# History of Modern Civilisation

## Prof. Elena Riva

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

The course aims 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 15th century to the revolutions in 1848.

In particular, the course aims to:

1. Inform students on the methodologies used in historical work, with a focus on its specialised terminology, and on the sources and general problems of historiographic interpretation.
2. Develop a critical approach towards the study of the discipline, focused on the causal links and the long-term relationships between the past and the present.

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

- know and understand the milestones of modern history, also from an interdisciplinary perspective;

- know and develop applied understanding skills allowing students to implement educational and training interventions, keeping in mind the underlying historical and cultural dynamics;

- communicate history-related information using an appropriate terminology.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course aims to reflect on the origins and the development, from a historical perspective, **of human rights** in the chronological framework of the centuries of the modern age. Fundamental human rights are not natural nor absolute, provided once for all, but they are historical, as they rise from specific needs, in a given context, when people fight for them and when they are translated into laws and then protected, and they vary – as laws and in practice – according to the country of reference. However, this reflection will not be focused just on the ‘Western’ dimension of our tradition, but also on everything the European tradition has mediated in all the cultures it got in touch with across history, after the geographical discoveries, colonisation, and trades. The fight for human rights will be retraced along the axis of time, but also space. Therefore, it will explore interconnected worlds and consider not only civil and political rights, linked to the achievement of freedom, but also all those **‘dignity’ rights** – the right to life, health, education, well-being, and happiness – that have marked through the centuries the fight of millions of men and women for the improvement of their personal conditions, as well as the ones of their children.

During semester 2, the topic of rights will be analysed from the point of view of gender, with a focus on the fight for women’s emancipation rights and the abolition of slavery, that followed strongly interdependent historical paths.

[In addition to the lectures, students will be invited to attend practical activities (10 hours) held by dr. Luca Ceriotti on the topic: ‘The history of feelings in modern Western society and family’ (beginning of semester 2, students will be promptly notified on the exact dates). The students attending this didactic activity will not have to study the related textbook that can be found in the reading list among the optional readings.]

***READING LIST***

-H.S:. Klein, *Il commercio atlantico degli schiavi,* Rome, Carocci, 2017;

- *Ubbidisco solo a Dio. Lettere di Angelina Grimké a Catharine Beecher*, edited by Carla Maria Gnappi, Preface by Letizia Tomassone, Afterword by Elena Riva, Florence, Nerbini, 2023.

- The teaching material that will be made available on Blackboard

and a reading of their choice among the following ones:

- 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. 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.

In order to contextualise the topics explained in class, students are invited to consult the history textbooks used at high school or **one** of the following textbooks, in case they don’t have one: F. Benigno, *L’età moderna,* Editori Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2005 and any following edition; A. Musi, *Un vivaio di storia. L’Europa nel mondo moderno*, Biblion, Milan, 2020.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures in class. Sometimes the lectures can be structured as seminars held in collaboration with subject-matter experts (academics or professionals specialised in different topics) through the use of an interactive teaching method. The teaching material for students will be optimised thanks to the support of Blackboard platform, available on UCSC website.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final assessment will consist of an oral exam. Students will be allowed to divide it into two different parts, with a first exam (always oral) taking place in January-February during the pause between the lectures of the two semesters. The first oral exam will be focused on the topics analysed in class during semester 1, according to the guidelines that will be made available at the beginning of the course on Blackboard. The students who pass the first part of the course will be allowed to complete the exam starting from the official exam dates of the summer session.

The assessment criteria will include: the clarity of the exposition, the knowledge of the main concepts of the discipline, the use of critical thinking skills, the ability to put general issues in relation with the topics related to the in-depth analyses specified in the reading list.

There will be only one final mark.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

As this is an introductory course, there are no prerequisites in terms of content. Non-attending students will have to define the content of the first exam 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.