



## Course information 2026-27

# IR1200 International History Since 1945

### General information

**MODULE LEVEL:** 4

**CREDIT:** 30

**NOTIONAL STUDY TIME:** 300 hours

**MODE:** Online Taught Only

### Summary

This is the level 100 course on which subsequent and more specialised courses in the area of international relations are based.

### Conditions

Please refer to the relevant programme structure in the EMFSS Programme Regulations to check:

- where this course can be placed on your degree structure; and
- details of prerequisites and corequisites for this course.

You should also refer to the Exclusions list in the EMFSS Programme Regulations to check if any exclusions apply for this course.

### Aims and objectives

The main aim of the course is to introduce students to some of the key developments in international history from 1945 to the end of the Cold War era, including differing historical interpretations and debates over major events and episodes.

By the end of the course, students will:

- have the ability to write critically and knowledgably about some of the major themes and issues in international history since 1945.
- have acquired understanding of some of the major debates and historical interpretations that have featured in areas such as the origins and conclusion of the Cold War, the role of nuclear weapons, and the formal end of European empires.

## Learning outcomes

At the end of this course and having completed the essential reading and activities, students should be able to:

- explain the development of the Cold War, including the relationships between the United States, the Soviet Union, and China.
- understand the historical processes that lay behind European decolonisation in the second half of the twentieth century.
- analyse key regional conflicts and crises in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
- appreciate the importance during the period of such phenomena as the growth of international institutions; the nuclear arms race and nuclear proliferation; and the emerging global human rights agenda.
- understand the processes that led to the end of the Cold War and debates over the kind of system that replaced it.

## Employability skills

Below are the three most relevant employability skills that students acquire by undertaking this course which can be conveyed to future prospective employers:

1. Communication
2. Decision Making
3. Complex Problem Solving

## Essential reading

Best, A., Hanhimaki, J., Maiolo, J., and Schulze, K., *International History of the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, 3rd edition (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

Crockatt, R. 1995, *Fifty Years War: the United States and the Soviet Union in world politics, 1941-1991*, New York: Routledge.

Leffler M. P. & Westad, O. A. (eds.). 2010, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume I: Origins*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leffler, M. P. & Westad, O. A. (eds.) 2010. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume II, Crises and Détente*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leffler, M. P. & Westad, O. A. (eds.) 2010 *The Cambridge History of the Cold War. Volume III: Endings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## Assessment

This course is assessed by three coursework components only. Coursework consists of two essays of 1,500 words (each worth 25% of the final mark), and one 3,000 word essay (50% of the final mark). There is no examination for this course.

## Syllabus

This course provides a wide-ranging survey of international history from 1945 to the end of the Cold War era. While attention will necessarily be given to relations between the United States, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China, the course will also explore the processes of European decolonization and the conflicts this generated; regional crises and key issues in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America; the dynamics of the nuclear arms race; the role of international institutions, including the UN system; and the increasing salience of social, environmental and human rights issues in international affairs.

Key topics to be considered include:

- The impact of the Second World War on the international system, including the formation of the UN and other multilateral institutions.
- The emergence of, and responses to, anti-colonial resistance in the post-war European empires.
- The rise of Cold War tensions in Europe.
- The Soviet Union and Communism in Eastern Europe.
- The emergence of Communist China and spread of Cold War tensions to Asia, including the Korean War.
- The development of the nuclear arms race.
- Sino-Soviet relations and ideological developments in the Communist world.
- West European recovery and integration in the 1950s and 1960s.
- The development of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- India, Pakistan, and the Superpowers.
- International aspects of the Vietnam War.
- Decolonisation in Africa, and the persistence of white rule in southern Africa.
- The United States and Latin America.
- Ostpolitik and the emergence of détente between the Superpowers.
- The social, environmental, and human rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s.