# History and Institutions of Asia

## Prof. Riccardo Redaelli

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

Course aims: the course aims to introduce and develop the main historical and political dynamics of the continent under study, with particular attention to: (a) colonization and de-colonization processes; (b) contemporary Asian geo-political dynamics (c) to recent epistemological and methodological reflections.

The course also intends to perfect students’ knowledge of Islamic Asia, with a focus on the complex security crisis within the Great Middle East today and its geo-political and energy centrality.

Intended learning outcomes: at the end of the course, students will have acquired specialized knowledge of the main historical-political processes and of the ethno-cultural and religious specificities that have characterized and characterize the Asian macro-continent today.

More specifically:

i) Ability to apply acquired knowledge

Students will be able to: 1. formulate critical observations on the development of the political, social and cultural institutions of the countries studied and describe their fundamental articulations; 2. critically use documentary, journalistic and multimedia sources in addition to current literature and primary sources; 3. formulate a critical historical judgment on the nature and structural origins of political and social change in the Middle East, south-central Asia and in the Asia Pacific countries.

ii) Critical analysis and communication skills ability

Through the study of the general history of Asia and its various macro-regions, students will be able to improve their ability to judge and analyse contemporary events, characterized by deep and different political and security *shatterbelts* that undermine the stability of the international system .

Students’ learning skills will be stimulated through power point presentations, seminars, group work and class discussions, also aimed at verifying an effective understanding of covered topics. At the end of the course, students will also be able to look at the current Asian and Middle Eastern international context with a critical look based on a long-term vision. Finally, through the acquisition of adequate specialist terminology and essential analytical tools, students will be able to communicate in the areas of their competence both orally and in writing and to critically discuss information and analysis with specialist and non-specialist interlocutors.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Part One

– An “invented” continent: terminological and methodological consideration.

– Asia before colonization: the situation in China, India and Japan.

– De-colonization.

– Contemporary geo-political dynamics within Eastern and Southern Asia.

Part Two

– Different regions of Islamic Asia: an historical-cultural framework.

– The post bi-polar period and illusions of a new world order.

– The concepts of the Great Middle East and Expanded Mediterranean.

– The contemporary crisis period in the Middle East.

N.B.: as well as the introductory part, students must choose *one* of the following specialist subjects):

Indicatively the subjects in-depth analysis will be the following, for current a.y. (with the possibility of change depending on the international events)

– Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

– Iran.

– Iraq.

– Afghanistan.

– The concept of Orientalism.

– Jihadism.

***READING LIST***

For Module One

Lecture notes.

R.F. Betts, *La decolonizzazione,* Il Mulino, Bologna, any edition available.

R.F. Betts, *L’Alba illusoria. L’imperialismo europeo nell’Ottocento,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 1992, Part Two only, namely Chapters 4 and 5 (pdf uploaded on Blackboard platform).

F. Mazzei-G. Volpi, *L’Asia al centro,* Egea-Università Bocconi, Milano, any edition available (just a reading and understanding of the main historical and cultural dynamics of at least 6 chapters at student’s choice).

For Module Two

Lecture notes;

M. Campanini, *Storia del Medio Oriente contemporaneo,* Il Mulino, Bologna, latest edition available.

Specialist in-depth material for geographical or topic areas which will be available on the tutor’s webpage (on *Blackboard*) and *constitutes part* of the examination programme.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures. Personal accounts and topic-based seminars. Student’s presentations.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The examination is normally oral and will test students' knowledge and skills by means of different assessment methods: 1) a test of skills aimed at critically analysing course content and elaborating upon and arguing verbally about what has been learnt on the course by discussing theoretical references and case studies; 2) testing and assessing what has been learnt by discussing the main theoretical and methodological references studied on the course; 3) assessment of skills at making multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary connections from a historical, political, economic and social viewpoint; 4) assessment of expertise in taking part (with well-reasoned arguments) in methodological and scientific debate on the historical, institutional, geopolitical and geo-economic issues being studied.

The oral exam includes at least four questions on various course contents, with the possibility of further in-depth study. The final mark is out of thirty.

Attending students may also take a written exam, consisting of two tests, one interim and one final test, at the end of each of the two semesters. Both tests include three or four open-ended questions. The mark is out of thirty both the interim test and the final exam. The final mark is the average of the two marks obtained.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

There are no formal prerequisites to attend the course. However, students should have a knowledge of international contemporary history that can be obtained by attending one of the following courses: History of Political Cultures and Civilisations, History of International Relations or Contemporary History or other similar courses attended during the three-year degree.

Attendance is strongly recommended. Updated programme, reading list, instructions and other documents will be published on the Blackboard platform. The Blackboard platform will also be the tool for communicating time changes, exam information and more. All students (attending and non-attending, current and non-current) are invited to enrol in the course on Blackboard and to keep up to date.

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.