

SA.554 (EUROPE AND EURASIA)

Courses

SA.554.100. Central Asia Practicum: The Pivot of All Eurasia. 4 Credits.

If Eurasia is the "geographical pivot of history," as Halford Mackinder proclaimed in 1904, to what extent does Central Asia constitute the axis of this super continent - the pivot of the pivot? The course examines this question through the analytical lenses of history, political economy, and geopolitics. Strategically located at the crossroads of China, Russia, India, Turkey, and Iran, the region is pulsating with great power rivalries, developmental challenges, and social tensions. Our focus will be on the external influences and domestic drivers that shape the development paths of the five states of Central Asia (CA5) "Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan" with episodic examination of neighbors in the Caucasus and Afghanistan. The region is a thriving market for hydrocarbons, minerals and agricultural products, but also a crossroads of illicit drugs, terrorist groups, and weapons. At the same time, innovative educational and civil society organizations offer hope for a new developmental path. The course examines these contradictory trajectories, their implications for regional economic and political development, and the consequences for rivalries and connectivity in Eurasia. Note: successful completion of this course fulfills the capstone requirement for second-year MAIR students. Enrollment in this class is by application, and also involves work for an external client. Click here for Capstone course application information

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.710.772[C]

SA.554.101. Europe and Islam. 4 Credits.

Introduces the complex interactions of European and Islamic civilizations from the time of the Prophet until the contemporary era. Draws heavily on the cultural, political and military aspects of early encounters between Islam and Christianity. Analyzes the contemporary presence of Islam and Muslims in Europe by focusing on France, Germany and Britain. Examines the relevance of different models of secularism and citizenship in these three countries. Also addresses Islam in the Balkans, Europe's relations with Turkey and the Middle East.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.710.956[C]

SA.554.102. Politics of Protest in Europe and Eurasia. 4 Credits.

This class provides students with an in-depth exploration of the motivations behind, strategies of, and societal changes produced by various instances of collective mobilization across Europe and Eurasia. Some of the main questions we seek to answer throughout this course are: Along what lines of grievance do social movements form? Why do people choose to participate in collective mobilization given threats of reprisal by the state apparatus? Under what conditions do protests succeed and fail? What role does violence play in these outcomes? What explains the rise of far-right movements in Europe's most democratic countries? Thinking comparatively, we consider whether conditions from particular movements be generalized to a wider universe of cases. Can studying "leaderless" anti-government protests in Turkey help us understand youth movements in Sweden? Do protest dynamics in Europe and Eurasia differ from elsewhere in the world?

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.710.707[C]

SA.554.103. Russia and the World. 4 Credits.

This course will mainly focus on contemporary Russia's foreign policies around the world. For the first part of class students will review the Cold War engagement of the Soviet Union, but the majority of the class will examine post-Soviet Russia's global foreign and securities in regions including Europe, East and South Asia, the greater Middle East (from the Eastern Mediterranean to Afghanistan), Africa, the United States, and the Arctic. Throughout students will also view these regional engagements through the prism of three schools of international relations theory: Constructivism, Liberalism, and Realism.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.710.724[C]

SA.554.104. The Balkans: From Fragmentation to What?. 4 Credits.

Explores factors at work in the cycles of conflict and outside control that mark the region. Considers the competing narratives that shape the identities and "history" of the Balkan peoples. Also looks at the problems of shifting borders and populations as well as the definition of the Balkans as a region—including exploration of why an area marginal to greater powers repeatedly draws them into dangerous involvements. The former Yugoslavia's formation and collapse is a central focus, along with the growing Albanian universe and the roles of Greece, Romania and Bulgaria.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.710.992[C]

SA.554.105. The New Turkey. 4 Credits.

The primary objective of this class is to introduce students to Turkey's rapidly evolving domestic and external environment. The first part of the course will broadly cover Turkey's domestic dynamics. After an overview of the Ottoman legacy, the course will analyze the official ideology of the republic, Kemalism, and the role of the Turkish military as the guardian of this official ideology. The course will then focus on the Kurdish question and political Islam as Turkey's two major "identity" problems. The rise of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) in the last decade and the clash between Kemalism, the Kurdish question and political Islam will be a major theme of class discussions and presentations. The second part of the course will primarily deal with Turkish foreign policy and Turkey's evolving strategic vision and culture under the leadership of AKP. Although the main emphasis will be on relations with the Middle East, Turkish Foreign policy towards the European Union and Russia will also be analyzed. The domestic determinants of Turkish foreign policy will be a particularly important theme to explore.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.710.740[C]

SA.554.106. Contemporary Germany. 4 Credits.

What is and what should Germany's international role be? Should it be more active and assertive? Or should it continue along the path of constraint that nevertheless has made it the most important country in Europe and its de facto leader? These old debates are as relevant as ever against the backdrop of Brexit, Russia's war against Ukraine, increasing EU concern about China, global economic woes, and many other challenges. Germany is also the central European player in the transatlantic relationship and exercises significant influence on the West's relations with adversaries and difficult partners. We will study Germany's tumultuous recent history; the sources of its leadership, its strengths and limits; its domestic political context; its extraordinary success as the world's third largest exporter and Eurozone leader; and its foreign and security policy with respect to NATO, the EU, Russia, China, France, Turkey, Central Europe, Israel, and, of course, the United States. We will also look ahead at how Germany's role may evolve in a changing global strategic environment.

SA.554.107. Eurasia's Transformation and the Global Implications. 4 Credits.

Eurasia, stretching from the Western Europe across Russia, Central Asia, and China to the Pacific, is by far the largest continent on earth, with a massive share of global population, economic output, and key natural resources. It has been traditionally Balkanized. Yet since the late 1970s, due to China's modernizations, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and a series of global geo-economic shocks, the nations of this Super Continent have become increasingly interactive, creating fluid new trans-regional political-economic patterns that remain remarkably unexplored. This course explores the critical junctures that made Eurasia the dynamic, growing colossus that it is becoming today, as well as the global implications, from a unique problem-oriented perspective. It looks first at the developmental and political challenges confronting China, Russia, and key European states as the Cold War waned, how the key nations coped, and how they might have evolved differently. It then considers the new challenges of the post-Cold War world, and how national and local leaders are responding today. Particular attention is given, in this problem-centric approach, to the challenges that growing Eurasian continental connectivity, epitomized in China's Belt and Road Initiative, are creating for US foreign policy and for the grand strategy of American allies in NATO, Japan, and Korea. Note: Some familiarity with Eurasian history and/or politics is recommended.

SA.554.108. Russian National Security Policy. 4 Credits.

This course examines Russian foreign and national security policy and has five goals. The first goal is to enable students to make accurate and reliable assessments of the principal actors, main drivers, and structural constraints shaping Russian foreign and national security policy. The second goal is to enable students to make accurate and reliable assessments of Russia's important relations and key issues with major powers and regions. The third goal is to enable students to determine what policy instruments and institutional mechanisms the Russian decision-makers use to defend Russia's national interests, to advance Moscow's strategic objectives, and to realize the Kremlin's policy priorities in key functional areas. The fourth goal is to enable students to evaluate the accuracy, credibility, and utility of the main Russian open sources available online in the public domain for the policy relevant research and intelligence analysis. The fifth goal is for students to develop critical thinking and writing skills so that they can produce high quality analytical products for various types of consumers, using open-source information.

SA.554.109. Russia's Post-Soviet Space. 4 Credits.

This course examines critical policy issues concerning Russian strategy in the post-Soviet space and has three main purposes. The first is to provide students with the factual and conceptual knowledge of Russian interests in and policies towards the post-Soviet states, including five Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan), three Caucasian republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia), three Baltic republics (Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia), Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus so that they can analyze numerous identity, security, energy, transportation, supply chain, and immigration challenges facing Russia in the near abroad, understand the role of religion, transnational networks, including the shrinking Russian and growing Chinese diasporas, drug cartels, human smuggling rings, and terrorist movements, in regional security, political and economic development, and understand Russia's relations with the United States, China, Turkey, Iran, and European Union in the post-Soviet space. The second purpose is for students to develop critical thinking and writing skills so that they can produce high quality analytical products for various types of consumers, using open-source information. The third purpose is to introduce the main post-Soviet open sources available online in the public domain and teach students how to evaluate their accuracy, credibility, and utility for the policy relevant research and intelligence analysis.

SA.554.110. Contemporary Transatlantic Relations. 4 Credits.

The United States and Europe share deep historical, cultural, economic, political, and security ties. Since World War II, the United States and Europe have together worked to create and preserve the international rules-based order; pursue a Europe "whole, free, and at peace"; and deepen economic ties based on free-trade principles. Despite this close cooperation, the transatlantic relationship has at times been riven by tensions over trade disputes and disagreements over issues such as burden-sharing and the 2003 Iraq war. The last decade has brought new challenges to the fore - the rise of populism and authoritarianism, Russian aggression and a rising China, and global challenges such as climate change and disinformation - complex problems that challenge entrenched assumptions in transatlantic relations and at times challenge the paradigm of transatlantic cooperation itself. The extent to which the United States and Europe face these challenges together is likely to determine, to a large extent, whether they succeed. However, maintaining and deepening cooperation will require vigilance, commitment, and creativity from current and - more importantly - future policymakers, whom this course will prepare to enter the transatlantic policy arena.

SA.554.111. Ukraine and Russia: Sovereignty Clashes with Empire. 4 Credits.

This course will examine the complex history of Russia and Ukraine starting in the 9th century and the founding of Kievan Rus. The first half of the course will cover the impact of the Mongol conquest, the subsequent rise of the Principality of Muscovy and later the Russian Empire until its collapse in 1917. The second half of the course will address the Soviet period through 1991 and the emergence of independent Russia and Ukraine through the current war. Deep knowledge of this at many times tortured history, geography, emerging nationalisms, cultures, economies, interests is essential to understanding the current conflict. Core themes for the course are contested sovereignty, imperial power, and the role of the West, including Europe and later also the United States as well.

SA.554.112. European Union Grand Strategy. 4 Credits.

In this course, we will study European Union Grand Strategy. Grand Strategy is a plan to achieve core strategic objectives such as peace, prosperity, and democracy. It represents the highest level of long-term political, diplomatic, military, and economic statecraft and sets the parameters for day-to-day policies and responses to crises and contingencies. It clarifies which threats and challenges should receive the most resources, which allies, and which international institutions are most reliable, which battles one might and perhaps should fight, and which ones to avoid at all costs. The European Union currently does not have a proper Grand Strategy. Nevertheless, in this course we think through how such an EU Grand Strategy could be designed. What is the EU's conception of world order? What does it stand for? What are possible strategic visions going forward? Who are the EU's its friends and allies in realising these visions? Who are its enemies? What resources can it mobilise to put these visions into action? This course consists of three parts. In Part I we examine the building blocks of Grand Strategy: what is it exactly? How to develop good grand strategy and how to implement it? In Part II, we look at existing strategic documents of EU member states (e.g. Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Poland). What type of key strategic challenges do they define? What strategies do they propose? Finally, in Part III, we developed jointly an EU Grand Strategy.

SA.554.113. Seminar on European Integration. 4 Credits.**SA.554.114. The EU: From Peace Project to Defense Union?. 4 Credits.**

The dual shocks of a US President questioning America's commitment as Europe and NATO's security guarantor, coupled with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, have compelled Europeans to rethink and significantly bolster their own defense capabilities. This course investigates the defense policy transformations currently ongoing in Europe and explores the role of the EU at this critical juncture: Will European nations unite to form a robust defense union, or will individual countries prioritize national approaches? Can the EU, set up as an economic "peace project", transform into a geopolitical power? And what will be NATO's role in the future of European defense? The course provides an introduction to the key actors of European defense policy, the structure of Europe's security architecture, and the conceptual and theoretical foundations of European defense policy. Students will analyze defense strategies and perspectives of specific member states such as Germany, France, and Poland, assess the repercussions of Brexit on EU defense dynamics, and address the complexities of EU partnerships with nations like the UK and Turkey. Special focus is given to the intricate relationship between the United States and the EU, examining America's role as both an enabler of European defense and inhibitor of EU defense policy. Students will also examine concepts of burden-sharing and burden-shifting, learn about the stakes involved in EU defense industrial policymaking, and contemplate the existence and implications of an EU grand strategy. Taught in a seminar format, this course encourages active participation through class discussions and engagement with guest speakers who bring real-world perspectives.

SA.554.115. Conflicts and Cultures in Contemporary Turkey. 4 Credits.

This course takes a deep dive into many of Turkey's domestic and regional conflicts to understand the issues, actors, and power dynamics at play. We focus on cases since 2002, but draw from legacies including Ottoman collapse, Turkey's Cold War experiences, impacts of military coups, and spillover effects of the first Gulf War. While we examine so-called cultural conflicts within Turkey and in foreign policy – Kurdish issues, the role of Islam in politics, gender struggles, clashes with Egypt and Israel over Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas ties – we also gain unique perspective on these issues by viewing them through a pop culture lens. We acquire new tools for studying conflicts in various forms by analyzing films, TV, music, novels, and sports, as well as academic sources. By treating pop culture as a data source, we gain access to debates we otherwise wouldn't have, especially when studying in a US institution. In addition to providing an entertaining lens for considering how actors view conflicts in and around Turkey, pop culture is also a site of struggles among rivals. Take Gulf countries' responses to Turkish support of Qatar during the Gulf Cooperation Council crisis: Saudi Arabia banned wildly popular Turkish soap operas, and UAE produced a historical drama to "counter Ottoman tyranny." Or consider the Ministry of National Defense's use of music videos to sell Turkey's naval activity in the Eastern Mediterranean and military incursions in Syria to domestic publics. Or the role Istanbul soccer fans played in sustaining the 2013 Gezi Park Protests, using their highly mobilized networks and experience in clashing with rivals in the stands to defend protesters against police crackdown. Political actors at the highest levels clearly take the power of pop culture seriously. As students seeking deeply informed, multi-faceted, policy-relevant expertise in Turkey's internal and external conflicts, we will as well.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.555.107[C]

SA.554.116. The Eastern Mediterranean in the New Strategic Context. 4 Credits.

This course on the new strategic context in the Eastern Mediterranean will cover regional and international dynamics in a rapidly changing region. In addition to Turco-Greek tensions and the relevance of recent developments such as Syria's regime change, the weakening of Russia's regional influence, and Israel's wars in Lebanon and Gaza, the course will also look at whether the European Union can play a more active role in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly in the current context where the American role in NATO is diminishing.

SA.554.117. European Political and Geoeconomic Risk. 4 Credits.

Investors have long recognized that politics matters at least as much as economic fundamentals to financial performance in many developing countries. Increasingly, they are starting to understand that it matters more than they had long thought possible in advanced industrial countries as well, including in Europe. As the relevance of political and geoeconomic factors have become more apparent to investors, so has the dearth of comprehensive and systematic tools for successfully evaluating political and geoeconomic risk. This course explores the challenges to political and economic stability in Europe, with a special focus on sovereign credit ratings, democratic backsliding, geoeconomics, economic security, and the effects of European integration on the politics and policies of individual member states. Through in-depth analysis of Europe's economic, social, cultural, and political contexts, students will gain a deeper understanding of the region's complexities, risks and opportunities from a business point of view. The course will give you both a solid theoretical foundation and practical skillset for doing effective political risk analysis.