COMILLAS
UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA
CIHS

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: CURRENT INTERNATIONAL ISSUES FROM A SPANISH PERSPECTIVE

COURSE DATA	
Degree	Diploma in Humanities and Global Challenges
Academic Year	2026-7
Credits	6
Course type	Elective
Department	International Relations
Language of instruction	English

PROFESSOR DATA	
Name	Prof. Dr. Galyna Solovei (Term 1); Prof. Dr. Jason Xidias (Term 2)
Email	gsolovei@comillas.edu; jxidias@comillas.edu
Office hours	By appointment, in person or Zoom/Teams. Please contact me via email stating your full availability for a meeting.

DESCRIPTION

This course examines major international issues through the lens of Spain's historical experience, political development, and contemporary role in global affairs. Students will explore how Spain evolved from a global empire to a modern European democracy and influential international actor, analyzing the ways in which historical legacies continue to shape the country's foreign policy and global engagement.

The course traces Spain's transformation from the imperial era through the twenty-first century, including the Civil War, dictatorship, democratic transition, and integration into European and transatlantic institutions. Building on this historical foundation, students will gain insights into Spain's relationships with the European Union, NATO, the United Nations, Latin America, and the Mediterranean region.

Special attention is given to contemporary challenges such as nationalism, populism, terrorism, migration, historical memory, and the changing international order. Through lectures, discussions, research, and presentations, students will develop a deeper understanding of how Spain both influences and is influenced by global political, economic, and social dynamics, while gaining broader knowledge of international relations and world politics.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

MODULE 1: SPAIN AS A GLOBAL POWER

TOPIC 1: THE MUSLIM EXPERIENCE IN SPAIN AND THE BIRTH OF A MODERN STATE
TOPIC 2: NEW WORLDS AND HISPANIC GLOBALIZATION; THE END OF EMPIRE
TOPIC 3: THE LEGACY OF THE SPANISH EMPIRE

MODULE 2: SPAIN IN THE 20TH CENTURY

TOPIC 1: SPAIN AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR
TOPIC 2: THE SPANISH SECOND REPUBLIC
TOPIC 3: THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR
TOPIC 4: SPAIN AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR
TOPIC 5: SPAIN AND THE COLD WAR
TOPIC 6: FROM DICTATORSHIP TO DEMOCRACY
TOPIC 7: SPAIN AND HISTORICAL MEMORY
TOPIC 8: SPANISH CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

MODULE 3: SPAIN AS A GLOBAL ACTOR

TOPIC 1: SPAIN AND THE EU
TOPIC 2: SPAIN AND THE UN; SPAIN AND NATO

MODULE 4: SPAIN AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

TOPIC 1: NATIONALISMS AND POPULISMS
TOPIC 2: TERRORISM
TOPIC 3: MIGRATION

METHODOLOGY

This course titled Current International Issues from a Spanish Perspective will be taught in person. The professor will deliver a series of lectures on the key themes above. This will be enriched by student contributions (questions, commentaries, discussions, presentations) inside the classroom as well as readings, research and writing outside.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Percentage
FINAL EXAM	In-depth knowledge and application of the course topics stated under Content and Structure above.	**50%**
RESEARCH PROJECT	This will be a group project. Your professor will provide you with further details early in the semester.	**20%**

ORAL PRESENTATION	Your professor will provide you with further details early in the semester.	**15%**
ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION	Attendance and active participation.	**15%**

- Committing any serious academic misconduct, such as **plagiarism** of previously published material, or **copying** in the exam or any other graded activity, **will imply not being able to pass the course in the ordinary assessment period.**

- At the beginning of the term the professor will announce the office hours for the course. Tutorials are an important part of the development of the course; students may attend these within those office times, however they must be arranged in advance with the professor.

- To be able to take the final exam, students must not have missed **more than one third of the classes without justification**. If this requirement is not met, students will lose the right to be assessed both in the ordinary and extraordinary periods (art. 93-1 of the General Regulations). Failure to attend the first hour of a two-hour lecture means having missed the whole session in terms of attendance, regardless of whether or not the student is present the second hour.

- Students are expected to arrive to class on time and stay until the end of each session.

- Students should not speak among themselves when the professor is speaking. It disrupts teaching and learning.

- **AI USE REGULATIONS**: Detection of illegal use of AI will carry a sanction (art.168.2.e, Reglamento General de la Universidad). In group assignments, the sanction will apply to all members of the team.

STUDENT WORKLOAD		
CONTACT HOURS	OUTSIDE CLASSROOM	OVERALL
60	90	150

READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

Arteaga F., Fiott D., Simón L. The defence dilemma: can Spain ride Europe's defence revival?.

Chislett, William (2013) Spain: What Everyone Needs to Know, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Haass, Richard (2020) The World: A Brief Introduction, New York: Penguin Press.

Larres, K. & Wittlinger, R. (edit.) (2020) Understanding Global Politics, London and New York: Routledge.

Martínez Montes, Luis Francisco (2018) Spain, a Global History, Madrid: Global Square Editorial.

Magone, José María (2017) Contemporary Spanish Politics, Third Edition, London and New York: Routledge.

Malamud C., Ruiz J., Talvi E. Why does Latin America matter?. *Elcano Royal Institute*. 2023. Informe 32. URL: https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/report/elcano-report-32-why-does-latin-america-matter/.

Beneyto, José María and Pereira, Juan Carlos (dirs.) (2011) Política exterior española. Un balance de futuro, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva (2 vols.).

Balfour, Sebastian (ed.) (2005) The Politics of Contemporary Spain, London and New York: Routledge.

Magone, José María (2009) *Contemporary Spanish Politics*, London and New York: Routledge.

Oso L., López-Sala A., Muñoz-Comet J. Migration Policies, Participation and the Political Construction of Migration in Spain. *Migraciones. Publicación del Instituto Universitario de Estudios sobre Migraciones*. 2021. No. 51. P. 1–29. URL: https://doi.org/10.14422/mig.i51y2021.001.

Pereira, Juan Carlos (coord.) (2010) La política exterior de España. De 1800 hasta hoy, Barcelona: Ariel.

Powell C. International dimensions of democratisation: revisiting the Spanish case. *Elcano Royal Institute*.

Radcliff, Pamela Beth (2017) Modern Spain. 1808 to the Present, Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

Schafgans Muñoz J. The Rise of Populism in Spain. An Analysis of Hegemonic Struggles and Shifts in Power Relations. *Política. Revista de Ciencia Política*.
URL: https://revistapolitica.uchile.cl/index.php/RP/article/view/68359/71836.

Soler i Lecha E., Morillas P. MIDDLE POWER WITH MAGHREB FOCUS: A Spanish perspective on Security Policy in the Southern Neighbourhood. *Bibliothek der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*.Spain in the European Union and the European Union in Spain: Europeanisation and Domestic Change in Public Policies (1986–2021). *Europeanisation of Public Policies in Spain: Opportunities and Challenges*. 2022. P. 1–14.

The US and Cuba, 1895–98. *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century*. P. 197–222.

Tussell, Javier (2007) Spain, From Dictatorship to Democracy: 1939 to the present, Malden: Blackwell.

Xiaoyu R. The Development and Effectiveness Evaluation of Counter-Radicalization Policies in Spain. *Analecta Política*. 2024. Vol. 14, no. 26. P. 1–27.