

Political order(s), States and Global Affairs: history and geopolitics

PhD Course proposal

24 hour, 12 modules

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This history course aims to address the emergence, transformation, and nature of the interaction among polities from a global perspective in a **long-term, multi-secular perspective**. The perspective of the course will include elements of global history, the history of international relations, and the evolution of the World's geopolitical orders in time. A unique feature of the course will be, alongside frontal lectures by the instructors and guests, the sessions dedicated to analysing primary historical sources and materials to provide the students with some insights into "the historian's toolkit."

The course will be divided into two sections, each composed of modules.

Part 1

Introduction

The first part of the course focuses on the emergence and consolidation of the ancient and pre-modern political institutions in global human history. The course will start by examining the emergence of the first forms of hierarchies in human societies and then move on to understanding the factors underpinning the formation of the first ancient territorial states around the globe. In this section we will also analyse how scholars can make use of pre-historical records to reconstruct

quantitative aspects of ancient societies. A following section will then deal with the persistence of non-state spaces across history. We will then analyze pre-modern political and societal institutions in a global comparative perspective. We will study how global regions diverged concerning adopting the institutions at the foundation of the society (the city and the clan) and how they differently organized their political and fiscal institutions. A substantial fraction of these classes will deal with how to conduct quantitative historical research on pre-modern societies. The last topic of this part will deal with the threat of internal collapse of large states in Europe and East Asia and the different solutions adopted: the rise of constitutional states in Europe and the transformation of representation in authoritarian states in the East.

Session 1: From tribes to chiefdoms: the emergence of political hierarchy and inequality in ancient societies

Session 2: The rise of States: institutional and economic motives

Session 3: Persistence of non-states in historical perspective

Sessions 4-5 Political institutions between the Middle Ages and Renaissance in a Global Perspective

Session 6: Fiscal capacity and the dynamics of pre-modern States

Part 2

Introduction

The second part of the course includes 8 modules (18 sessions) and deals with the establishment and dynamics of World Orders in the long run. A World Order can be defined as a relatively stable (but not necessarily equal and inclusive) ranking among powers. A World Order is normally established either through coercion and violence, or through a mutual agreement on rules of behavior regulating the interaction among polities. World Orders are bounded to last normally for relatively long periods (multiple decades) but not forever. In coincidence with specific events and behaviors aiming at revise an existing World Order, conflicts – in general military hegemonic conflicts – do emerge, challenging the existing arrangements and giving room to a new kind of World Order. The main actors in the framework of World Order politics are political entities, the nature of which is changing over time, in a long run perspective, including Empires, National States and more recently supranational formal organizations originated by a mutual agreement among States.

Session 7: The Rise of the Modern State and the Balance of Power System after the Westphalia Peace

Session 8: After the Balance of Power System: ensuring precarious stability in a multipolar Europe through Concerts

Session 9: The beginning of power relations globalization. Imperial Geopolitics and Social Darwinism

Session 10: The most dangerous scenario: Multipolarity without Hegemony in the interwar Years in a Globalized World Order

Session 11: The meaning of bipolar-equilibrium between stand-offs and territorial power grabs in the Cold War

Session 12: World Orders in Time: a long-run perspective

Module 7) A Multifaceted Present and Future (1990-Today), AKA Multipolarity Reloaded

Andrea Colli

The unipolar phase of American dominance following the end of the Cold War, coincided with a long period of stability which resembled (although with many differences) the “Concert of Powers” equilibrium under the British hegemony. For nearly two decades following the fall of the Soviet Block, the World Order was stably under the US. leadership. The US. identified the existing hierarchy of powers, and the governance of international bodies and organizations, with their own interest, but also with their capacity of promoting cultural homogeneity, under the ideological umbrella of the so-called Washington Consensus. This situation of enduring stability has been challenged by the consequences of the acceleration of the second globalization processes which finally gave room to the present conjuncture in which, increasingly, “revisionist powers”, emboldened by globalization itself, are increasingly contesting the existing status quo. Ironically, this brings the level of the confrontation back to a kind of multipolar interactions among modern versions of Empires as supranational entities (The US., the European Union, China, Russia, and a number of medium-size supra-regional powers as for instance India and Iran).

Would the World Order of the near future resemble the Cold War bipolarity, the Multipolarity with (or without) hegemon of the Concerts of Europe, or will be a new kind of hierarchy, hopefully not following a new hegemonic war?

What is this telling us?

The relevance of this section lies, instead in the analysis of the relationship among changing World orders and international relations attitudes and the impact over the dynamics of global integration which have characterised the last decades, now on the verge of imploding into a deglobalized fragmentation very similar to that characterising the interwar years.

Session 1 (29)

Frontal Lecture

The International Order in the Post-Cold War Phase

Kocs, 9

Session 2 (30)

Frontal Lecture

The Geopolitics of the present

Black 2016, 9 and 10

Session 3 (31)

Seminar: The Rise and Fall of US. Unipolar Moment and its consequences.

Speaker: TBA

Module 8) Conclusion of the Course

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Session 1 (32)

Roundtable Discussion

The Historical Evolution of International Order

Kocs 2

