

SA.554 (EUROPE & 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. <https://livejohnshopkins.sharepoint.com/sites/SAISInsider2/SitePages/DC-Capstones,-Professional-Skills-Courses.aspx> target=”_blank”>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: The Making (and Unmaking) of a Super Power. 4 Credits.

Far from expectations of partnership after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Russia looms large in today's international security debates as a nuclear-armed opponent of the US-led world order. The course examines how the Soviet Union acquired and lost superpower status as a backdrop to current Russian efforts to reassert global leadership. The central premise of the course is that modern Russia, to paraphrase Mark Twain, does not repeat but rhymes with the Soviet era. The content is structured chronologically, to give the main sequence of events, and thematically, to enable students to draw comparisons between the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. Themes include state capacity and institutions, economic modernization, national identity and nationalism, and national security. The content enables students to look behind the headlines to historical factors shaping the current worldview of Russian elites and society.

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 Clashed with Empire. 4 Credits.**SA.554.112. European Union Grand Strategy. 4 Credits.**