# -. History of Contemporary World

### Prof. Marta Busani

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

The course aims to provide students with the knowledge necessary to reconstruct the general framework of Italian and European history from the beginning of the twentieth century to the Cold War. The memory of the most enigmatic parts of contemporary history will provide historical and cultural tools that are important for developing judgment and personal responsibility. Specifically, the course aims to:

* develop a critical approach to the study of the discipline, focussed on the causal links and long-term relationships between the history of the twentieth century and the present world;
* promote awareness of the historical factors that led to the advent of totalitarianism and the crisis of democracy in Europe;

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

* know and understand the key turning points of the history of the twentieth century, from the beginning of the century to the Cold War;
* reflect on some dynamics that have marked the history of the twentieth century and which still raise crucial questions;
* develop critical understanding of human action in history, necessary to increase autonomous judgment also in relation to educational and training interventions.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will address the history of the twentieth century and in particular the contrasting development of democracy and the advent of totalitarian regimes. Starting from the avant-gardes of the beginning of the century and from the experience that millions of Europeans had in the trenches of the Great War, it will focus on the history of totalitarianism, to reflect on the nature of politics and the role of the individual and the community in the era of modernisation and of mass society. The first semester will analyse some aspects of European and Italian history that prepared totalitarianism. The second semester will focus on the political-institutional, ideological and organisational dimensions that characterise fascism and totalitarianism, regimes that have highlighted the vulnerability of liberal democracy faced with the challenge of movements that mobilise collective passions in the name of fundamentalist and intolerant ideologies. Furthermore, the problem of consensus and forms of resistance to totalitarian regimes will be examined in depth, and therefore of the relationships that they have established with civil society and citizens.

***READING LIST[[1]](#footnote-1)***

1. A. Ventrone, *Grande Guerra e Novecento. La storia che ha cambiato il mondo*, Donzelli, Rome, 2015 (pp. 3-35 e 81-212).

2. *La tentazione totalitaria. Materiali per il corso di Storia del mondo contemporaneo, Educatt, 2022*

To contextualise the topics addressed during the course, students will have to refer to the manual A. A. Banti, *L’età contemporanea. Dalla Grande Guerra a oggi*, Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2019 (chapters 1-4 and 6-10).

***TEACHING METHOD***

Classroom lectures and discussions on specific topics, integrated with the support of iconographic and audiovisual documentation. The lesson plans will be made available to students through the University's Blackboard platform.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The assessment consists of an oral exam (interview). Students will be able to divide it into two parts with an interim exam (in the form of an oral interview) which will take place during the January-February 2024 sessions. The interim exam will focus on the topics covered in the first semester (which will refer to the volume by A. Ventrone indicated in the reading list) and on the general history topics that will be specified at the beginning of the course. The timing of the interim exam will be announced on the Blackboard platform, where students can register for it. The exam will be completed starting from the summer exam sessions. There will be a single final mark resulting from the average of the score achieved in the interim exam (50%) and that obtained with the second interview (50%).

The assessment will take into account the following criteria: knowledge and critical re-elaboration of the contents studied; understanding the contextual links of events; presentation clarity and effectiveness.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Since it is an introductory course, there are no content-related prerequisites for attending it.

Information on office hours available on the teacher's personal page at <http://docenti.unicatt.it/>.

1. The textbooks indicated in the reading list can be purchased from University bookstores; they can also be purchased at other retailers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)