

Challenges in Teaching and Learning European Studies, International Relations, Political Science and Public Administration

Convenors

Partick Bijsmans (Maastricht University)

Dorothy Duchatelet (University of Antwerp)

Arjan Schakel (Maastricht University)

Contact person and email

Patrick Bijsmans (patrick.bijsmans@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

Abstract

In a world that often seems governed by the motto “publish or perish” it can be easy to forget that we usually tend to also be involved in teaching. Teaching is a valuable, be it often time-consuming, way to discuss our research with others. The importance of teaching is also illustrated by the fact that nowadays teachers in higher education need to acquire a University Teaching Qualification.

At programme-level, teaching comes with many challenges and expectations. For instance, programmes in higher education have to take into account an ever more competitive higher education market due to the development of other, often discipline-transcending programmes. Second, government policy comes with new requirements and agreements related to such issues as students’ study choice, retention and completion rates, employability, novel ways of teaching, etc.

The result of this is the constant need to update programmes and to rethink ways of attracting new students, including the importance of linking research and teaching practices. This also applies to programmes in the fields of European Studies, International Relations, Political Science and Public Administration. They also have to deal with additional challenges. For instance, at a time in which politics is increasingly questioned at all levels of decision-making, there is a need to not only incorporate critical perspectives, but perhaps even to counter myths in a ‘post-truth’ world.

The aim of this panel is to provide a forum for reflection on challenges such as the aforementioned ones and to take stock of best practices in the fields of European Studies, International Relations, Political Science and Public Administration. We welcome papers that focus on issues such as BA and MA curriculum design, the relation between research and teaching, first-year experience, retention and completion rates, and general teaching practice in the fields of European Studies, International Relations and Political Science.

Link with main themes

The proposed panel transcends the four subthemes of the conference. First, participants are invited to reflect on their research in those subthemes and how they use this research in a teaching and learning context. Second, many of the programmes that we teach have an international dimension. Last, but not least, it links government management practices with the ways in which we arrange teaching in the fields related

to those subthemes.

Papers

We expect to receive papers that cover a variety of issues. In fact, there has already been some tentative interest in our network. One of the organisers is likely to submit a paper on the use of simulations of decision-making in teaching. Related to this, we know of a colleague who might be interested to participate and who's expertise lies in using active learning in teaching international politics. Another colleague may want to contribute a paper on teaching controversial political issues, such as (increasingly) EU politics and governance. Finally, the other two organisers are working on a research project that looks at students' (non-)attendance and study progress and that raises policy-related questions in this context.

Involvement of senior members

Co-organiser Arjan Schakel is senior NIG-member. We hope to invite other senior members to contribute.