



Academic Year 2025-2026

Syllabus

Course: Global History CFU 6

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Course Description

The course will investigate some of the main characteristics of extra-European international relations and global governance from a historical perspective, examining their origins and evolution over the period from 1945 to 2001, i.e. from the “post-war period” to the adoption of the “Belt and Road Initiative” by the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The period covers three important phases, namely the “Cold War”, the brief “unipolar moment” of the United States, and the origins of the new international order, which sees China and Asia at the centre of systemic changes.

The course will provide the bases and conceptual framework necessary to understand and reflect on the history of the so-called Third World (now referred to by academics and commentators as the “Global South”), and on the opportunities and challenges posed by institutional developments in global governance. It will examine some specific aspects of the foreign and domestic policies of East and Southeast Asian countries, as well as some countries in Africa and the Middle East, in relation to the two Cold War superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The course will address the role of Asia and Africa in a changing and globalised world, assess their place in the development of hegemonic powers and, finally, shed light on the alternative visions proposed particularly by the PRC on the management of the hegemonic transition after the end of the Cold War.

The fields that revolve around the course analysis concern not only domestic politics and diplomacy, but also the economy, society and institutional changes that have taken place in the international context. In this regard, ample space will be given to the United Nations, the greatest example of international cooperation ever conceived.

Schedule of sections

Section 1	The post-1945 political order: the Cold War, bipolarism and the United Nations
Section 2	Decolonisation, the two Superpowers and the Third World
Section 3	Asia, Africa at the time of détente
Section 4	China’s economic reform and opening-up, Japan’s economic power and the repercussions on bipolarism
Section 5	The end of the Cold War, the development of new types of regional cooperation and the rise of China
Section 6	New initiatives in the framework of global governance: China’s Belt and Road Initiative and its effects on the world order

Textbooks and Materials

A) Reference Textbooks

- W.M. Grimes, *Unmaking the Japanese Miracle: Macroeconomic Politics, 1985-2000*, Ithaca; NY: Cornell University Press, 2001;
- Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea*, London: Penguin Books, 2013;
- Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, New York; NY: The New Press, 2007;
- Catherine Schenk, *International Economic Relations since 1945*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2011;
- Isabella M. Weber, *How China Escaped Shock Therapy. The Market Reform Debate*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2021;
- Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750*, London: Penguin Books, 2012.

B) Further specific readings will be made available during the course on the DIDA platform. You are required to register on DIDA to get access to all materials.

Teaching Method

The course combines different teaching methods: lectures, student presentations and a final debate. Lectures will provide students with the necessary information and reading suggestions on the phenomena under study, while presentations will allow students to critically engage with this knowledge and encourage fruitful classroom debate. Finally, the final debate will allow students to interact with both the lecturer and their peers on specific topics assigned by the teachers in the previous weeks. Students are required to attend every lecture and actively participate in discussions.

Students will agree on the topic of their presentations with the lecturer and will give PPT presentations in which they critically evaluate the content and argument of their chosen topic. Each presentation must include a slide at the bottom of the PPT containing questions to be asked to classmates for discussion.

Examination

The course includes two specific types of examination: one for attending students and one for non-attending students.

1) For attending students

The assessment of attending students' learning will take place in three main stages: two class presentations and a final debate.

Stage 1 > Individual presentation) Each student must examine in depth an academic article, which they can select from a list provided by the lecturer to class representatives during the first week of the course. Each student must be able to critically evaluate the content and examine the main argument underlying the author's work. In addition, they must conclude their analysis by proposing a couple of related questions for discussion to the class.

Stage 2 > Group presentation) The lecturer will form 5/6 groups (the number depends on the composition of the class), each of which will have to present a case study of their choice that falls within the macro-theme selected by the lecturer. This year's topics are national liberation movements, anticolonial movements and nationalism.

Stage 3 > Final debate) On the occasion of the last class of the course, there will be a debate moderated by the lecturer where all students must participate. It will be based on the topics discussed in class, both during the lecturer's lessons and during individual and group presentations. The lecturer will circulate the list of questions for the debate three weeks before the end of the course.

2) For non-attending students

The assessment method for non-attending students consists exclusively of an oral examination, to be taken during the regular examination sessions. They will have to study:

- **one academic article**

Each student will critically assess the content and argument of an academic article chosen from a list provided by the lecturer to class representatives during the very first week of the course;

- the monograph by **Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso Book, 2016.**

The book must be read in its entirety. This means that no changes to the programme or the topics covered in the book may be agreed upon in advance.

Non-attending students shall register in Delphi for the additional exam sessions in 2026 (Autumn/Winter session). Students will be notified of their non-attendance status soon after the end of classes. Those who will result non-attendant will automatically lose all the work that they gave in the framework of the permanent evaluation activities (individual presentation, group presentation, final debate). Accordingly, they must take the exam as non-attending student.

Assessment

The aim of this assessment system is to verify the achievement of the course learning outcomes. In particular, the examination assesses the student's overall preparation, ability to integrate knowledge from different parts of the programme, consistency of reasoning, analytical skills and independent judgement. In addition, language skills and clarity of expression are assessed.

For attending students

The minimum score required to pass the written exam is 18/30 for each test. There will be no final exam: indeed, the final mark will correspond to the weighted average of the three tests, whose values are distributed as follows:

- Individual presentation in class (45%)
- Group presentation in class (35%)
- Final debate in class (20%).

Attending students must take all three tests in order to obtain a final grade. However, there is one exception: if a student is unable to submit the academic article (see 'Phase 1') due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g. another class at the same time), they may examine the article during the regularly scheduled examination sessions, so long as they have already completed the group presentation ('Phase 2') and participated in the final debate ('Phase 3'). In this case, the mark for the discussion of the academic article will be averaged with the other two, according to the percentages listed above.

For non-attending students

Oral examination (100%). The student will discuss specific topics or important aspects of both readings with the lecturer. He/she is expected to reproduce what he/she has learned and explain relevant interrelationships. The minimum score required to pass the written exam is 18/30.

By the way, the rules relating to the examination procedures will be carefully examined on the very first day of the course.

Office hours

On appointment. To book an appointment or ask specific questions about any aspect of the course, please contact Dr Raimondo M. Neironi at raimondo.neironi@gmail.com.

NOTE: If you are an Erasmus or a non Global Governance student who would like to attend one or more courses in the Global Governance programme, please be aware that, before enrolling in the course, you should have read the code of conduct and the procedural rules characterizing our programme. We assume that, if you enroll in the course, you have read and accepted all Global Governance values and rules. Notice that attendance is expected from the very first class and you need to attend at least 80% of the course in order to be considered as an attending student. Please be aware that the Secretariat of the programme will only notify not attendant students of their status via email after the end of classes.

POINT A: GRADES

For assessment purposes, the following scheme will be used:

Unsuitable: major deficiencies and/or inaccuracies in the knowledge and understanding of the topics; limited capacity for analysis and synthesis, frequent generalisations and limited critical and judgmental skills, the topics are set out inconsistently and with inappropriate language;

18-20: barely sufficient knowledge and understanding of the topics with possible generalisations and imperfections; sufficient capacity for analysis synthesis and autonomy of judgement, the topics are frequently exposed in an incoherent way and with inappropriate/technical language;

21-23: Routine knowledge and understanding of topics; ability to analyse and synthesise correctly with sufficiently coherent logical argumentation and appropriate/technical language

24-26: Fair knowledge and understanding of the topics; Good analytical and synthetic skills with arguments expressed in a rigorous manner but with language that is not always appropriate/technical.

27-29: Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the topics; considerable capacity for analysis and synthesis. Good autonomy of judgement. Arguments presented in a rigorous manner and with appropriate/technical language

30-30L: Excellent level of knowledge and thorough understanding of topics. Excellent analytical and synthetic skills and independent judgement. Arguments expressed in an original manner and with appropriate technical language.

POINT B: GOALS

Through this course, students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE AND COMPREHENSION SKILLS:

Acquire and demonstrate mastery of general concepts related to global history, with particular reference to political, economic and social dynamics in the areas of Europe and East Asia; identify key concepts and major issues useful in understanding the evolution of global governance from 1945 to the early 21st century;

ABILITY TO APPLY KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING:

Students will be guided to the use of primary sources as well as of the main analytical and critical tools used by global history scholars. At the end of the cycle of lectures, the student will be able to apply these tools independently in the seminar part.

AUTONOMY OF JUDGEMENT:

Students will be introduced to the various historiographical debates related to the topics covered, in order to create sensitivity to different approaches to the same problem or event. Students will be asked to discuss interpretations and arguments proposed by scholars, as well as to present their own using the specific vocabulary of global history.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

Active participation in class lectures and oral presentations in the seminar part will activate in students the necessary skills to present concepts and make logical connections quickly. Furthermore, the stimuli received in class will enable students to argue with autonomy, critical capacity and terminological mastery about the main themes of global history.