# Contemporary History (Undergraduate Degree in Political Sciences and International Relations)

## Prof. Paolo Colombo

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

Course objectives

The course aims to provide students with the key tools to analyse the changes that took place in history between the 19th-20th centuries with special reference to links between cultural phenomena, social changes, and political events.

The course also aims to provide tools useful for understanding the conditions favourable to political change and which, combined with those provided by other courses, are applicable to current events.

Expected learning outcomes:

*Knowledge and understanding:*

At the end of the course, students will have gained knowledge and competences necessary to navigate the historical development of the contemporary age and to interpret crisis and development factors, correlating them not only to specific events but also to th**e** dynamics of mentality, culture, and social discourse transformation.

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding:*

This knowledge should also facilitate students’ access to further history courses in the undergraduatedegree programme and, possibly, to the more specialised ones in the graduate degree programme. This knowledge will enable students to design research projects of higher level; it will also support any form of professional activity that involves the ability to understand the developmental dynamics of human communities, both in the more strictly political forms and in those of the broadly understood social, economic and cultural sphere.

*Autonomy of judgement, communication skills and ability to learn:*

Students will be able to manage historical information and data useful to form autonomous judgement, interpretations and associations with implications of a social, political, economic, juridical, cultural and collective psychology nature. They will be able to communicate both the information and data they have mastered along with the associated problems, to both specialists and non-specialists. They will have developed learning abilities and intellectual coordination of the topics covered in the course, enabling them to undertake further studies with a high degree of autonomy.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Part 1: *“In storms of steel”: conflicts and transformations between two centuries.*

* 19th century innovations.
* The advent of mass society and the groundings of democracy.
* The conditions for the creation of US power.
* The Italian unification.
* The cultural and political conditions of the turn of the century.
* 20th century innovations.
* Totalitarianism.
* The Second World War.

Part 2: *“Lights and shadows of the First Republic”: transformations in the Italian political system*

– The Atomic Age.

– The Cold War.

– From the post-war years to the economic boom: social changes and cultural innovations.

– The innovations of the 60s

– Youth protest movements.

– The age of terrorism.

* The 80’s, “Tangentopoli” and the shoft from the “First” to the “Second” Republic.

– The new structures after the fall of the ‘Iron Curtain’

***READING LIST***

In addition to lecture notes, exam preparation requires the following:

– To revise the basics of Contemporary History (the 19th and 20th centuries), the following text is advised:

G. Sabbatucci-V. Vidotto, *Il mondo contemporaneo,* Laterza, Rome-Bari (latest edition)

– To reinforce one’s knowledge of the basic History of Republican Italy, the following text is advised:

G. Vecchio-P. Trionfini, *Storia dell’Italia repubblicana (1946-2018),* Monduzzi, Bologna (latest edition).

**Lesson notes strongly support the readings listed above** and also exonerate attending students from studying one of the five texts below,which is compulsory for non-attending students:

J. Smith, *La Guerra Fredda: 1945-1991,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2000

T.G. Fraser*, Il conflitto arabo-israeliano*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2009

M.K. Hall, *La guerra del Vietnam,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2011

P. Colombo, *History telling. Esperimenti di storia narrata* Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2020

P. Colombo-G. Lanotte, *Azzurri. Storie della nazionale e identità italiana*, UTET, Turin, 2021

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will mainly be taught – with no obstructing conditions – through lectures with frequent support from slides; experts will give talks on special topics and cycles of practical exercises will be carried out. Depending on the number of students attending, there may be individual or group research projects. Further support materials may be made available on the course Blackboard page.

In addition to lectures, a cycle of practical exercises will be carried out – generally during the second semester - aimed at deepening a specific case study.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

*Assessment method:*

Students’ learning outcomes are assessed in an oral exam. The oral test may be preceded by a written test immediately preceding, consisting of closed questions (multiple choice). In this case, access to the oral exam will depend on passing the preliminary written test. All the information about it will be communicated in time through the Blackboard and web pages of the teacher.

Only *attending* students may take a written test at the end of the course, aimed at assessing the knowledge they acquired during the year.

*Assessment criteria:*

Questions will be aimed at ascertaining the candidates’ ability to express themselves dialectically, with accuracy and relevance, as well as their ability to demonstrate mastery of the chronological sequence of events. The evaluation will take into consideration the pertinence of answers, appropriate use of specific terminology, reasoning and coherent structuring of argumentation, as well as students’ ability to identify conceptual links and unresolved issues.

Students will be examined - with no obstructing conditions - by a Commission whose President is the Professor holding the chair. The mark is out of 30. A passing mark is equal to or above 18/30. The maximum mark is 30/30. The Commission may decide to award deserving students with a *‘cum laude’*.

Further information or clarifications in this regard will be provided by the lecturer during the course, and the answers to the most frequently asked questions are available in the ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ (FAQ) section on the lecturer’s webpage.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Notes:*

Although not mandatory, attendance is strongly recommended.

Material useful for attending the course and preparing for the exam will be made available online on the Blackboard page of the course.

Erasmus students who need specific clarifications, after having previously consulted with the Faculty representatives for the Erasmus project, can contact the lecturer by sending a specific email clarifying the nature of their requests.

*Prerequisites:*

The course requires a basic preparation on the essential features of 19th-20th century history (as provided by a course of upper secondary studies) together with students’ ability to chronologically navigate among the main political events.

Students are also expected to demonstrate curiosity and intellectual interest in the most recent historical and political events that are the core of this discipline. Therefore, students should, on one hand, behave proactively (strongly recommended) in order to bridge any past gaps in course attendance or thanks to individual study and, on the other hand, to consolidate their own preparation throughout the academic year.

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.