



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Key Issues in 20th Century History: International Order in an Age of Crises - 390703

Last update 31-08-2025

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: History

Academic year: 2026

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Eran Shlomi

Coordinator Email: eran.shlomi@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours:

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Eran Shlomi

Course/Module description:

The course will examine the central issues that shaped the 20th century through the prism of the international institutions that developed during it. We will focus on three foundational issues: the world wars, the Cold War, and decolonization, and explore how these challenges led to the creation of new institutions that have continued to shape the international arena to this day.

The course is based on critical reading of primary sources - diplomatic documents, international treaties, private letters, political speeches, and personal diaries. This approach will enable students to understand the development of ideas and institutions from the perspective of the historical actors themselves, to identify the dynamics that led to the creation of the international institutions that shape our world today, and to develop skills for critical research.

Course/Module aims:

1. Developing critical reading skills of primary sources, with emphasis on speeches, diplomatic sources, international treaties, and legal documents.
2. Examining the role of international politics in major historical issues of the twentieth century.
3. Investigating the way in which international institutions influenced the handling of historical issues and were influenced by them.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Upon completion of this course, students will develop advanced critical analysis capabilities of the central issues in European history of the twentieth century. *RetryClaude can make mistakes. Please double-check responses.*

Attendance requirements(%):

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction:

Course/Module Content:

Part A: World Wars and International Institutions

Session 1: World War I

Course introduction; liberal international ideology at the turn of the century; the

Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907: first attempts at peaceful resolution of international conflicts; the Great War and the collapse of the European imperial system; Wilson's Fourteen Points and the attempt to shape a new world order; the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

Session 2: League of Nations - Structure, Ideology and Achievements

Establishment of the League of Nations and writing of the League Covenant; structure of the League of Nations: the Assembly, the Council and the Secretariat; the attempt to create collective security and the sanctions system; economic and social achievements: the International Labour Organization, protection of minorities; the mandate system.

Session 3: The Crises of the 1930s and the Collapse of Collective Security

The Manchurian Crisis (1931): first test of collective security; the rise of Nazism and Fascism: a challenge to international ideology; the Abyssinian Crisis (1935-6) and the failure of the international system; the Munich Conference, the Évian Conference and the road to September 1939.

Session 4: World War II: Diplomacy Under Fire

The Atlantic Charter and wartime military alliances; the Yalta and Potsdam conferences.

Part B: The Cold War and the New International Order

Session 5: Establishment of the UN

The discussions at Dumbarton Oaks and the San Francisco Conference (1945) on the structure of the new institution; analysis of the UN structure, compared to the League of Nations; the Security Council as an arena of confrontation between the US and USSR; the Genocide Convention and the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (1948).

Session 6: The Security Institutions of the Cold War

Establishment of NATO (1949): renewal of the ideal of "collective security" in the Cold War context; the Warsaw Pact (1955) and consolidation of the Eastern Bloc; the Baghdad Pact, SEATO and the attempt at global institutionalization.

Session 7: Economic Institutions and European Integration

Bretton Woods (1944) and the new world economic system; the Marshall Plan (1947): integration of economic aid and institutional building; the impact of the Cold War on European integration; EFTA, EEC and other models of economic integration.

Session 8: Crisis Management in the Cold War Era

The Berlin Crises (1948-49, 1961): first tests of international institutions; the Suez Crisis (1956): the UN between the interests of old and new powers; the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962).

Part C: Decolonization in the International Arena

Session 9: The Bandung Conference and the Non-Alignment Movement

Decolonization processes of the British, Dutch and French empires; the Bandung Conference (1955); creation of the Third World voice in the international arena.

Session 10: The UN of the Third World

Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Resolution 1514): the diplomatic struggle against colonialism; the 1973 energy crisis: OPEC's embargo against the West; Israel as a target: from the "Zionism & Racism" declaration (1975) to its repeal (1991); the UN's financial crisis in the

1980s.

Session 11: End of the 20th Century and Its Legacy - Between Achievements and Contemporary Challenges

The fall of communism; the Gulf War (1991): the UN as an instrument of American military operations; the crises of the 1990s: Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia - the limits of humanitarian intervention; the Rome Statute and the establishment of the International Criminal Court (1998).

Required Reading:

.1918 נאום ארבע-עשרה הנקודות של וודרו וילסון,

.1936 נאום היילה סילאסי, קיסר אתיופיה, באספת חבר הלאומים, יוני

האמנה האטלנטית.

.1948 ההכרזה לכל באי עולם בדבר זכויות האדם,

.1947 נאום ג'ורג' מארשל באוניברסיטת הארוורד, 5 ביוני,

.1946 יונסטון צ'רצ'יל, "נאום מסך הברזל",

Belgrade Declaration of Non-Aligned Countries, 1961.

.1960 ההכרזה בדבר מתן עצמאות למדינות ועמים קולוניאליים (החלטה 1514),

Pedersen, Susan. "Back to

The League of Nations." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 112, no. 4, 2007, pp. 1091-117.

Steiner, Zara. *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History, 1933-1939.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, prologue, pp. 1-6

דובס, מייקל. שישה חודשים ב-1945: רוזוולט, סטלין, צ'רצ'יל וטרומן - ממלחמת עולם למלחמה

קרה. תל אביב: הוצאת עם עובד, 2017, הקדמה, פרק 5: "התכנית הגדולה", עמ' 91-107.

Mazower, Mark. *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, chapter 1, 28-65.

Mastny, Vojtech, and Malcolm Byrne. *A Cardboard Castle?: An inside History of the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991.* Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005, pp. 1-13.

Cromwell, William C. "The Marshall Plan, Britain and the Cold War." *Review of International Studies* 8, no. 4 (1982): 233-49. Shimazu N. "Diplomacy as Theatre: Staging the Bandung Conference of 1955." *Modern Asian Studies* 48(1), 2014: 225-52.

Fishman, J. (2011). "A Disaster of Another Kind": Zionism & Racism, Its Beginning, and the War of Delegitimization against Israel. *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 5(3), 75-92.

, הובסבאום, אריק ג'ון. עידן הקיצוניות: המאה העשרים הקצרה 1914-1991. תל-אביב: עם עובד, 1999, פרק אחרון.

Additional Reading Material:

.פנון, פרנץ. עור שחור, מסכות לבנות. תל-אביב: ספרית מעריב, 2004 (מקור מ-1952).

Bart Luttikhuis and Thijs Brocades Zaalberg (eds). Empire's Violent End: Comparing Dutch, British, and French Wars of Decolonization, 1945–1962. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2022.

Chamberlain, M. E. Decolonization: The Fall of the European Empires. Oxford, UK: Malden, MA, 1999.

Pedersen, Susan. The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Sluga, Glenda. Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

ג'אדט, טוני. אחרי המלחמה: תולדות אירופה מאז 1945. ירושלים: הוצאת ספרים ע"ש י"ל מאגנס, 2009.

שטרנהל, זאב. יסודות הפשיזם: ממד תרבותי למהפכה פוליטית. תל אביב: עם עובד, 1992.

שנהב, יהודה (עורך). קולוניאליות והמצב הפוסטקולוניאלי. ירושלים: הקיבוץ המאוחד ומכון ון ליר, 2004.

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 50 %
Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture/ Seminar / Pro-seminar / Research proposal 25 %
Active Participation / Team Assignment 25 %

Additional information: