# History of Civilisation and European Culture

## Prof. Paolo Valvo

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to delve into the present and future problems and prospects of Europe, understood above all as a space of civilisation consolidated throughout history and still characterised today by peculiar traits. To achieve this objective, the course will start from an examination of the multiple and dramatic challenges (cultural, social, and geopolitical) that Europe and the West as a whole have had to face from the Second World War to today. Reflection on some of the main topical issues - from *cancel culture* to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, from the global Covid-19 pandemic to China's growing international protagonism - will allow us to better understand the relevance and timeliness of some distinctive aspects of European civilisation and encourage students to develop a critical awareness of their own identity and an inclusive approach towards other cultures. The contents learnt during the course will support future educators in designing effective interventions also in the field of integration and intercultural mediation.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will examine the main cultural and sociopolitical developments of the European area from the Second World War to the present day. It will particularly focus on the fundamental historical turning point of 1989, when the fall of the Berlin Wall gave birth to the idea - apparently confirmed by the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet bloc - that there were no alternatives to the definitive and irreversible worldwide establishment of a “Western model” based on liberal democracy and free market economics. The analysis of the events that in the following thirty years have challenged this vision - from the war in the former Yugoslavia to the failed democratic transition in Russia, from the problematic consolidation of the European integration process (with the birth of the EU, its progressive inclusion of ex-Soviet countries and Brexit) to the rise of the global threat of Islamist terrorism, from the 2008 financial crisis to the advent of the possible US-China bipolarism, from tensions in the Mediterranean space to the Russian invasion of Ukraine - will allow students to reflect on what the future of European civilisation and culture could be in the current scenario. Among the challenges that Europe is currently facing, particular attention will be paid to the trends of thought which more than others seem to call into question some cornerstones of the continent's historical-cultural identity (such as the protection of freedom of expression and the promotion of the democratic method), from the Anglo-Saxon *cancel culture* to the periodic re-emergence of authoritarian and technocratic temptations, recently favoured also by the pandemic.

***READING LIST***

Students are required to study the following volume:

E. Capozzi, *Storia del mondo post-occidentale. Cosa resta dell’età globale?*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2023

and one essay of their choice from the following:

S. Belardinelli, *L’ordine di Babele. Le culture tra pluralismo e identità*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2018

D. de Rougemont, *Vita o morte dell’Europa*, Edizioni di Comunità, Rome, 2019

A. Dell’Asta, *La “Pace russa”. La teologia politica di Putin*, Scholè, Brescia, 2023

A. Finkielkraut, *L’identità infelice*, Guanda, Parma, 2015

E. Ivetic, *Est/Ovest. Il confine dentro l’Europa*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2022

F. Magni, *La libertà di espressione nelle Università tra USA ed Europa. Una prospettiva pedagogica*, Studium, Rome, 2022

E. Mazzarella, *Europa, cristianesimo, geopolitica. Il ruolo geopolitico dello “spazio” cristiano*, Mimesis, Sesto San Giovani, 2022

A. Panebianco - S. Belardinelli, *All’alba di un nuovo mondo*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2019

F. Rampini, *Fermare Pechino. Capire la Cina per salvare l’Occidente*, Mondadori, Milan, 2021

J. Ratzinger Benedetto XVI, *La vera Europa. Identità e missione*, Introduzione di Papa Francesco, Cantagalli, Siena, 2021

P. Rumiz, *Il filo infinito. Viaggio alle radici d’Europa*, Feltrinelli, Milan, 2019

A. Schiavone, *L’Occidente e la nascita di una civiltà planetaria*, il Mulino, Bologna 2022

Some information to facilitate the choice between the volumes will be provided by the teacher in class. Students may choose to present one of the essays of their choice in the classroom (even in small groups, depending on the volume in question) at the end of the course, as part of the exam; for obvious educational reasons it will not be possible to organise more than one presentation for each volume.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Classroom lessons. Teaching will encourage the active participation of students, who will be invited to reflect critically on topical issues starting from the contents learnt during the course. The lessons will be supplemented by iconographic, textual and audiovisual documentation.

Both the video recordings of the lessons and the materials used in the classroom will be made available weekly on the Blackboard platform.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam is oral. The assessment will take into account the mastery and critical reworking of the contents learnt during the course, as well as the clarity of presentation and the ability to adequately motivate the statements and analyses developed during the exam.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no content-related prerequisites for attending the course.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at <https://docenti.unicatt.it/ppd2/it/docenti/27954/paolo-antonio-benedetto-valvo/profilo> or on the Faculty notice board.