The evolution of the European Union ranks among the **most significant developments** in contemporary European and international history. Yet scholars have disagreed about nearly every important aspect of its origins, nature and implications; and now with **Brexit** on the horizon, they argue about whether and how the EU can endure a conjuncture of challenges and crises.

The seminar’s readings, discussions and written assignments will **introduce students to the main debates** by addressing **five questions**:

1. What is the EU?
2. What accounts for its origins and evolution?
3. How does the EU work and what does it do?
4. What impact has it had on the national societies, polities and economies of Europe?
5. How does the EU influence relations among members, neighboring countries, global society and international politics and economics?

The class will cover topical contemporary developments including **Brexit**, the **massive inflow of refugees**, the legacies of **banking** and **sovereign debt crises**, **security threats** from Russia and extremists, and **authoritarian tendencies** of some member state governments.