# Regional Studies

## Prof. Andrea Plebani; Prof. Aldo Pigoli; Prof. Marco Valigi; Prof. Elisa Giunipero

Module: *History of Contemporary Africa* (Prof. Aldo Pigoli)

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

The course aims to explore and outline the main historical trends of the African continent from the second half of the 1800s to recent and current developments.

After reviewing the colonisation process of the African continent - identifying and describing its main characteristics and dynamics - the course will focus on the process of decolonisation and the political-institutional impact of the Cold War on the African political and institutional context; next, the course will cover the political, economic and security-related development of the continent from the 1990s, exploring the political and military crises of the last three decades, the developments of the process of political and economic integration and the international relations of the African States.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

* understand the main political, economic, and social dynamics that characterised African states from their independence to the present day;
* recognise the most important factors lying at the basis of positive and negative outcomes in the trajectories for the development of African states;
* identify the main national and regional differences between African states in terms of political and social development and economic growth;
* estimate the importance of international relations in the trajectories for the development of African states.

***COURSE CONTENT***

– The African context prior to European colonisation: general outline.

– The colonisation of the African continent: main characteristics, figures and dynamics.

– The process of de-colonisation

– The construction of a national state.

– The impact of the bi-polar conflict on the African continent.

– African continent during the post-bipolar era.

– Economic, political and social development of the African continent during the twenty-first century.

– Continental and regional integration processes in Africa.

– The international relations of African states.

– Case studies and further analysis.

***READING LIST***

The reading list will be provided at the beginning of the course and made available on Blackboard.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures, practical classes, themed seminars and testimonies.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Oral assessment. Students will be tested on their knowledge and understanding of the subject, with a focus on the political, economic, and social aspects of the current African context, and the international relations of African states.

The assessment will be structured as follows: three (3) questions. In order to pass the exam, students must give a correct answer to at least two of the three questions.

Students attending at least 70% of the classes, will have the possibility to write an assignment on a topic of their choice (that must be approved by the lecturer); this will replace one of the three questions of the final assessment.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

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.

Module: *History of Islamic Asia* (Prof. Andrea Plebani)

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

The course aims to introduce and analyse the main historical and political dynamics of Muslim-majority countries in the Asian continent, with specific reference to the so-called Greater Middle East. There will be a particular focus on: (a) analysing ethno-cultural and religious features; (b) the main geopolitical dynamics involving the countries in question; (c) deconstructing the main processes of transformation and development of political culture and of the relationship between politics and religion in the Islamic Asian area.

1. *Knowledge and understanding*

By the end of the course, students will have keen awareness of the ethno-cultural and religious features of the Middle East in its broader sense, having acquired specific knowledge of the historical-political profiles of a number of case studies examined individually on the course. Students will also have developed specific and critical knowledge of the processes of transformation and development that have marked the history of the countries in question, including most recent developments.

2. *Ability to apply knowledge*

Students will be able to: 1) construct critical analyses on the scope and impact of the current phenomena of transformation in the areas under examination, by preparing independent evaluations from both a long- and short-term perspective; 2) provide an updated and structured framework for the main political and geopolitical issues influencing the transformation and evolution of the Greater Middle Eastern region; 3) use current media as well as journalistic and multimedia material in a critical way.

3. *Critical analysis and communication skills*

Students will be able to: 1) independently develop hypotheses and well-reasoned analytical pathways on the subject of Islamic Asia, having learned the appropriate methods; 2) use appropriate specialist terminology for studying this region; 3) conduct well-reasoned discussions based on the critical analysis of available sources and data.

Students will be supported in developing their learning and communication skills through the use of PowerPoint presentations, targeted lectures and multimedia resources, available on the course's Blackboard page, and always available to those unable to attend. They will also develop these skills by participating in classroom discussions, the purpose of which is to verify students’ understanding of the topics covered and update their knowledge on the dynamics under way during the course.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Reflecting the expected learning outcomes and objectives, the course is composed of two modules.

The first module offers a broad overview of the contemporary history of the main countries of Greater Middle East.

i. *Module 1 syllabus:*

1. The Greater Middle East today: The transformation of Middle Eastern political spaces between the end of the nineteenth century and WW2;
2. Nationalism, independence, development and decolonisation;
3. The Cold War in the region;
4. The post-Cold War Middle East: from the hopes of the 1990s to the Arab uprisings;
5. Current geopolitical dynamics in the context of the Greater Middle East.

Module 2 is dedicated to analysing specific topics. The aim of this module is to stimulate more detailed knowledge of the history of the Greater Middle East by establishing specific and critical analytical pathways on specific issues.

ii. *Module 2 syllabus and possible detailed studies:*

1. The challenge posed by the phenomenon of Jihad and its complex nature;
2. Post-Saddam Hussein Iraq;
3. Iran on the regional and international stage;
4. The Syrian crisis.

***READING LIST***

In addition to the general part of module 1, students should choose one of the geographical and/or theme-based studies listed in this section. The final list of studies and the updated reading list will be published on Blackboard halfway through the course.

**Module 1:**

1. Course slides and materials uploaded onto the Blackboard page.
2. M. Campanini, *Storia del Medio Oriente contemporaneo,* Il Mulino, Bologna, latest edition.

**Module 2:**

1. Course slides and materials uploaded onto the Blackboard page.
2. *Any one of the following studies* **(the reading list will be communicated during the course**):
3. *The challenge posed by the phenomenon of Jihad and its complex nature.*
4. *Post-Saddam Hussein Iraq*
5. *Iran on the regional and international stage*
6. *The Syrian crisis*

Course slides and specialist studies on geographical areas or specific themes will be made available on the course Blackboard page.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures, testimonies and topic-based seminars.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam is designed to assess students’ ability to critically analyse course content and interpret and debate knowledge acquired, whilst referring to theory as well as case studies. The objective is to evaluate knowledge acquired through discussion of the main historical topics examined, and to assess the ability to make multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary links on a historical, political and socio-economic level. The exam will be marked out of 30.

The oral examination consists of four questions: three on the topics of module 1 and one on the chosen study. The four questions will have different weights: the first three will be marked from 0 (no answer) to 7 (excellent answer) and the final question from 0 (no answer) to 9 (excellent answer).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course has no prerequisites. It is advisable, where considered appropriate, to read a book introducing the Islamic world, such as: P. Branca, *I musulmani*, Il Mulino, 2000; R. Tottoli, *Introduzione all’islam*, Istituto per l’Oriente C. Nallino, 2018.

However, intellectual interest and curiosity are assumed, and students are encouraged to acquire prior knowledge of contemporary international history, by taking any of the following courses, for example: History of Civilizations and Political Cultures, History of International Relations and Contemporary History.

Attendance is strongly encouraged.

The updated syllabus, reading list and other documents will be published on the course Blackboard platform. The Blackboard platform will also be used to communicate timetable changes, exam information and more. All students (attending and non-attending, regularly enrolled students (*in corso*) and those who have not completed the exams of the year in which they are enrolled (*fuori corso*)) are invited to register on Blackboard and keep updated with its contents.

Should the Covid-19 health emergency prevent in-person teaching, distance learning alternatives will be put in place, details of which will be provided to students in good time.

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.

Module: *Russia and International Relations* (Prof. Marco Valigi)

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

The aim of the course is to analyse the development of the role of Russia in international relations since the end of the Cold War. The course will focus equally on the factors and resources that have led Russia to play a leading international role, and on the ideas and principles (sovereign democracy, network diplomacy, pragmatism, modernisation, sovereignisation) underpinning the new Russian foreign policy. Russian interaction with the outside world will be examined from a systematic, regional and internal perspective. Finally, the discussion of particular case studies will help students understand Russian external projection (the positioning of Russia in the so-called “near abroad”; its reaction to the Arab Spring; and, finally, Russia’s role in the Syrian war). At the end of the course, students will be able to understand, examine, and carry out a critical analysis of the main social, political, and economic factors of Russian history, and identify the elements of continuity between these factors and the structure constants of Russian politics.

***COURSE CONTENT***

5. Russia and post-Soviet space

1. Energy and armaments, or the basis of Russian power.

1. Transition from Soviet to Russia’s foreign policy and the rise of new Russia

2. Factors of strength and weakness of the new Russian external projection

3. Sovereign democracy, network and coercive democracy, pragmatism, multi-vector cooperation, modernisation

4. The geopolitics of energy

6. Russia and organisations in the post-Soviet space: GUAM, CIS, CU, CSTO, EurAsEc, SCO

7. Russia and the EU: from cooperation and modernisation partnership to tensions over Ukraine

8. The cyclic relations between Russia and the US: from the Bush era to the mistrust under Obama’s presidency

9. Russia-China relations and the competition in Central Asia

10. Russia and emerging powers: the case of Turkey

***READING LIST***

M. Valigi -G. Natalizia -C. Frappi, *Il Ritorno della Geoplitoca:* *Regioni e Instabilità dal Mar Nero al Mar Caspio*, Edizioni Epokè, Novi Ligure, 2018.

Further material (such as slides, documents, articles, reports, and papers) will be made available on the lecturer’s webpage; in addition, the lecturer will guide students in the choice of useful websites to integrate the information contained in the textbook.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course privileges an interactive way of teaching and learning. Students are encouraged to read newspapers and specialist journals regularly as well as to follow and discuss events regarding Russia’s foreign policy during classes.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of a single written test.

The test will be made up of 11 closed questions, each of which is worth three points for a total of 33, i.e. 30 with *lode*. The questions will be equal in weight and marked as follows: 0 for incorrect answers and 3 for correct answers.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no prerequisites for attending the course. However, students should ideally have a basic knowledge of international relations.

Students who have never studied international relations (e.g. students of different curricula) are supposed to inform the lecturer, and they will be provided with a list of readings on the subject.

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Module: *East Asia* (Prof. Elisa Giunipero)

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

The course provides an introduction to the history of eastern Asia’s international relations throughout the 20th century, with a particular focus on the role of China in regional and international relations throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. At the end of the course, students will be able to contextualise the history of China from the Opium wars to the present day, with a focus on the relations between the countries of Eastern Asia.

***COURSE CONTENT***

– The crisis of the China-centric system and the end of the Chinese imperial system

– China and Japan in the first half of the 20th century.

– The People's Republic of China in international relations from 1949 to today.

– The concept of *Tianxia* yesterday and today

– The new Silk Road.

***READING LIST***

Students attending class on a regular basis are requested to know the topics analyzed in class and the study of the following texts:

A. Fiori, *L' Asia orientale. Dal 1945 ai giorni nostri*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2011.

Ge Zhaoguang, *What Is China? Territory, Ethnicity, Culture, and History,* Harvard University Press 2018.

In addition to the texts indicated above, non-attending students are requested to study:

R. Caroli-F. Gatti, *Storia del Giappone,* Laterza, 2017 [capitoli IX-XI]

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures. Group discussions on assigned reading and “open lectures” with contributions from experts.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The examination is carried out in oral form. It is marked out of 30 and comprises three open questions worth 10 points each. The test is designed to assess students’ knowledge of the content of the texts on the exam reading list and, for attending students, the topics covered during the course. Students will also be assessed on their critical and expressive skills. Students who are able to demonstrate a critical and organic approach to the material, using specific terminology appropriately and confidently will receive top marks.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

A basic knowledge of the physical and political geography, and the contemporary history of Eastern Asia are prerequisites for attending this course.

Additional information on the reading list will be provided in class.

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