability?
- What are the challenges to oversight and accountability (in general and in the EU)?
- Why are oversight and accountability important (or are they?)

Readings:

1. Olsen, Johan (2017) Democratic Accountability, Political Order, and Change: Exploring Accountability Processes in an Era of European Transformation, Oxford University Press. Chapters 7 pp. 150-178.
2. Final thoughts reading(s) – ***TBD***