

Contemporary history

Dott. Federico Melotto

Educational objectives:

The course has two main objectives:

1. Enabling students to develop their own basic 'historical culture';
2. Provide students with the cultural tools necessary to rationalise their sense of time and space, enabling them to critically examine historical interrelationships and approach “their” contemporary world with greater awareness.

A basic but solid knowledge of contemporary history will enable students to operate with greater awareness and mastery and, above all, to contextualise political, social and cultural issues thanks to a greater understanding of general geo-historical contexts. At the end of the course, students must demonstrate that they have acquired a basic knowledge of contemporary history. They must also be able to independently engage in critical reflection on the main issues of the contemporary era and achieve a sufficient ability to communicate clearly.

Course contents:

The course aims to outline a general profile of the main events in the political and social history of the 20th and 21st centuries in order to provide students with the cultural tools for an adequate understanding of the key issues that have characterised contemporary Italian and world history. Topics covered will include:

1. The origins of contemporary Europe.
2. The origins of contemporary Italy: the Giolitti era and its inconsistencies, opportunities seized and opportunities missed.
3. The Apocalypse of Modernity: Issues and Problems Related to the First World War.
4. An impossible transition: political violence, the end of democracy and fascism.
5. The age of totalitarianism.
6. The world after the catastrophe. The difficult path to renaissance (1945-1950).
7. The golden age in the Western world, the “birth” of the Third World (1945-1975) and the great transformations beginning in the 1960s.
8. Observing and understanding the world we live in: the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.
9. The problems of the contemporary world: globalisation as a missed opportunity, new migrations, the return of nationalism, the rise of populism and the crisis of democracy.

The lessons will be lecture-based. However, there will also be in-depth thematic analysis in the form of seminars on specific types of documents.

Exams:

The examination will be oral.

Objectives: to verify adequate knowledge of contemporary history and the ability to articulate critical reasoning on its main themes.

Programme: Questions will cover the entire period covered in class (the 20th century and the early 2000s).

There are no separate examinations for non-attending students..

Bibliography:

G. Sabbatucci, V. Vidotto, *Il mondo contemporaneo*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2019, ristampa 2024 (capp. 8-31).

Lecture notes and slides.

Lalir, Lalit Mantova 30/10/2025