



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

ECTS CARD

STUDY PROGRAMME

European Interdisciplinary Studies, Natolin campus (Advanced Academic Master)

YEAR

2023-2024

COURSE TITLE

Central Asia as the EU's Wider Neighbourhood: Power, Politics, and Foreign Policy

SEMESTER

2

COURSE PROFESSOR(S)

ISAACS Rico

ACADEMIC ASSISTANT(S)

NIZOWICZ Nicolas

COURSE TYPE

Compact Seminar

MAJOR(S)

EUN

ECTS CREDITS

no ECTS

TEACHING HOURS

10

INDIVIDUAL & GROUP STUDY TIME

40

TUTORIAL(S)

COEFFICIENT

not
applicable

LANGUAGE(S)

EN

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course serves as an introduction to Central Asian politics and international relations and is divided into two halves. The first examines Central Asia's domestic post-Soviet transition and analyses the tension between tradition and modernity, the legacies of Soviet rule, the political and economic transformations in the region, nation-building and state-building challenges, clan politics and conflict and revolution. It will do this through an engagement with the scholarship central to the region including the clan vs. regional politics debate, neopatrimonialism and literature on formal/informal politics.

The second half of the course places the Central Asian states in global context. It will assess several key international challenges facing the region, the geo-strategic significance of Central Asia and the interaction between actors internal and external to the region. It will explore issues such as political Islam, energy security, human security (organised crime and migration) and the roles of Russia, US, EU and China. It will do so through the prism of international relations theory, foreign policy analysis and security studies. Importantly the module challenges participants to think critically regarding the West's existing policy and scholarly perceptions of Central Asia which has tendency to see it as an exotic region primed for danger and conflict. Participants instead will be encouraged to view the region from the perspective of the states themselves and their interests and perceptions.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate knowledge of and recognise the historical legacies which have shaped the political, economic and social development of the five Central Asian republics
2. Critically assess the multi-natured domestic challenges facing the Central Asian states including political and economic transition and state and nation-building

3. Recognise, understand and critically analyse the salient issues affecting the region which possess an international dimension such as energy, political Islam, transnational organised crime, security, regionalism and the 'New Great Game'.
4. Understand and deploy relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks and compare and evaluate their utility in the context of understanding Central Asia and appreciated the contested nature of their utility.
5. Critically engage with theories, concepts and scholarly literature related to radical Islam, energy politics, human security, regionalism and the geo-strategic competition and assess their relevance to Central Asia and its relationship with key international actors
6. Critically assess the scholarly and policy discourses related to Central Asia and reflect on their methodology and extent to which they represent the region as dangerous, obscure and insecure.

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION

The following text should be used as an introductory primer for the course:

Isaacs, R. and Marat, E. eds. (2021) Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Central Asia. New York: Routledge

TEACHING METHOD(S)

10 x 1-hour interactive workshops

ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA

The compact seminar will be assessed on a 'pass/fail' basis through:

- an online closed-book multiple-choice test (80% of the mark) at the end of the final course session - 15 minutes to answer 7 questions, and
- overall attendance (20% of the mark).

The weighted average of both assessment elements needs be equal or greater than 50% for a student to pass the compact seminar.

Each student is entitled to re-taking the test once. The re-take test would account for 80% of the mark whilst overall attendance would account for the remaining 20%.

Since compact seminars carry no ECTS credits, the final result will be present on the transcript, but will have no impact on the student's final average, nor on the overall grade, nor on attaining the diploma.

COURSE CONTENTS

10 1-hour sessions based on the following topics:

1. Framing of Central Asia in global politics. Central Asia from the point of view of classical geopolitics
2. Soviet Rule in Central Asia and the Collapse of the USSR
3. Authoritarian and Personalist leaderships in Central Asia
4. Conflict and Revolution: Kyrgyzstan's three revolutions and Kazakhstan's 'Bloody January'
5. Political Islam and Central Asia

6. The International Politics of Oil, Gas and Energy Security in Central Asia.
7. USA and Central Asia
8. The EU and Central Asia
9. China, Russia and Central Asia
10. Towards the post-post-Soviet: Russia's war in Ukraine and its effects on Central Asia

COURSE MATERIALS (readings and other learning resources/tools)

General book list and web resources are provided in the Course outline. Specific journal articles and readings will be provided closer to the course start.