# Contemporary History

## Prof. Valentina Giorgia Maria Villa

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

The course aims to provide a comprehensive review of contemporary history, exploring the mayor changes happened between the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 21st century. The course investigates the political, economic and cultural aspects of the events; a specific attention will be devoted to analyse social phenomena and their impact on historical transformations.

At the end of the course students are expected to acquire a solid understanding of the evolution of global contemporary history; they should be able to orient themselves in the historical developments and to explain the main issues of the period.

At the end of the course students will be able to apply their historical knowledge to put current events in their appropriate historical context.

***COURSE CONTENT***

First Module: Towards The End Of The 19th Century

1. From the Second French Empire to the Third French Republic
2. Italy: The Independence Wars and the unification
3. The American Civil War
4. The birth of the German Empire
5. The advent of the mass society and the end of century’s crisis

Second Module: The ‘Short 20th Century’

1. The First World War and its consequences
2. Italy: the Fascist age
3. From the Weimar Republic to the Third Reich
4. The Second World War
5. The Cold War and the post-war transformations

Third Module: The Turn of the Millennium

1. Italy: from the economic miracle to the advent of Berlusconi
2. The fall of the Soviet Union and the breakup of Eastern Europe
3. British colonial legacy and the future of India
4. China since the civil war
5. Africa: the forgotten continent

***READING LIST***

The reading list of the course consists of the slides of the lessons, the students’ personal notes taken in class and the following textbook:

N. Lowe, *Mastering Modern World History,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2013 (chapters indicated in class).

Additional didactic material will be assigned during the lessons and the specific reading list will be available on Blackboard.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be taught mainly through traditional lectures; slides and audio-visual sources are considered an essential part of the lessons and will be used extensively. Active participation is strongly encouraged: students are expected to join constructively with comments and questions.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The students’ learning outcomes are assessed through a written exam held during the official *Appelli*, starting from June 2024. Otherwise, students can take two intermediate exams at the end of each semester (i.e. January 2024 and May 2024), weighting respectively 50% of the final grade.

The exam includes different kind of questions (i.e. open questions, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, true/false) and aims to evaluate the students’ understanding of the main issues of contemporary history, as well as their capacity to express themselves with accuracy and appropriateness using the specific lexicon of the course.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The course requires a basic knowledge on the essential timeline of contemporary history (19th-21st century) as usually provided during secondary studies; students who believe to require additional preparation to satisfy those prerequisites are encouraged to contact the lecturer at her email address.

All the students are required to register on the Blackboard page of the course and to regularly consult the course updates.

*Office hours and contact*

The professor is always available for appointments in person or online (on Teams) after scheduling by email.

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