

SYLLABUS

Academic Year 2025-26

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Title: Historical Legacies and Development: Roots of Contemporary Issues

Number of Credits: 4

Type of Course: Elective course

Semester: 2nd Semester

Language: English

Instructor: Emre Amasyali

Email: eamasyali@ibeio.org

Office Hours: By appointment, Room 24.225

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the historical foundations of pressing global issues. Rather than concentrating exclusively on contemporary events, it examines the profound origins of current complexities, emphasizing the enduring connections between the past and present. The course is structured around four principal themes: colonialism and capitalism; human-environment interactions; fascism; and conflict. From these standpoints, we analyze the evolution of human interaction across borders and time. Adapting to the challenges of the digital age, the course emphasizes the critical evaluation of historical narratives. Students will acquire the skills to audit AI-generated historical text against primary evidence, distinguishing between algorithmic outputs and rigorous historiography. The course critiques Western-centric perspectives, particularly by examining the origins of fascism and its proliferation beyond Europe and by contextualizing conflicts such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict within broader historical frameworks. By engaging with diverse perspectives, students enhance their critical thinking and synthetic argumentation skills, cultivating their ability to analyze global issues with historical depth and clarity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course offers students an introduction to comparative development from a historical perspective, exploring how past events persist or diminish over time and the mechanisms that connect them to current outcomes. In addition to substantive knowledge, the course emphasizes the methodological challenges of the digital age. Students will develop the skills to critically audit AI-generated historical texts and distinguish between algorithmic outputs and rigorous professional historiography. By engaging with diverse geographic contexts and theoretical frameworks, students will enhance their ability to synthesize complex historical processes, critique Eurocentric perspectives, and construct well-supported historical arguments.

EVALUATION AND CLASS METHODOLOGY

Overview:

- Participation & Discussion Leading: 15%
- AI Historiography Audit: 40%
- Final In-Class Examination: 45%

Class Participation (15%): Attendance and active engagement are essential. To ensure high-quality debate, students will sign up in pairs to act as "Discussion Leaders" for one session. Leaders are not expected to deliver a formal presentation but must be prepared to open the session with a brief synthesis of the readings (5 minutes) and three questions to kickstart the debate. This role is graded on a Pass/Fail basis as part of your participation score.

AI Historiography Audit (40%). Due April 8th via email (eamasyali@ibei.org). This assignment treats generative AI as an object of critical analysis rather than a prohibited tool. Students will generate historical text using a Large Language Model, then audit it using the standards of professional historiography and course readings. The exercise develops the ability to identify bias, verify claims, and recognize what constitutes rigorous historical argument.

- *Step 1: Generate AI Text.* Students will prompt an AI system (ChatGPT, Claude, or similar) to write a 1,000-word historical essay on specific course topic (options provided in class). Students must save the exact prompt used and the full AI output.
- *Step 2: Conduct the Audit.* Students will annotate the AI-generated text (using Track Changes or margin comments) to identify three types of problems: (1) Factual Hallucinations and Verification Failures: Check every claim. Flag invented quotes, misattributed sources, or timeline errors. (2) Interpretive Bias and Framing: Analyze language choices. For example, does the text use passive voice to obscure agency in violence? Does it reproduce Eurocentric framings that contradict course readings? Does it flatten complex causality into inevitability? (3) Theoretical Superficiality: Does the AI engage with concepts like path dependence or critical junctures? Does it provide functionalist explanations without addressing power dynamics?
- *Step 3: Write the Critique and Correction.* Students will submit a 2,000-word analytical essay that presents findings from the audit organized by the three categories above, uses a minimum of 5 course readings to demonstrate what rigorous historical analysis requires, and rewrites one 150-word section of the AI text to show what a properly sourced, theoretically informed treatment would look like.
- The final submission should include the original AI prompt and output, the annotated AI text, and the 1,500-word critique essay.
- *Grading criteria:* Identification of structural biases (40%), Engagement with course readings (40%), Quality of rewritten section (20%).

Final In-Class Examination (45%) Date: Official Exam Period (May 26–29, 2026). To consolidate knowledge of the course's four pillars (Colonialism, Environment, Fascism, Conflict), students will sit for a 2-hour in-class essay examination.

- **Format:** Students will write two essays. You will be provided with a Study Guide in Session 12 containing six potential essay prompts; two of these prompts will appear verbatim on the final exam.
- **Evaluation:** Successful essays will demonstrate a command of the required readings, the ability to connect historical legacies to contemporary issues, and clarity of argument.
- **Logistics:** This is a "blue book" exam (handwritten). No notes, texts, or digital tools are permitted during the session.

Policy on Artificial Intelligence. AI may be used for brainstorming initial ideas, locating preliminary bibliography leads (which must be independently verified), or copy-editing drafts for grammar and clarity. Transparency is essential: if AI is used for permitted purposes, students must include a brief "AI Use Statement" noting what tool was used and for what purpose. AI may not be used to generate thesis statements, write body paragraphs, conduct analysis, or produce citations (except in Step 1 of the AI Historiography Audit assignment). Any source suggested by AI must be independently verified and the inclusion of hallucinated citations constitutes academic misconduct. All work submitted must be the student's own. The topic pitch and version history requirements allow verification of authorship and intellectual development.

Late Submissions. Assignments submitted after the deadline will incur a penalty of 0.5 points per day of delay (deducted from the grade for each 24-hour period from the submission deadline).

LECTURES AND READINGS

Session 1 (January 28): Historical process, temporality, and causation

This session introduces the course and reviews expectations and the syllabus. It provides a general overview of historical analysis in the social sciences, focusing on the central question: how can we argue that the past shapes the future? Particular attention will be given to the treatment of time and causation in historical inquiry.

Required Readings:

- Mahoney, J., & Schensul, D. (2006). Historical context and path dependence. In C. Tilly & R.E. Goodin (eds.). *The Oxford handbook of contextual political analysis*, pp. 454-471. Oxford University Press.
- Pierson, P. (2003). Big, slow-moving, and invisible: Macrosocial processes in the study of comparative politics. In J. Mahoney & D. Rueschemeyer (eds.). *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, pp. 177-207. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Readings:

- Levy, J. S. (2015). Counterfactuals, causal inference, and historical analysis. *Security Studies* 24(3): 378-402.
- Aminzade, R. (1992). Historical Sociology and Time. *Sociological Methods & Research* 20(4): 456-480.
- Morck, R., & Yeung, B. (2011). Economics, history, and causation. *Business History Review* 85(1): 39-63.
- Clemens, E. S. (2007). Toward a historicized sociology: Theorizing events, processes, and emergence. *Annual Review Sociology* 33: 527-549.

Session 2 (February 4): Case Selection & Data Collection

What are the strategies of case selection in historical research? Can case selection lead to bias? What are the sources of data in historical social science? How can one assess the authenticity, credibility, and reliability of these sources?

Required Readings:

- Milligan, J. D. (1979). The Treatment of an Historical Source. *History and Theory* 18(2): 177-196.
- Goldthorpe, John. (1991). The Uses of History in Sociology: Reflections on Some Recent Tendencies. *The British Journal of Sociology* 42(2): 211-230.
- Lange, Matthew. (2013). Case Selection in Comparative-Historical Analysis. In M. Lange. *Comparative Historical Methods*, pp. 140-166. London: Sage Publications.

Recommended Readings:

- Mann, Michael. (1994). In Praise of Macro-Sociology: A Reply to Goldthorpe. *The British Journal of Sociology* 45(1): 37-54.
- Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2): 294–308.
- Presnell, Jenny L. (2007). “Historians and the Research Process”, “Evaluating Your Sources”, “The Thrill of Discovery: Primary Sources”, “History and the Internet”, in *The Information Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students*, pp. 3-18, 86-91, 92-135.

Session 3 (February 11): Comparative Methods and Historical Analysis

Having discussed case selection and data collection, this session examines the logic of comparative history and methodological strategies of historical inquiry. We explore researchers' strategies for drawing conclusions from history and debate quantitative (“Big N”) versus qualitative (“Small N”) approaches, weighing broad generalization against deep historical understanding.

Required Readings:

- Mayrl, D., & Wilson, N. H. (2020). What do historical sociologists do all day? Analytic architectures in historical sociology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 125(5), 1345-1394.
- Bennett, A., & Checkel, J. T. (2015). Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 1).

Recommended Readings:

- Mahoney, J. (2004). "Comparative-Historical Methodology." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30, 81-101.
- Lange, M. (2013). *Comparative Historical Methods*. London: Sage Publications. Chapter 5: Comparative Methods.

Session 4 (February 18): Colonialism & Capitalism: Sugar, Slavery, and Rise of Global Capitalism

This week examines the historical connections between sugar, slavery, and the rise of global capitalism, followed by the abolition of slavery alongside the emergence of industrialization.

Required Readings:

- Goodwin, C. (2010). Why Haiti is Poor? *New African*. Retrieved from <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/why+Haiti+is+poor%3A+since+the+devastating+earthquake+hit+Haiti+on+12.-a0220203800>
- Abernethy, D. B. (2000). Ceuta, Bojador, and Beyond: Europeans on the Move. In *The dynamics of global dominance: European overseas empires, 1415-1980* (pp. 3-17). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Recommended Readings:

- Mann, M. (1993). Economic and ideological power relations. In *The Sources of Social Power: Rise of Classes and Nation-States* (pp. 23-43). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bayly, C. A. (2004). Industrialization and the New City. In *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (pp. 171-198). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Campbell, J. L., & Hall, J. A. (2015). The Past. In *The World of States* (pp. 9-28). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Lange, M. (2009). *Lineages of despotism and development: British colonialism and state power*. University of Chicago Press.

Session 5 (February 25): Colonialism & Capitalism: Decolonization and the New Imperialism

We examine the repercussions of “new” imperialism and the inequalities it produced, including how drought challenged economic liberalism and intersected with global war, depression, and reactionary politics. The session also considers the complexities of decolonization, its role in destabilizing empires, and its lasting impact on global economic institutions and poverty.

Required Readings:

- Mamdani, M. (1996). Introduction: Thinking through Africa’s Impasse. In *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism* (pp. 3-34). Princeton University Press.
- Davis, M. (2002). Preface. In *Late Victorian holocausts: El Niño famines and the making of the third world* (pp. 1-16). Verso Books.

Recommended Readings:

- Kohli, A. (2020). Introduction. In *Imperialism and the Developing World: How Britain and the United States Shaped the Global Periphery* (pp. 1-18). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Abernethy, D. B. (2000). Why Did the Overseas Empires Rise, Persist, and Fall? In *The dynamics of global dominance: European overseas empires, 1415-1980* (pp. 18-42). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- McClintock, A. (1992). The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term “Post-Colonialism”. *Social Text*, 31/32, 84-98. doi:10.2307/466219
- Lüthi, B., Falk, F., & Purtschert, P. (2016). Colonialism without colonies: examining blank spaces in colonial studies. *National Identities*, 18(1), 1-9.

Session 6 (March 11): Humans & Environment: Carbon, Politics & Landscapes

We examine the historical significance of energy transitions, beginning with coal in the Industrial Revolution and extending to the geopolitical dynamics of oil empires. The session highlights how shifts in energy sources reshaped global power, influenced patterns of conflict and cooperation, and continue to shape debates on economic development and sustainability.

Required Readings:

- Osterhammel, J. (2015). Energy and Industry: Who Unbound Prometheus, When, and Where? In *The transformation of the world: A global history of the nineteenth century* (pp. 637-672). Princeton University Press.

- Santiago, M. I. (2006). The Anatomy of Progress: Changing Land Use Patterns. In *The Ecology of Oil: Environment, Labor, and the Mexican Revolution, 1900-1938* (pp. 101-122). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Readings:

- Solomon, S. (2010). *Water: The Epic Struggle for Wealth, Power, and Civilization* (pp. 96-125). Harper Collins.
- Crain, C. (2009). "There Was Blood: The Ludlow Massacre Revisited," *The New Yorker*, accessed January 28, 2024, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/01/19/there-was-blood>

Session 7 (March 18): Humans & Environment: Carbon, Politics & Landscapes

In the second part of this theme, we explore pivotal moments such as the Mexican Revolution and the rise of ARAMCO. We also analyze how energy infrastructure—particularly pipelines—intersects with regional conflicts, focusing on post-Soviet Georgia as a case of violence shaped by competing geopolitical interests.

Required Readings:

- Marriott, J. & Minio-Paluello, M. (2013). *The Oil Road: Journeys from the Caspian Sea to the City of London* (pp. 159-166). London: Verso.
- Mitchell, T. (2011). *Machines of Democracy*. In *Carbon democracy: political power in the age of oil* (pp. 12-42). London: Verso.

Recommended Readings:

- Bergesen, A. J. (2013). The New Surgical Colonialism China, Africa, and Oil. In G. Steinmetz (Ed.), *Sociology and Empire* (pp. 300-318). Duke University Press. doi:10.1515/9780822395409-011

Session 8 (March 25): Fascism in Historical Perspective: Origins, Definitions, and Historical Development

This session analyzes the rise of fascism as a global response to the political, economic, and social crises of the early 20th century. We explore its core ideological pillars—authoritarian nationalism, anti-communism, and militarism—and trace its development across Italy, Germany, Spain, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Particular emphasis is placed on fascism's transnational dimensions, challenging Eurocentric perspectives and underscoring its global impact.

Required Readings:

- Mann, M. (2004). *Fascists*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1: A Sociology of Fascist Movements (pp. 1-30)
- Finchelstein, F. (2019). *From Fascism to Populism in History*. University of California Press. Introduction: Thinking Fascism and Populism in Terms of the Past (1-30).

Recommended Readings:

- Eley, G. (2021). *What is Fascism and Where Does it Come From?*. *History Workshop Journal* (pp. 1-28)

- Payne, S.G. (1995). *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*. University of Wisconsin Press. Selected pages on ideological foundations.

Session 9 (April 8): Fascism, Populism, and Post-Fascism in Contemporary Perspective

This session examines how fascist legacies shaped postwar populism and the evolution of contemporary far-right movements. We analyze how tactics such as propaganda, exclusionary nationalism, and demonization were adapted by post-1945 populist regimes, particularly in Latin America. The discussion also addresses “post-fascism,” where far-right movements retain fascist elements within electoral democracies, and “wannabe fascism,” where leaders such as Trump, Bolsonaro, and Modi adopt fascist styles without fully dismantling democratic institutions.

Required Readings:

- Finchelstein, F. (2024). *The Wannabe Fascists: A Guide to Understanding the Greatest Threat to Democracy*. University of California Press. Introduction (pp. 1-21)
- Keim, W. (2021). *Post-Fascists: Putting the So-Called “Populist Right” into Historical Perspective*. *Journal of Historical Sociology* (pp. 1-20)

Recommended Readings:

- Traverso, E. (2019). *The New Faces of Fascism: Populism and the Far Right*. Verso.
- Mudde, C. (2019). *The Far Right Today*. Polity Press. Selected chapters
- Finchelstein, F. (2024). *The Wannabe Fascists*. University of California Press. Chapter 1: Violence and the Militarization of Politics (pp. 22-55).

Session 10 (April 15): Conflict – Palestine-Israeli Conflict

This session explores the interplay of racism, Zionism, and the Great War (1897–1917) and their influence on the historical trajectory of Palestine. It then examines Palestine under the British Mandate (1917–1937), analyzing how colonial rule, nationalism, and resistance shaped the region’s socio-political landscape.

Required Readings:

- Khalidi, R. (2020). First Declaration of War, 1917-1939. In *The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017* (pp. 21-56). Henry Holt and Company
- Shafir, G. (1996). Introduction. In *Land, labor, and the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 1882-1914*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press.

Recommended Readings:

- Kark, R. (1984). Changing patterns of landownership in nineteenth-century Palestine: The European influence. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 10(4), 357-384. doi:10.1016/0305-7488(84)90069-0
- Oke, M. K. (1982). The Ottoman Empire, Zionism, and the Question of Palestine (1880-1908). *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 14(3), 329-341. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/163676>
- Pappé, I. (2007). The Drive for an Exclusively Jewish State. In *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (pp. 10-28). Oxford: Oneworld Publications.

Session 11 (April 29): Conflict – Palestine-Israeli Conflict

This session traces the turbulent history of Partition and Occupation (1937–1967), analyzing the political, social, and economic consequences of this period. It then examines the post-1967 era, focusing on the expansion of settlements, failed peace initiatives, and state violence, and considers their lasting impact on regional dynamics and the prospects for peace.

Required Readings:

- Isacoff, J. B. (2005). Writing the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Historical Bias and the Use of History in Political Science. *Perspectives on Politics*, 3(1), 71-88. doi:10.1017/S1537592705050061
- Pearlman, W. (2011). Roots and Rise of the Palestine Liberation Organization, 1949–1987. In *Violence, nonviolence, and the Palestinian national movement* (pp. 62-93). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Readings:

- Pappé, I. (2017). *Ten myths about Israel*. Verso Books.
- Shaw, M., & Bartov, O. (2010). The question of genocide in Palestine, 1948: an exchange between Martin Shaw and Omer Bartov. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 12(3-4), 243-259. doi:10.1080/14623528.2010.529698

Session 12 (May 6): Debates in Historical Research

This concluding session reflects on the importance of historical social science and the role of justice in historical inquiry. We ask whether shared histories can foster dialogue in deeply divided societies and review key debates and challenges shaping contemporary historical research.

Required Readings:

- Abbott, A. (1988). Transcending general linear reality. *Sociological Theory* 6(2): 169-186.
- Graeber, D. & Wengrow, D. (2021). Unfreezing the Ice Age. In Graeber, D. & Wengrow, D. *Dawn of Everything*, pp. 1-26. Allen Lane.
- Bevernage, B. (2018). Narrating Pasts for Peace A Critical Analysis of Some Recent Initiatives of Historical Reconciliation through 'Historical Dialogue' and 'Shared History'. In S. Helgesson & J. Svenungsson (Eds.), 34 (pp. 70-93). Berghahn Books. doi:10.2307/j.ctvw04kkp.8

Recommended Readings:

- Nunn, Nathan. (2014). Historical Development. In P. Aghion & S. N. Durlauf (eds.). *Handbook of Economic Growth*, vol. 2, pp. 387-395. North-Holland.
- Wittenberg, J. (2015). Conceptualizing Historical Legacies. *East European Politics and Societies* 29(2): 366-378.

- Calhoun, C. (2003). Why Historical Sociology? In G. Delanty & E. F. Isin (eds.). *Handbook of Historical Sociology*, pp. 383-393. London: Sage.