

# **Foundation Programme on Social Sciences**

(An introduction to Law, Economics and Socio-Political Studies)

**Academic Year 2025/2026**

## General Information

- I Credits: 60 Foundation Credits (non-convertible to CFU or ECTS)
- I Academic Coordinator: Barbara De Donno  
Full Professor of Comparative Law, Rector's Advisor for Internationalization (Area of Law) and the ENGAGE.EU Alliance, Director of the LLM on Business and Company Law, Member of the School of Law Board, Member of Board of Editors and Scientific Committees of Comparative Law Reviews and Research Centers
- I E-mail: [foundation@luiss.it](mailto:foundation@luiss.it)

## Course Description

The Programme, totally held in English, is open to international students with less than 12 years of schooling who need to acquire an additional year to fulfill the prerequisites for pursuing a Bachelor's or a Single-Cycle Degree Programme in Italy.

The Programme focuses on social sciences areas' subjects: Economics & Finance, Business & Management, Political Sciences and Law.

## Course Prerequisites

All information regarding requested documents to join Luiss Foundation Programme can be found in the official Call for Application available on Luiss' website.

This document must be read carefully.

## Course Evaluation

The evaluation of the programme is based on a number of components as follows:

- I continuous assessment
- I class participation
- I final test at the end of each course

The following evaluation system is applied:

Definition	US grading system
Excellent	A +
	A
Very good	A -
	B +
Good	B
	B-
Satisfactory	C +
	C
	C-
Pass	D+
	D
	D-
Fail	F

## Student Assessment

- I The learning process of each student will be regularly monitored through a continuous assessment based on closed-ended quizzes, open questions, interviews, or short essays concerning the main topics of the course, according to each teacher's assessment criteria, and a final test at the end of the course.
- I Students with learning disabilities who may need special provisions during exams are required to contact Luiss Foundation staff beforehand.
- I The use of proper grammar and sentence structure, correct spelling as well as appropriate language and terminology will have a significant impact on the assessment.
- I At the end of each course, students will be evaluated through a final test aimed at assessing their acquired knowledge.

NB: At the end of the programme, and upon successful completion of all courses, students will be awarded the final qualification of successful completion of Luiss Foundation Programme on Social Sciences.

## Class Participation

Speaking in class will be highly encouraged and welcomed. It will be expected that students actively listen to their classmates, pay attention, and participate in class through reading assignments, doing homework and contributing to the overall class environment.

Students will be evaluated based on their ability to understand and apply all acquired knowledge to class/team discussions. Each student will be expected to provide opinions and feedback, and to challenge the instructor's and other students' assumptions in a respectful manner.

A correct, active and responsible participation is highly recommended since the final evaluation will be strongly affected by it.

Students must switch on their camera during the entire class period, otherwise he/she will be considered as absent.

Leaving class for no reason and disrupting it (i.e. talking, texting, etc.) will impact the final evaluation.

Classroom activities' attendance is compulsory for at least 80% of each course. For exams validation, only 20% of absence for each course is allowed.

## Teaching Methodology

The lessons will reflect a multi-method approach consisting of:

- I A balanced combination of various teaching techniques including lectures and open discussions in the virtual class;

- I Class sessions based on lectures with in-class slides introducing students to the specific topics and incorporating discussions with practical examples and, possibly, teamwork activities.

NB: Teaching methodology will vary according to each Professor. Methodologies will be illustrated by each Professor at the beginning of the course.

## Course readings/resources

Learning materials will be indicated at the beginning of the course and during classes.

## Course Schedule

For the academic year 2025/2026, the Foundation Programme will be a blended course: the first semester will be delivered via online synchronous classes, while the second semester will be delivered mainly online. Students will be invited on campus for a period to live the student life experience.

Courses	Foundation Credits
<p><b>Introduction to Computational Thinking</b></p> <p>The course introduces students to computational thinking as a fundamental approach to problem-solving, focusing on algorithmic abstraction and structured reasoning. Students will develop a systematic way of tackling complex problems—an essential skill in an increasingly digital world. Particular emphasis is placed on understanding the logic behind algorithms and their role in automation, artificial intelligence, and data-driven decision-making. Through case studies and real-world examples, students will explore how computational thinking applies across various disciplines, from science and engineering to economics and business analytics. By the end of the course, students will have gained problem-solving skills and a foundational understanding of how computational methods shape modern technological advancements, including AI and machine learning.</p> <p><b>Instructor: TBD</b></p>	6
<p><b>Introduction to Critical Thinking and Methodologies</b></p> <p>Critical thinking is the dialogic practice of reasoning through issues to reach well-founded conclusions. In an augmented and hyper-technical context, critical reasoning is a necessary skill for understanding, decision-making and social interaction. Being able to break down complex issues is arguably one of the most valuable assets one can possess in any educational or professional environment. This course will offer an introduction to the main theories of truth and knowledge, as well as practical exercises and group-works in the field of justice and social science. Students will be guided through the key-concepts of reasoning assessment (argument, certainty, probability, validity) and its faults (fallacies, cognitive bias, fake news) aimed at enhancing logic, argumentation development, idea generation and reasoning skills.</p> <p><b>Instructor: Flavio Michele Ceci; Ludovico Ercole</b></p>	3
<p><b>Introduction to Macro and Microeconomics</b></p> <p>Students will learn to employ core economic principles to explain key selected topics. At the end of the course students will be able to identify basic causality link for analysis of issues such as: how do markets work? What are the (unintended) consequences of policies which interfere with market prices? What are the origins and functions of money? What are the reasons behind inflation and unemployment?</p>	6

<p>The tools and concepts developed during the course will be a fundamental support for the understanding of more advanced studies in the economic and financial sectors.</p> <p><b>Instructor: Giuseppina Gianfreda</b></p>	
<p><b>Introduction to Private Law</b></p> <p>The course is designed to equip students with the foundational concepts of Italian civil and commercial law. Its purpose is to prepare students for further academic study in legal and economic disciplines. It is divided into two parts: civil law and commercial law. The first part of the course covers key theoretical topics necessary for the general comprehension of private law, such as: the notions of legal rule, the sources and interpretation of the law, its scope of application, the subjects (individuals and legal entities) of private law. It also provides a general overview of personal, family, and succession law, as well as property and real estate law, obligations, and contract law. The first part of the course concludes with a brief presentation of tort law. The second part of the course is dedicated to commercial law, covering essential topics related to regulating economic activity. Students will learn the basics of the concepts of entrepreneur and business activity, partnerships and corporations and bankruptcy proceedings. The course runs for thirty-six hours, with twenty hours dedicated to civil law and sixteen hours dedicated to commercial law.</p> <p><b>Instructor: Andrea Costa ; Mario Manna</b></p>	6
<p><b>Introduction to Public Law</b></p> <p>The course is designed to provide students with general knowledge and understanding of the main elements of Public Law, understood as a basic discipline on the structure of State powers, focusing on the principles of constitutionalism. Specific attention will be paid devoted to the features of the Italian Constitution. The general and foundational purpose of the course's content makes it a premise for the further legal courses that the students will attend in their subsequent academic careers.</p> <p>Along with the general outlines of the subject, the course aims to provide students, through participative teaching including classroom exercises and tests, with the essential tools of the legal language and knowledge of how to document the most relevant regulatory sources, scholarly debate and case law in the field of Public Law.</p> <p><b>Instructor: Giovanni Piccirilli; Giorgia Valentini</b></p>	6
<p><b>Fundamentals of Management</b></p> <p>The course offers students a basic frame of reference for business management and management processes, emphasizing the primary role of the resources (both individual and organizational) and relational contexts (both interpersonal and inter-organizational) in which business development processes take place. The course aims to provide students with the tools and techniques for supporting management processes, both in the sphere of strategic choices and in that of the various management functions: marketing, production, corporate finance, human resources management, logistics, and supplies, research &amp; development, and market research. Finally, through business cases and guided exercises, an application learning path is promoted on specific management issues (business definition, environmental analysis, environmental analysis, sector analysis, strategic resources and skills, competitive strategies, and so on). Moreover, by considering the current hypercompetitive and hyper-technological scenario, some topics are dedicated to urgent issues such as social diversity, sustainability, and new technology integration (e.g., Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Blockchain, Metaverse, and so on) in several industries for business digitalization purposes.</p> <p><b>Instructor: Andrea Sestino</b></p>	6
<p><b>Fundamentals of Investing</b></p> <p>The course offers an introduction to investments and financial tools. The course aims at providing at basic notions and fundamental principles of investing, from the description of financial markets and traded securities to the analysis of investments and portfolio management. The course also provides tools for analyzing portfolios of common stocks and to make basic investment analysis.</p>	6

<b>Instructor: Stefano Marzoni</b>	
<p><b>Introduction to Social and Political Analysis</b></p> <p>After a short methodological introduction, the course introduces democratic regimes and their characteristics, comparing and contrasting them with non-democratic regimes. It then proceeds by presenting the process of democratic representation in a democratic political system, in terms of: a) its key actors (citizens, parties, interest groups, social movements); b) the processes of interaction between such actors, in terms of both electoral and non-electoral accountability (elections; interest representation; other processes); c) how both processes are differently shaped by different political institutions. After an analysis of the characteristics and interaction processes of political institutions (parliaments, cabinets, public bureaucracies, courts), part of the course is dedicated to public policy, i.e. the actual decisional output of the political system, and how it affects the distribution of power within the system. Finally, the interplay between domestic politics and the emergence of multi-level governance is briefly discussed.</p> <p><b>Instructor: Davide Vittori</b></p>	<p>6</p>
<p><b>Language Empowerment and Academic Preparation (LEAP)</b></p> <p>This course aims to enable students to acquire significantly greater communicational competence in English, while also enhancing their general critical skills and creative talent, best practices and digital literacy. Its specific goal is to serve as a solid preparation for a full, broad and symbiotic academic experience and as a clear foundation for the future professional lives of its participants. The course will be blended, will seek to position students firmly at the center of their own learning, and will consist of a series of interactive, practice-based workshops undertaken together during class time and material, tips, readings and recommendations provided for each week on the course page. Assessment will be continuous and primarily based on attendance, active participation, and performance on specific tasks throughout the course. Personal feedback will also be regularly provided to each student on their work. Increased communicative competence and confidence in English, increased cultural knowledge and awareness (also of oneself), the development of best practices and a strong personal narrative, digital and creative training.</p> <p><b>Instructor: TBD</b></p>	<p>6</p>
<p><b>Italian Language*</b></p> <p>This course aims to enable students to acquire competences of Italian language, by considering all aspect of its aspects: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Objectives of the course include the acquisition by students of at least basic vocabulary and to get a better understanding of Italian language as a tool of communication for every-day challenges.</p> <p><b>Instructor: TBD</b></p>	<p>9</p>

Students should bear in mind that the content of the lessons may change slightly depending on the progress of the class.

NB: Should the beforementioned instructors be unavailable, a substitute will give the scheduled or a prepared alternative lecture at the regular class time.

\*Students possessing at least a B2 level in Italian language will be exonerated from the course, upon internal assessment by the Luiss Foundation Team or presentation of a language certificate.

In March/April 2026, students will come to the Luiss campus in Rome to attend some classes and the soft skills training, such as Coding, Public Speaking and Negotiation. If students successfully complete all courses at the end of the programme, students will register the exams and be awarded the final qualification of successful completion of Luiss Foundation Programme on Social Sciences.

The non-attendance to the on-campus period must be strongly justified beforehand and validated by the Luiss Foundation team.

If a student intends to come to Rome earlier than the on-campus period, he/she will be able to use all Luiss' facilities such as canteen, library, campuses as a regular student enrolled in Luiss.

## Luiss Course Policies

### Attendance Rules

- I To obtain the final qualification of successful completion, students must also attend at least 80% of the hours of each course.
- I Students who attend less than 80% of hours of lessons and activities set out in the course syllabus will have no credits awarded and, without signing the Official Withdrawal Request Form, will receive an "F" as their final evaluation.
- I Punctuality is mandatory. Students must arrive in class on time: any lateness, leaving class during the lesson without notice, not showing up on time after the break or leaving early will impact the attendance percentage.
- I Students are responsible for keeping track of their absences and for catching up on any missed work.
- I Make-up classes are always mandatory as part of the course.
- I For no reason (i.e., travel plans, family matters, etc.) will absences be excused.
- I Students will receive an "F" on each exam they miss.
- I Students who leave Luiss University before the end of the course that they are enrolled in must fill out an Official Withdrawal Request form and return it to Luiss Foundation Team.
- I Students who leave Luiss University without submitting the form will receive an "F" in each non-completed course. In all cases, students will not be eligible for credits nor receive a refund.

### Assignment Submissions

Late submissions of assignments, including papers, are not accepted. If an assignment is submitted after the deadline, the evaluation for the assignment will be an "F" (0 points), which may adversely impact the final assessment of the course.

### Deadlines

If the deadlines mentioned in the call for applications and the regulations are not met, the penalties described in those documents will apply.

### Scheduling Conflict

If, on occasion, a class has a scheduling conflict with another class (due to a simultaneously scheduled make-up class, etc.), the student is required to inform both instructors in advance, allowing them to prepare a formal justification for the class that will be missed. Even though an absence may be excused, students must be aware that there is no possibility of making up any assessed in-class activities they may have missed, and no refund will be given for pre-paid visits/field trips.

### Etiquette

The "[Code of Conduct for Luiss Guido Carli Students](#)" includes all provisions concerning students' behavior to adopt while at Luiss University:

- I Eating or drinking during class/site visits is not allowed. No eating or drinking is allowed in museums. In religious places, shoulders and knees must be covered;
- I Students must use classroom for learning or research purposes and they should take proper care of available equipment and materials and promptly report any damage or loss. After the use, students should leave the classroom clean and neat;
- I Students should clear the tables in the canteens and bars of study materials at meat time;
- I Electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, iPods, iPads, laptops, etc.) must be switched off during class, unless otherwise instructed;
- I Plagiarism, copying, the use of any form of outside help, artifice, deception or any other fraudulent act directed at altering the outcome of official assessments, are all forbidden;
- I False statements, deliberately omit mandatory information or perform any other fraudulent act in competitions, comparative evaluations and any other administrative procedure of the University are not allowed;
- I Bringing in and consuming alcohol or drugs on university premises and appurtenances is forbidden;
- I Students' behavior must be informed by the principles of dignity, decorum and respect.
- I Students must dress in a sober and dignified manner on university premises, keeping in mind that they are in an academic institution.

NB: Instructors who find that a student's behavior is inappropriate will seek to talk to him/her immediately. If the behavior continues, the instructor is required to contact the appropriate Luiss authorities.

### **Academic Honesty**

According to the "[Code of Conduct for Luiss Guido Carli Students](#)", all student work will be checked for plagiarism.

"Violations include cheating on tests, plagiarism (taking words or texts, works of art, designs, etc., and presenting them as one's own), inadequate citation, recycled work, unauthorized assistance or similar actions not explicitly mentioned". Assignments and projects are specific to individual courses. Therefore, presenting the same work in two different courses (including previous courses) is considered recycling and is unacceptable.

Why is plagiarism bad?

- I It is unethical.
- I The student will fail the assignment and possibly the course.
- I Faculty are required to report it.
- I The student will be put on academic probation.
- I The student might even be dismissed from college.

Bottom Line: Students MUST cite the sources that they use!

NB: Should issues on academic dishonesty arise, the faculty members will adhere to the relevant Luiss' policy and report any suspected cases to the Luiss Course Leader for disciplinary review.

## **Useful Student Resources**

### **Internal Luiss Resources**



The Luiss Library offers its users a wide collection of both printed and online periodicals. To see the database of e-journals currently available, users can consult the dedicated page.

The Luiss Library has subscriptions to a number of databases, organized by:

- | Subject
- | Type
- | Remote access

### **Important research libraries in Italy**

Biblioteca di Palazzo Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale, Fondo Marciano di Venezia, Biblioteche di Firenze and Biblioteca Vaticana.

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### **Luiss Foundation Programme**

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