

Developed by EU Learning, www.EULearning.ca
An activity of the Centre for European Studies, Carleton University
www.carleton.ca/ces and www.canada-europe-dialogue.ca
ces@carleton.ca

Use is free of charge. Source must be acknowledged if materials are distributed.
EU Learning is made possible by a grant from the European Union.

Ukraine, Russia, and the European Union



COURSES:

Canadian and World Politics (CPW4U)
Analysing Current Economic Issues (CIA4U)
Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis (CGW4U)
Canadian and International Law (CLN4U)
World History since 1900: Global and Regional Interactions (CHT30)

TIME REQUIREMENTS:

150 minutes (two class periods)

DESCRIPTION:

The crisis that erupted in Ukraine in 2014 has culminated in a period of radically increased tension between Russia and the West. The most contentious aspect of the situation was Russia's annexation of Crimea, which had previously been part of Ukraine. In addition, the West alleged that Russia has supported separatist elements in other parts of Ukraine (eastern Ukraine or the Donbas). This crisis has its roots in Ukraine's relationship with two of its neighbours: Russia to the east and the 28-member European Union to the west. Similarly, the EU-Russia relationship shapes how these two actors engage with Ukraine. This lesson has been created to help students understand the complexities of EU and Russian interests in Eastern Europe, with Ukraine as a case study.

OBJECTIVES:

The two primary objectives of this lesson plan are to provide information about the Ukraine crisis and to allow students to consider the extent to which the crisis is the result of competing interests. If the students have already done a lesson on the European Union or the Ukraine crisis, you may wish to tailor the presentation to leave some sections out. Feel free to pick and choose topics from the handouts you feel fit your class more than others.

The following themes will be covered:

- The European Union's eastward expansion over time, specifically the post-Cold War enlargements in 2004, 2007, and 2013;
- The EU's membership criteria, prospects of further expansion, and "enlargement fatigue" within the EU;
- Institutional mechanisms that govern the EU's engagement with the countries of Eastern Europe;
- The historical, economic, and political ties that the EU and Russia have with Eastern Europe;
- The trade relationship between the EU and Russia, particularly related to energy;
- The Ukraine crisis and the Russian, European, and Canadian responses

MATERIALS: (8 documents total)

- Teacher's Guide (below)
- Teacher's Attachment
- Vocabulary Sheet
- Student handouts (**Note:** feel free to pick and choose which material from the handouts you would like to use, and which material would be for your reference only)
 - Handout A: Understanding the EU's eastward expansion
 - Handout B: The Eastern Partnership
 - Handout C: The Russian alternative
 - Handout D: European and Russian interdependence case study: energy
 - Handout E: The Ukraine crisis

TEACHER'S GUIDE:

The following guidelines are to assist in delivering the material in this lesson plan. They are meant to have a certain amount of flexibility, to account for the amount of time available in the class, as well as to offer the option of a more classroom or homework-focused approach.

This lesson plan suggests that students study the EU-Russia relationship in the first class, with the Ukraine case study and an in-class debate to follow. However, feel free to adapt the plan in accordance with the time you have available. The amount of time included in brackets is only approximate; you may wish to spend more or less time on some sections, depending upon your time requirement and inclination.

Procedure for Lesson Plan 1: EU-Russia relations (75 minutes)

Handouts recommended (these can be distributed to the students or used as reference material for the teacher):

- Handout A
- Handout B
- Handout C
- Handout D

1. **Teachers lead students in an opening discussion on the EU's expansion.** This will provide students with key historical background. In the interest of time, you may want to combine this portion with a separate and more in-depth lesson on the history and expansion of the European Union. Engage with the students on the membership process. Include a discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of EU membership for both applicant countries and the EU itself and explore possible reasons why a state might want to join the EU. *(10 minutes)*
2. **Steer the discussion towards the Eastern Partnership.** Discuss why this Partnership was created and what purpose it was intended to serve. With the students, consider the advantages and drawbacks of such a Partnership and whether its goals were met. *(15 minutes)*
3. **Introduce Russian interests.** Discuss the historical, economic, and political ties that Russia has in the region. Introduce the Eurasian Union and study it briefly as an alternative to the EU. *(15 minutes)*
4. **Consider the EU-Russia relationship.** Present the many ways that the two are linked politically and economically, using the concept of energy security and interdependence as a case study to illustrate the relationship. If time allows, consider a discussion of the impact of oil prices upon this relationship. *(25 minutes)*
5. **Lead a brief discussion on “spheres of influence” and clashing interests.** It is frequently claimed that the EU and Russia are competing for influence in Eastern Europe. Based on Handouts B, C, and D, discuss with the students whether this is the case. This short discussion will serve to prepare students for the subsequent class on the Ukraine crisis. If time is short, consider asking students to consider it and form their own opinions in the intervening time between classes. In addition, consider distributing

Handout E at the end of the class and instruct students to review it in advance of the following lesson on the Ukraine crisis. (10 minutes)

Procedure for Lesson Plan 2: Ukraine case study (75 minutes)

Handouts recommended:

- Handout E

1. **Begin with a discussion of the Ukraine crisis.** Distribute Handout E, and refer back to the previous class discussion on competing interests. Continue the previous class' discussion if deemed necessary. (45 minutes)

Consider both the positive and the negative impacts of Euromaidan, including:

- The emergence of a pro-European political consensus
- The loss of Ukrainian sovereignty in Crimea and the Donbas
- Signing of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU
- Deep structural reforms of Ukrainian politics and economics begun, but efforts thus far have been ineffective, and reform has been resisted by the country's oligarchs
- The ongoing economic crisis due, in part, to deteriorating trade relations with Russia
- The ongoing political crisis and competition the power between political factions

Topics to consider during the lesson on the Ukraine crisis include:

- a. The roots of Euromaidan;
- b. The Euromaidan protests;
- c. The Russian invasion, the annexation of Crimea, and war in the Donbas region;
- d. The sanctions and their impact thus far;
- e. The Canadian response;
- f. The current situation in Ukraine;

2. **Consider the positive and negative impacts of the crisis.** Some possible responses include:
3. **Lead an in-class debate.** Split the class into 3 groups, representing the EU, Russia, and Ukraine. Task them with crafting a diplomatic solution to the crisis. You may set 'victory' conditions for each group, but stress that each group must try to satisfy its own interests in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. Aspects of a final agreement to consider include ending the conflict in the Donbas, resolving the issue of Crimean sovereignty, lifting the sanctions on both sides, determining whether the Ukrainian government will continue to integrate with the EU or will turn towards the Eurasian Union, and maintaining a cooperative and productive EU-Russia relationship. Are any of these goals incompatible? If so, which should take priority? (30 minutes)