



Syllabus
A.Y. 2025/2026
History and Civilization
CFU 12
Prof. Aleksandra Komornicka
Prof. Lorenzo Trombetta
Prof. Jacopo Cellini

Course Description

General Module (Prof. Aleksandra Komornicka): “International System(s): Politics, Economy, and Governance in the XX Century world” – 8 CFU

Special Module 1 (Prof. Lorenzo Trombetta): “History of the Arab-Islamic Middle East: A Historical Perspective on Contemporary Challenges” – 2 CFU

Special Module 2 (Prof. Jacopo Cellini): “Religion(s) and International Politics: A Historical Approach” – 2 CFU

The course explores how the major political, economic, and social developments in Europe and the rest of the world shaped the governance of the international system from the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The **General Module** will consider the ways in which European countries intersected processes of nation building with imperial expansion in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia; explore the causes and consequences of the World Wars on the international system; analyze how Cold War and decolonization after 1945 redefined Europe’s place in the world and shaped new international relations; examine how globalization and the end of the Cold War changed the world order and morphed it into today’s system.

The **Special Module 1** will zoom in on the case of the Middle East area, exploring diverse situations and the most recent developments in a comparative perspective, which will allow students to detect national peculiarities as well as regional commonalities.

The **Special Module 2** will zoom in on the relationship between religion(s) and international politics. Exploring how this relationship evolved over the years and how it differs depending on the country and the region, the students will be able to reflect critically on the role of religion in international politics nowadays.

Overall, the aim of the course is to familiarize students with the main events and interpretations of global and international history, as well as with the multi-layered nature of historical processes. Students will learn to detect how these layers intertwined and influenced one another and will discover the variety of approaches historians adopt to inquiry into the past.

General Module:

“International System(s): Politics, Economy, and Governance in the XX Century world” Prof. Aleksandra Komornicka

Topic 1	Empires and colonialism 1870-1945
Topic 2	The collapse of the “Concert of Europe” 1870-1914
Topic 3	The end of the First World War and the making of the Versailles system 1914-1929
Topic 4	The failure of the Versailles system and the Second World War, 1929-1939
Topic 5	The end of the Second World War, Pax Americana, Cold War
Topic 6	Cold War in Asia
Topic 7	The rise of the Global South
Topic 8	The end of the Cold War and the dawn of the New World Order

Teaching method

The general module will be taught through a mix of lectures and seminars.

Lectures will present students with the main features of the international system and its evolution overtime; they will explain key concepts, the unfolding of events and processes, and the forces driving change. Lectures will also highlight the most important actors shaping and/or challenging the international order at a given time, their role and goals, and their interactions. Student will be also familiarized with the main historiographical debates and learn that there are different interpretations and approaches that historians use to explain events and the causes behind them.

In the seminar sessions, students will be guided to put this knowledge to use. They will engage in work-in-group assignments and small discussions, analyze specific case-studies, and exercise in analytical essay planning and writing. The seminars will also offer students a chance to practice public speaking. These seminar activities will help students to perform well at the exam.

Students are expected to attend every class and come to seminar sessions prepared for discussion.

Textbook and Materials

- Antony Best, Jussi M. Hanhimäki, Joseph A. Maiolo and Kirsten E. Schulze, *International History of the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2025) Chapters 1-4, 6-9, 11-12, 14, 16, 19
- Catherine Schenk, *International Economic Relations since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2011) Chapters 1-5
- Matthew G. Stanard, *European Overseas Empire, 1879–1999: A Short History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2018) Chapters 1-2.

Additional materials will be uploaded on the teachingplatform in due time ahead of classes.

Special Module 1:
“States, Cultures and Identities: The Middle East Meets Europe”
Prof. Lorenzo Trombetta

Topic 1	Methodological Introduction Beyond Orientalism
Topic 2	Power and Negotiation: Mecca and the Rise of Islam
Topic 3	The Sunni-Shi’a Divide and Its Impact on Governance
Topic 4	Power and negotiation: The Case of the Mamluks
Topic 5	Tanzimat, Colonialism, and Political Sectarianism
Topic 6	The Formation of Nation-States and the Post-Colonial Era
Topic 7	Contentious Policy in the Contemporary Middle East

Teaching Method

This course intends to take a close look at the history of the Arab-Islamic Middle East, showing how past events shape today's challenges. It dives into key moments of change, continuity, and adaptation, highlighting how political, social, and cultural factors have influenced each other from the early days of Islam to the present. By connecting historical events with current issues, the course helps to build a deeper understanding of the complexities of this region and its ongoing challenges.

Textbook and Materials

- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1978.
- Filiu, Jean-Pierre, *Le milieu des mondes. Une histoire laïque du Moyen-Orient de 395 à nos jours*, Paris, Seuil, 2021.
- Van Steenbergen, Jo. *A History of the Islamic World, 600-1800. Empire, Dynastic Formation, and Heterogeneities in Pre-Modern Islamic West-Asia*, London, Routledge, 2020.
- Makdisi, Usama. *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2020.
- Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah. An Introduction to History*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Rabbat, Nasser. *Writing Egypt. Al-Maqrizi and his historical project*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2022.

Additional materials will be uploaded on the teachingplatform in due time ahead of class.

Module 2:
“Religion(s) and International Politics: A Historical Approach”
Prof. Jacopo Cellini

Topic 1	Religion in International Relations: concepts and categories
Topic 2	Introduction to Catholicism: regional differences and relations with politics
Topic 3	Religion and nationalism; Fascism as political religion
Topic 4	Catholic Church and politics after the Second World War

Teaching Method

This module covers the relationship between religion and international politics. The lectures will provide students with an overview of religions in the world and their relationship with politics, explain key concepts and categories, and zoom on in the relationship between the Catholic Church and politics in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In the seminar sessions, students will be guided to put this knowledge to use. They will engage in work-in-group assignments and small discussions concerning the readings. The seminars will also offer students a chance to practice public speaking. These seminar activities will help students to perform well at the exam.

Textbook and Materials

- Jeffrey Haynes (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2016) Chapter 3: Allen D. Hertzke, *The Catholic Church and Catholicism in global politics*; Chapter 10: John Madeley, *Religion and the State*
- Jeffrey Haynes, ‘Religion, secularization and politics. A postmodern conspectus,’ in Jeffrey Haynes (ed.) *Religion, Politics and International Relations: Selected Essays* (London: Routledge, 2011)
- Emilio Gentile, ‘Fascism as Political Religion,’ *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 25, No. 2-3 (1990), pp. 229-251
- Renato Moro, ‘Religion and Politics in the Time of Secularisation: The Sacralisation of Politics and Politicisation of Religion,’ *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2005), pp. 71–86
- Elisabeth Erin Williams, ‘Liberation Theology and Its Role in Latin America,’ *Monitor: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2000)
- Agostino Giovagnoli, ‘Karol Wojtyla and the end of the Cold War: Vatican Ostpolitik and Pope John Paul II,’ in Silvio Pons and Federico Romero (eds.) *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War: Issues, Interpretations, Periodizations* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), pp. 82-89
- Staf Hellemans, ‘From ‘Catholicism Against Modernity’ to the Problematic ‘Modernity of Catholicism,’ *Ethical Perspectives*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2001), pp. 117-127.
- Olivier Roy, *Is Europe Christian?* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2019) Chapter 7: Identity and Values: Europe and the Other

Additional materials will be uploaded on the teachingplatform in due time ahead of class.

Assessment

Attending students

Notice that attendance is expected from the very first lesson and you need to attend at least 80% of the course to be considered an attending student. You are also required to complete all the elements of the assessment in the indicated time. Failing to do so might result in the necessity to take resit for the entire course (see: Full Resit section).

- Mid-Term Exam (40%): written at home group paper covering the topics examined in the General Module until then (topics 1-6). Students will ballot one question from a given list and will answer it using the knowledge acquired from the lectures, the textbooks, and any other materials provided in class. Questions will be on broad topics and processes, not on specific events. After submitting the group paper, each group will be expected to defend their work and answer follow-up questions. The paper and the defense will result in a single grade for all group members.
- Special Module 1 Essay (20%): individual take-home paper on one of the issues covered in class.
- End-Term Exam (20% + 20%): individual oral exam covering the remaining part of the General Module (topics 7-8) and the Special Module 2. Students will answer two questions: one question from a given list for the General Module (topics 7-8) and one question from the list provided during the Special Module 2 “Religion(s) and International Politics: A Historical Approach”. Students will answer them using the knowledge acquired from the lectures, the textbooks, and any other materials provided in class. Questions will be on broad topics and processes, not on specific events.

Non-Attending students

Attending less than 80% of the classes or not participating in the Mid-Term exam implies becoming a non-attending student. The student who is non-attending for the Mid-Term exam becomes non-attending for the entire course. The student who has passed the Mid-Term and subsequently becomes non-attending in the following classes of the course will lose the Mid-Term grade and follow the exam rules of non-attending students

The non-attending student's exam consists of two elements which all need to be completed in the same exam round:

- Oral exam (80%) Students will individually answer three questions: two questions from the General Module (one on topics 1-6 and one on topics 7-8) and one question from the Special Module 2 “Religion(s) and International Politics: A Historical Approach”. Students will answer them using the knowledge acquired from the lectures, the textbooks, and any other materials provided in class. Questions will be on broad topics and processes, not on specific events.
- Written exam (20%) individual take-home paper on one of the issues learned during the Special Module 1.

Partial resit

Resiting parts of the assessment is allowed only for attending students for the Mid-Term Exam and the End-Term Exam; there are no second chances for the Special Module 1 Essay.

Partial resits will take place only on the second round of the summer exam session. Resiting parts of the assessment is available for:

- Attending students who failed the Mid-Term Exam or rejected the grade of the Mid-Term Exam but passed the End-Term Exam.

- Attending students who failed the End-Term exam or rejected the grade of the End-Term Exam but passed the Mid-Term Exam.

Groups that participated in the Mid-Term Exam but did not pass will be allowed to resit the exam during the second exam round, in the same format as the original (group paper + defence). However, this applies only to members of the group who are still attending students and who have successfully completed the Special Module I Essay and passed the End-Term Exam.

Full resist

Full resist has a form of the Non-Attending Students Exam. It is required for:

- Attending students who failed both the Mid-Term Exam and the End-Term Exam or refuse the grades they got at both. These students will also lose the grade of the Special Module 1 Essay.
- Students who did not participate in the Mid-Term Exam
- Students who do not submit the Special Module 1 Essay by the only deadline.

Only in case of exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness, serious illness of a parent, bereavement) could a student be excused for not participating in the Mid-Term Exam and the Special Module 1 Essay. The exceptional circumstance shall be proved by means of a written certificate provided and signed by a third person in their professional capacity and attesting the situation.

Full resist is also available in any exam round for all the students who would like to improve their grade.

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is unacceptable and may result in a Fail. The Examinations Board will be notified of all attempts at fraud or plagiarism. When fraud or plagiarism has been established, the Examination Board may impose serious sanctions.

Plagiarism entails:

- The use of quotations that are not clearly marked by quotations marks and/or the source of which is not referenced.
- The creative use of cutting and pasting or rearranging the work of another person (a text or the part of a text, whole sentences, or parts thereof, or rewritten parts of sentences), or translations of such works, from printed or internet sources.
- This is also true for copying or accepting the work of fellow students or offering one's own work to fellow students. In other words: you are never allowed to take another person's ideas and pass them off as your own.

Self-test: Ask yourself: is all of my submission written by myself? If not so, did I indicate from where I took quotes or ideas? If the answer is "no" to both questions, you are committing plagiarism.

Office hours (by appointments) and contacts:

For the General Module and all exams:

Prof. Aleksandra Komornicka: Aleksandra.Komornicka@alumni.eui.eu

For the Special Module 1 and its essay:

Prof. Lorenzo Trombetta: lorenzotrombetta@gmail.com

For the Special Module 2 and the End-Term Exam:

Prof. Jacopo Cellini: Jacopo.Cellini@eui.eu

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 lesson and you need to attend at least 80% of the course to be considered an attending student.

Description of the methods and criteria for testing learning

The examination assesses the student's overall preparation, ability to integrate the knowledge of the different parts of the program, consequentiality of reasoning, analytical ability and clarity of presentation, in accordance with the Dublin descriptors (1. knowledge and understanding; 2. applying knowledge and understanding; 3. making judgements; 4. learning skills; 5. communication skills).

The examination will be graded according to the following criteria:

Unsuitable: important deficiencies and/or inaccuracies in the knowledge and understanding of the topics; the topics are exposed in an incoherent manner and with inappropriate language.

18-20: barely sufficient knowledge and understanding of most of the topics, with some missing items; sufficient capacity for analysis; the topics are sometimes exposed in an inconsistent manner and with inappropriate/technical language;

21-23: basic knowledge and understanding of most of the topics; ability to analyze and synthesize correctly with sufficiently coherent logical argumentation, with possibly some inaccuracy in the technical language.

24-26: good knowledge and understanding of most of the topics; good analytical and synthetic skills with rigorously expressed arguments, though with possibly a few inaccuracies in the technical language.

27-29: complete knowledge and understanding of the topics; good capacity for analysis and synthesis. Arguments presented in a rigorous manner and with appropriate/technical language, with only minor inaccuracies.

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