

Online Courses Fall 2025

NOTE: Certificates marked with an asterisk*, Global Humanities, Global Studies, and Sustainability and Climate Solutions, will be open for enrollment in Fall 2025. Certificates in Democracy and Technology and Society will be introduced later. Courses will be counted towards them retroactively.

A Thousand Splendid Suns and the Contemporary Afghan Woman's Story

Lucy Ferris, Bard College and Afghan Female Student Outreach

Global Humanities certificate*

Students will read Khaled Hosseini's novel both as literary exemplar and as the subject of postcolonial critique. We will pay particular attention to the dual point of view in the novel; to Hosseini's perspective as a member of the Afghan diaspora; and to the fluid interpretations of history embedded in novels tied to controversial events. By the end, students will have written two stories of their own, one from a perspective close to their own, and one from a much different perspective.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Algorithmic Fairness

Inesa Stolper, European Humanities University

Human Rights certificate, Technology and Society* certificate

Algorithmic fairness is a field that primarily discovers causes of bias in algorithms through measurements of fairness. This interdisciplinary course examines broader intersections between the rapid developments of artificial intelligence in diverse areas of societal life and its implications for fundamental human rights. Exploring ethical dimensions in relation to AI equips students with a critical framework for addressing the complexities of AI development and its use.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Artificial Intelligence in a Human World: Skills, Ethics & Impact

Anguelina Popova, American University of Central Asia

Global Studies certificate*, Technology and Society certificate*

This course introduces modern AI systems and tools while exploring their ethical implications and societal impact. Students gain practical experience using AI technologies like Large Language Models, Generative Art tools, and AI agents, while simultaneously developing a

critical framework for understanding AI ethics, governance, and responsible use. The course combines hands-on workshops with discussions on the philosophical, social, and policy dimensions of AI in contemporary society.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Combating Violence Against Women

Jannat Kovalchuk, American University of Central Asia

Human Rights certificate

The course focuses on the key concepts of violence against women, the international and European legal framework, case law governing the prevention and protection of women and girls from violence. Course content includes domestic violence issues and criminal laws dealing with family violence, the access to justice for victims of violence, criminal justice and the judicial response in violence against women cases and support that will enable students to recognize violence against women.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Decolonizing the History of Soviet and Post-Soviet Cinema

Olga Kyrylova, Bard College

Global Humanities* certificate

This course is designed to challenge the stereotypes of Soviet and Post-Soviet eras through the lens of film revealing many unknown facts from film history and from cultural and political history, helping shape new perspectives for the global world. The students are encouraged to apply decolonial frameworks to the analysis of the Soviet and Post-Soviet national cinemas, understanding local historical contexts of Baltic, Transcaucasian, Central Asian and East Slavic regions and interrogating the silenced histories and suppressed identities. The emphasis is shifted towards multicultural identities addressed from the point of view of diversity for such Soviet celebrities as S. Eisenstein (October), D. Vertov (The Eleventh), A. Bek-Nazarian (Zangezur), J. Streičs (Strange Passions), T. Okeyev (The Skies of Our Childhood), S. Parajanov (Ashik-Kerib), G. Daneliya (Hopelessly Lost), K. Muratova (Change of Fate), and many others, along with their legacy for lesser known filmmakers currently working on the Post-Soviet space. This course does not require prior knowledge of film history or Soviet studies, nor any other prerequisites.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Democracy in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Nathaniel Matala, American University of Central Asia

Civic Engagement certificate, Democracy* certificate

AI is fundamentally transforming how democracy functions, posing urgent questions about power, governance, and the future of political institutions. In this course, we will explore the relationship between democratic ideals and AI technologies. We will consider whether AI can strengthen transparency, pluralism and civic engagement, or if it instead accelerates trends toward technocratic or even authoritarian futures.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Education for Sustainable Development

Amadeus DeKastle, American University of Central Asia

Global Education Development certificate, Sustainability and Climate Change certificate*

The UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. As educators, it is important that we are not just “aware” of these goals, but that we can integrate them into our classrooms. Why? Because for these goals to become reality by 2030, our students need to see them as something that is part of our/their lives, not just something we give lip service to in a few token lessons throughout the school year. This class will educate you on the background and importance of a selection of the goals as well as model ways to incorporate them into your classroom in conjunction with various tech tools. Although this course is aimed towards those involved in education, it can easily be taken by anyone interested in learning more about the SDGs.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Ethno-Religious Identity and Politics in the Middle East and South Asia

Karen Barkey, Bard College

Democracy certificate*

This course is designed for undergraduates. It is a comparative course intended to bridge areas and disciplines in the social sciences. It will bring expertise in sociology, political science, and history together, but beyond these fields, we also bring together different methodological approaches to the comparisons between regions and cases. Both the Middle East and South Asia are areas of democratization and conflict around issues of ethnic,

religious, and communal organization.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

European Union Law and Human Rights

Kanykei Kasybekova, American University of Central Asia

Human Rights certificate

The course will address two main themes. Firstly, students will be exposed to the functioning of the European Union and address the human rights issues as raised within the European Union. The second theme will cover the Council of Europe and European Human Rights Law, exploring the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The course introduces students to the legal system and institutions, the basic principles, and rules with a focus on human rights.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Global Climate Restoration Through Anthropology, Psychology, and Human Rights: Protocols for a Sustainable Future

Felix Kaputu, Bard College at Simon's Rock

Human Rights certificate, Sustainability and Climate Change certificate*

This interdisciplinary course examines how anthropological, psychological, and human rights frameworks tackle the global crisis of climate change. Students will explore human behavior, cultural practices, and international policies while learning to create innovative and sustainable solutions. The course offers theoretical and practical tools to analyze environmental degradation, climate justice, and restoration efforts through readings, discussions, case studies, and hands-on projects.

Prerequisites: Seminar I or Seminar II or both, or any similar experience from other institutions.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Globalization, Media and Culture

Fahmidul Haq, Bard College

Global Studies certificate*, Technology and Society certificate*

This course will discuss and analyze the complex structure and evolution of modern media systems, emphasizing their connection to globalization. Additionally, it will concentrate on examining the organization, practices, and challenges of global media and their impact on global and national cultures. Core topics include the evolving political economy of the media

and culture, with a specific focus on the recent proliferation of digital and social media.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

History of Globalisation since 1300

Victor Apryshchenko, Bard College

Global Humanities certificate*, Global Studies certificate*

This course explores the *longue durée* of globalization, tracing its contours from the Mongol Empire's vast transcontinental networks to contemporary global interconnectivity. Inspired by world-systems theory and global history approaches, we examine whether earlier forms of globalization inform the fractures and fusions of our own era. How have economic, ideological, military, and environmental forces shaped global integration and disintegration? Through a comparative study of empires — including the Persian, Ottoman, British, Russian, and Soviet — we analyze shifting dynamics between core and periphery, mechanisms of governance, legal and cultural frameworks, and the impact of gender and administration. From the Black Death's role in reshaping Eurasian exchanges to the modern resurgence of global pandemics, the course interrogates cycles of connection and rupture. The course extends into the 20th and 21st centuries, exploring the legacies of colonialism, the Cold War's ideological and economic bifurcations, the rise of transnational corporations, and the digital revolution's acceleration of global integration. We examine decolonization as both a dismantling of imperial structures and a reconfiguration of global inequalities, as well as the role of international institutions (UN, IMF, WTO) in managing globalization. Topics such as migration, climate change, populism, and the persistence of global asymmetries will be analyzed through the lens of historical patterns of power, expansion, and resistance. By integrating theories from scholars such as Immanuel Wallerstein (on world-system), Christopher Bayly (on global history), and Arjun Appadurai (on modern globalization and cultural flows), this course illuminates the long history of globalization's push and pull — unraveling forces that bind the world together and those that drive it apart.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Human Rights Defenders and Advocates

Liudmila Ulyashina, European Humanities University

Civic Engagement certificate, Human Rights certificate

The course aims to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and ethical imperatives of individuals who safeguard and advance civic space, using human rights advocacy as a central tool. The notions of “human rights defender” and

“human rights advocate” will be used as synonyms, but with a space that specifies professional groups and individuals striving to promote and protect human rights.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Introduction to Middle Eastern Cinema

Persheng Vaziri, Bard College

Global Studies certificate*

The course will introduce students to major trends and movements in the cinema of the region since the 1980s. We watch films and discuss them in light of the historical and cultural frameworks of the countries that produced them. We will also discuss production and aesthetic concepts that constitute the films.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Investment Law and Sustainable Development

Begaiym Esenkulova, American University of Central Asia

Human Rights certificate, Sustainability and Climate Change certificate*

This course is focused on legal aspects of foreign direct investment (FDI) and sustainable development. Classes are aimed at providing students with the knowledge and critical understanding of main investment law as well as sustainable development concepts and issues. Course assignments are concentrated on helping students further improve their proficiency in verbal and written communication as well as their analytical and problem-solving skills.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Mapping the World with QGIS

Viktor Lagutov, American University of Central Asia

Sustainability and Climate Change certificate*, Technology and Society certificate*

The course will introduce QGIS, the most popular open-source free GIS package, and its use for geospatial data visualization (mapping). Participants will develop basic understanding of spatially referenced data and familiarize themselves with GIS mapping principles. The online sessions followed by individual work will equip participants with both theoretical understanding and practical skills in visualizing societal and environmental phenomena.

Prerequisites: No experience in GIS is required, but basic computer skills are expected.

Credits: 2 US / 4 ECTS

Mathematics of Puzzles & Games

Lauren Rose, Bard College

Mathematics can be used to analyze many puzzles and games. Conversely, puzzles and games can be used as a vehicle to explore mathematics concepts. In this class we will develop the mathematics of puzzles and games from both perspectives, as a means to solve a puzzle or win a game, and also as a fun way to learn and develop mathematical skills. We will focus on the mathematics and the strategies behind puzzles and games such as the Rubik's Cube, SET and Quads, Nim, and Sudoku. Students seeking to take this class should be proficient in basic algebra and geometry.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Microfinance and Development

Khondker Aktaruzzaman, Parami University

Global Education Development certificate, Sustainability and Climate Change certificate*

Microfinance has been hailed as a key tool for combating poverty through loans, grants, insurance, and other financial products for the poorest worldwide. This course explores these issues, introduces microfinance principles and practices, and examines contemporary debates from a developmental standpoint. It prepares students for roles as policy analysts and advisers in banks, financial institutions, foundations, governments, multilateral organizations, and international agencies.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Philosophers and Queens: Women in the History of Political Thought

Rebecca Kingston, Bard College

Human Rights certificate

This course introduces important and diverse contributions by women to political theory. New lines of research have demonstrated the many and complex ways women have contributed to political reflection. While most of the key texts we explore come from the Western tradition, the course also includes examples of Asian contributions to this global tradition and gives an opportunity for students themselves to give a presentation on authors from their own cultural traditions.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Science Communication

Maria Avxentevskaya, Bard College Berlin

Global Humanities certificates*, Technology and Society certificates*

Making sense of scientific information has become part of daily life. News media report scientific details that require interpretation, while scientists seek to convey insights to the public and policymakers. This course explores how to foster cooperation between science and society. Students examine social and scientific issues, learn to craft science stories and podcasts in collaboration with scientists, journalists and artists, develop mini-research projects, and engage in teamwork exercises.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Screenwriting and Human Rights

Lisa Katzman, Bard College

Human Rights certificate

Human rights, and the conflicts they pose, are central to drama and cinema. Over the course of the semester, each student will write a short screenplay exploring a human rights issue of their choice. As well as learning the fundamental elements of dramatic writing, we will consider how a dramatist's point-of-view conveys both emotional and ethical concerns. Close readings of a range of films and screenplays drawn from global cinema, Hollywood movies, and American independent film.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Social Entrepreneurship

Dalia Najjar, Al-Quds Bard College

Sustainability and Climate Change* certificate

This is a collaborative, cross-institution course in social entrepreneurship, where student teams ideate and develop models for social enterprises. Social entrepreneurship is the process of building new organizations that offer scalable solutions to social and environmental challenges. Social enterprises can be either for-profit, or non-profit. The course features a global classroom, with students enrolled convening each week in a common zoom space to share ideas. Participating schools include BRAC University in Bangladesh, Al Quds University in Palestine, the American Universities of Central Asia (in Kyrgyzstan) and of Bulgaria, Universidad de Los Andes in Colombia, and Bard. Past certificate courses have incubated powerful social business ideas in Bangladesh and Palestine. The course will culminate in a

“shark tank for sustainability” among and between teams from the different universities, with winning teams then competing at the Bard MBA’s annual Disrupt to Sustain pitch competition in December. The course includes readings and discussion focused on social issues related to entrepreneurship: drivers of change, from decarbonization to AI; delinking growth from material throughput; urban-based innovation ecosystems; social obstacles to risk taking; working on multi-disciplinary teams; language, power and gender dynamics in entrepreneurship; deconstructing the archetypes of entrepreneurship. The practice of social entrepreneurship explores the full suite of liberal learning: critical analysis, persuasive writing, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, design thinking, and group social dynamics.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Storytelling With Statistics

Polina Dolmatova, American University of Central Asia

Civic Engagement certificate

The course teaches students to transform data into compelling, culturally responsive narratives. It emphasizes global learning by exploring how cultural, social, economic factors influence the framing of both local and global issues. Students develop statistical skills, intercultural competence, teamwork, learning to synthesize ideas and collaborate effectively. Topics include statistics, probability, data visualization, with a focus on ethical storytelling and its impact on diverse communities.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Student Voting: Power, Politics and Race in the Fight for American Democracy

Jonathan Becker, Bard College

Civic Engagement certificate, Human Rights certificate

The course will be a historical and interdisciplinary examination of the 26th Amendment, which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 and outlaws age discrimination, using it as a prism through which to examine both the history of disenfranchisement and the fight for voting rights in the United States. The role of college communities, particularly at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, will be the central focus. The course will connect four institutions in the US that have been the sites of voting rights struggles and major litigation via a network collaborative course (with a section held at each institution – Bard, Tuskegee, North Carolina A&T, and Prairie View A&M University). The history of the struggle at each institution will be examined, including organizing, protest, advocacy, and litigation, in order to

elucidate methods and strategies of supporting and defending basic constitutional rights and elucidating, more broadly, strategies for organizing against anti-democratic and authoritarian actions. The course is co-designed by faculty from the respective institutions and will be taught simultaneously, with key assignments shared by the campus sites with the aim of facilitating synchronous classroom discussions and collaborations between the different sites. By the end of the course students will have developed an understanding of the history of the struggle for student voting rights and the challenges to those rights that are being faced today.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Telling Stories About Rights

Thomas Bartscherer, Bard College

Human Rights certificate

What can fiction tell us about human rights? And what can we learn about fiction by focusing on themes of justice and injustice, suffering and struggle, oppression and resistance? This course will focus on a wide range of fictions, from a variety of writers with different backgrounds and from different parts of the world, that tell compelling stories about individual rights and communal experiences of justice and injustice. Genres will include novels, plays, short stories, essays, and films.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

The Dictator

Zahid Rafiq, Bard College

Global Humanities certificate*, Human Rights certificate

Who is the dictator? What kind of people become dictators? Do they go to school with us? And why do some (so many) people want to be ruled by dictators? In this course we will look at literature, mostly novels and non-fiction, that engage with dictators and their power. We will see the lives and fate of these literary dictators and also enquire into the kind of societies that give rise to dictators and also into the societies that dictators end up making.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Transhumanism and the Future of Global Politics: The Digitalization of Humanity

Mirko Tasic, American University of Central Asia

Global Humanities certificate*, Technology and Society certificate*

This course offers a multidisciplinary exploration of how the drive to enhance human capabilities intersects with the evolving landscape of international relations, delving into the fundamental concepts of transhumanism through the lenses of political science, international relations, and related disciplines. We will analyze the dynamic interplay between technological advancements, specifically the digitalization of humanity, and its potential impact on and the nature of political engagement.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Universal Human Rights: Ideas and Challenges

Chiahao Hsu, National Sun Yat-sen University

Human Rights certificate

The concept of human rights is a complex and multifaceted concept that has been the subject of debate and discussion over the years. One of the key questions that arises when discussing human rights is whether they are natural and universal, or whether they are socially constructed and context-dependent. By studying the history, practice and challenges of human rights, students gain a deeper understanding of the importance of human rights in contemporary society.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Urban Politics and Governance

Bugra Güngör, American University of Central Asia

Civic Engagement certificate, Global Studies certificate*

This course provides the current debates in major issues regarding urban areas. Firstly, we will discuss the basic theories, methods, concepts and trends in urban politics. Next, we will move to intersectional accounts including the roles of ethnicities, classes, and immigrants in cities and metropolitan areas. Finally, we will unpack the three-fold relationship between politics, governance, and development in the context of urban areas relying on case studies from the Global South and North.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Women Playwrights Speak Their Truths: A Call to Activism

Aimée Michel, Bard College at Simon's Rock

Global Humanities certificates*

This course celebrates women playwrights in the US and elsewhere who often work in marginalized spaces due to the political, confrontational style and content of their writing.

Ntozake Shange quotes Frantz Fanon's "combat breath" saying she wants to "attack deform and maim the language" she was taught "to hate myself in". The writers we will read have all created their own language in order to speak their truth. Students will co-lead discussions as we read these plays aloud together.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Women Write the World

Jennifer Browdy, Simon's Rock at Bard College

Human Rights certificate, Sustainability and Climate Change certificate

This course explores women writer-activists--from different countries and cultural backgrounds, working on various global struggles for social and environmental justice, in a range of literary genres--who have melded art and politics into effective strategies of activism based on writing and creative expression. Students use analytical, research-based approaches, as well as creative approaches, in their own quest to use the power of the written word to make the world better.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS