# History of Modern Civilisation

## Prof. Elena Riva

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTOMES***

The general aim of the course is to offer students the opportunity to reflect on some of the possible interpretations of Western history in the modern age from the second half of the Fifteenth century to the revolutions of 1848.

More specifically, the course aims are:

1. Provide awareness of the methods of historical work, focusing attention on the subject-specific lexicon, on the sources and general problems of historiographic interpretation;
2. Develop a critical approach to the study of the discipline, paying attention to causal links and long-term relationships between past and present.

At the end of the course, students will:

- know and understand the fundamental issues of modern history also in an interdisciplinary key

- know and develop applied understanding skills that allow them to carry out educational and training interventions also through the awareness of the underlying historical and cultural dynamics

- be able to communicate information relating to modern history using specialised vocabulary.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The main aim of the course will be to reflect on the origin and historical development of **human rights** within the chronological framework of modern age centuries. It will try to explain how fundamental human rights are not absolute and established once and for all, but they are history-related, they arise from particular needs in a specific context, when someone struggles to assert them and when they are translated into norms and then defended, and they vary - in the norms and in fact - in the various reference countries. This reflection, however, will not only concern the “western” dimension of our tradition, but everything that the European tradition has drawn from all the cultures with which it has historically come into contact after the geographical discoveries and through colonisation and trade. The struggle for the affirmation of rights will be traced along the axis of time, but also of space. We will therefore speak of interconnected worlds and reference will be made not only to civil and political rights, linked to the achievement of freedom, but also to all those **“dignity”** **rights** which, starting from the right to life, to the rights to health, education, well-being and happiness, have marked the struggle of millions of men and women to improve their condition and that of their children over the centuries.

***READING LIST***

-R. Blackburn, *Il crogiolo americano. Schiavitù, emancipazione e diritti umani,* Turin, Einaudi, 2021;

- T.Green, *Per un pugno di conchiglie. L’Africa occidentale dall’inizio della tratta degli schiavi all’Età delle rivoluzioni,* Torino, Einaudi, 2018, da pp. 210-534.

- Materials available on Blackboard

And a textbook chosen from:

- L. Hunt, *La forza dell’empatia. Storia dei diritti dell’uomo,* Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2018.

-A. Mikhail, *L’ombra di Dio. Selīm il sultano, il suo Impero ottomano e la creazione del mondo moderno,* Turin, Einaudi, 2021

-S. Bono, *Guerre corsare nel Mediterraneo. Una storia di incursioni, arrembaggi, razzie*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2019.

-S. W. Mintz, *Storia dello zucchero. Tra politica e cultura*, Turin, Einaudi, 2020.

-J. D. Popkin, *Haiti. Storia di una rivoluzione*, Einaudi, Turin, 2020.

-E. Novi Chavarria, *Accogliere e curare. Ospedali e culture delle nazioni nella Monarchia ispanica (secc. XVI-XVII)*, Rome, Viella, 2020.

- M. Rediker, *La nave negriera*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2014.

To contextualize the issues addressed in class, students can refer to the history manuals used in secondary school or **to** **one** of the following textbooks for those who do not have any: F. Benigno, *L’età moderna,* Editori Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2005 and all other subsequent editions; A. Musi, *Un vivaio di storia. L’Europa nel mondo moderno*, Biblion, Milan, 2020.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lessons in the classroom. Sometimes lectures can be held in seminar form in co-presence with scholars or specialists on various topics through interactive teaching. The material available to the student will be optimised with the help of the Blackboard platform on the University website.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam is oral. Students can take the entire exam in the summer session or divide it into two parts with an interim test (always in the form of an oral interview) taking place in January-February during the break between the two semesters. The first interview will focus on the topics covered in class in the first semester, according to the information provided at the beginning of the course and on Blackboard. Students who pass the first part of the course will be able to complete the exam starting from the summer exam session.

The elements that will become part of the assessment will be: clarity of presentation, knowledge of the general lines of the subject, critical reflection, the ability to link general themes to the issues connected with the in-depth studies specified in the reading list.

There will be a single final mark.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course is introductory and there are no content-related prerequisites for attending it. Non-attending students will be able to agree on the contents of the interim test directly with the lecturer.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.