



Summer 2026 GHEA21 Online Courses

(De)Constructing Migration: Belonging, Participation, and Boundaries

June 02, 2026 – July 24, 2026

Cagla Ekin Güner, Central European University

This course examines migration not as a static or exceptional phenomenon, but as a dynamic, relational process that reshapes societies, identities, and political boundaries across contexts and scales. It invites students from different geographical and intellectual backgrounds to critically engage with migration as both a lived experience and a field of academic inquiry. The course is divided into two interconnected parts. The first part introduces key theories, concepts, and analytical frameworks in migration studies, including transnationalism, intersectionality, political membership, and participation. Drawing on political science, sociology, urban studies, and feminist theory, students will develop a conceptual understanding of how migration intersects with power, inequality, and governance across multiple scales. The second part, Migration in Action, turns to empirical explorations of diasporas, migration governance, urban integration, and labor regimes. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to bring examples from their own local, national, or regional contexts into discussion, allowing migration to be analyzed comparatively and relationally rather than from a single geographic vantage point. By the end of the course, students will have developed a multidimensional understanding of migration, belonging, and boundary-making, as well as the analytical tools to critically assess migration-related debates in diverse political and social settings.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Clicks, Likes, Shares, Votes: Media and Democracy in the Social Media Age

June 15, 2026 – July 17, 2026

[Darina Sarelska](#), American University in Bulgaria

This course examines the complex interplay between social media and democracy, focusing on how digital platforms have become both enablers and threats to

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democratic norms. While originally championed for enabling freedom and civic activism, platforms like X/Twitter, TikTok, and Facebook are now central in discussions on disinformation, hate speech, platform capitalism, and algorithmic amplification. Students will engage critically with current research, global case studies, and interactive tools, with special focus on AI and the future of information. This course promotes both critical analysis and civic responsibility in the digital public sphere.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Ecological History of the Globe

June 13, 2026 – July 31, 2026

Saad Amira, Al-Quds Bard College

This course will focus on the history of humankind's relationship with the environment. It uses the words "environment" and "ecology" to refer to the nonhuman components of the natural world. This course situates power at the nexus between culture, politics, and ecology by exploring the interaction between different ecosystems, human cultures, and lifestyles. The course will then expand to questions of environmental conflicts, uses of natural resources, the politicization of nature and landscape, and the environmental effects of mass migrations. As a case study, this course will study ecology in Palestine using methods of ethnographic research to interrogate the situation of the "ecological" within the framework of the colonial present.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Extractive Industries Law, Environmental Protection, Climate Solutions, and Sustainability

June 01, 2026 – July 10, 2026

Begaiym Esenkulova, American University of Central Asia

This course is focused on the study of the legal framework of extractive industries, environmental protection, climate solutions, and sustainability. The extractive industries sector may have a significant sustainable development impact in natural resource-rich states. The development of this sector may bring about the much-needed economic growth and reduce poverty. However, it does not automatically lead to states' sustainable economic, social, and environmental development. Extractive industries projects may fail to contribute to economic

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prosperity, may give rise to conflicts in local communities, and affect the natural environment negatively for years to come. Therefore, it is important to adopt prudent legal measures in order to ensure that this sector advances states' sustainable development and, most importantly, does not affect their ability to protect the environment. This course is concentrated on the comparative study of the legal framework of extractive industries of various natural resource-rich states in Asia, Africa, North America, South America, and Europe. It examines the legal tools available for the advancement of sustainable economic, environmental, and social development via the extractive industries sector. In particular, students engage in the analysis of the national legislation, global agreements and standards in the extractive sector as well as extractive industries contracts. During this course, students also study how extractive industries law can advance climate action. While fossil fuels are responsible for the world's greenhouse gas emissions and need to be gradually phased out, select minerals and metals are needed for green technologies and, hence, for the green energy transition. Students examine climate solutions by exploring how extractive industries law can better serve environmental protection and sustainability.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Financing Sustainable Development

June 04, 2026 – July 09, 2026

Syed Mahfuzur Rahman, BRAC University

The United Nations International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico 2002 has become a milestone in international development cooperation in which financing the development process was discussed on a global platform. Later, attempts were made to provide a global framework for financing sustainable development in Doha in 2008 and Addis Ababa in 2015. The Addis Agenda aimed to implement the 2030 Agenda by achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over time, multiple international and intergovernmental platforms have been created to follow up and review the financing for development outcomes and the way to achieve the SDGs. Domestic public resources, private business, development cooperation, international trade, debt sustainability, systemic issues, and capacity building are the specific action areas of the Addis Agenda. There are various actors with varying levels of interest and political motivation. Academics and practitioners also differ in conceptualizing the working definition of development finance, climate finance, green finance, and/or environmental finance. Hence, this course will prepare the students with sufficient knowledge about international development and financing issues that are usually required to work in

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multilateral development banks (like ADB and AfDB), major institutional stakeholders of development finance (like World Bank and IMF), and various regional economic commissions (like ESCAP and ESCWA).

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Food Security, Nutrition & Sustainable Development

June 08, 2026 – July 06, 2026

Mairambek Nurgaziev, American University of Central Asia

This course examines food security and nutrition in the perspective of sustainable development and social stability, taking into account the role of financial markets, agri-business industries and international food, land, and commodity trading, while connecting these factors to broader global challenges such as food sovereignty, public health, economic growth, population dynamics, natural resource management, protecting ecosystems, climate change, complex emergencies, and forced migration, etc.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Global Activism Through Theater

June 15, 2026 – July 03, 2026

Aimée Michel, Simon's Rock at Bard College

Because of its visceral, communal nature, theater has always been an agent for social and political change across the globe, either directly or indirectly. In this course, we will explore how the art form of theater has been used directly, consciously, and effectively worldwide as an agent of social and political change. We will begin by studying the activist work of Peter Schumann and his Bread and Puppet Theatre, Judith Malina and Julian Beck of the Living Theatre, both in the US, and Augusto Boal and his Theatre of the Oppressed in Brazil. In the first group project, students will work together to create presentations on these theater companies, which they will present to the class. The second group project will explore theater activism in countries outside North and South America. Students will research theater companies in their own countries, exploring how these theaters influence social and political ideas and policy, and share their research in an interactive presentation with the class. Finally, students will work in groups to choose through consensus an issue that they find challenging today and will devise a theatrical way to address this issue. Each group will present/perform their theatrical activism for the class in the last week. Throughout the course of the class, students will be provided prompts based

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on the work in the class, and they will respond to them in Brightspace.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Globalization, Media and Culture

June 15, 2026 – July 22, 2026

Fahmidul Haq, Bard College

This course will analyze the complex structure and evolution of modern media systems, emphasizing their connection to globalization. It will explore the historical and multifaceted aspects of the globalization process, focusing on its economic, political, and cultural dimensions. Neoliberalism will be a consistent focal point. The course will also establish links between globalization and the emergence of new technology-based global media systems in the 1990s, exploring their interdependence. 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.

Theoretical perspectives from scholars like David Harvey, Arjun Appadurai, Naomi Klein, Joseph Stiglitz, George Ritzer, Robert W. McChesney, and Manuel Castells will be consulted throughout the classes.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Literature and Social Justice

June 01, 2026 – July 10, 2026

Charlotte Fiehn, American University of Afghanistan

What do “humanitarianism” and “human rights” have to do with the humanities? In what ways can literature contribute to a consideration of these pressing questions in the early 21st century? In a globalizing culture, our interest will be both international and domestic, looking at ways in which personal stories contribute to political histories. In focusing on topics of “social justice,” we will consider such questions as environmental justice, racial justice, women’s rights, children, immigration, and refugees. Students will generate engaged and responsive close readings of texts, describe and analyze the various ways in which texts reflect and help shape wider cultural conditions, construct clear spoken and written arguments that demonstrate an awareness of purpose and audience, and write about the relationships among literature, contemporary struggles for social justice, and social engagement. This class will involve the use of “Think Pieces” to help inform and develop our discussions

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about key texts.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Literatures of the Roma

June 01, 2026 – July 09, 2026

Anita Tarnai, American University in Bulgaria

Fascination with the Roma have resulted in a large amount of works produced over centuries by non-Roma authors. These works, in turn, have shaped societal perceptions and norms of engagement and played a central role in the fictitious and exceedingly negative stereotyping and persecution of the Roma. Little attention has been paid to the literature and art produced by authors of Romani origin to counter their exoticized and often dehumanizing images and allow for self-representation. The course provides an opportunity for students to examine stereotypes associated with the Roma as well as engage with primary resources (poetry, prose, essays, art) produced by Romani authors and also drawn from collective forms of Romani art (fairy tales and songs). Students will explore themes of “the other,” identity, class, race, gender, location (and dislocation) and time, and the often overlooked experiences of Romani slavery and the Holocaust, amongst others.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Models of Many-Worlds. Connected by Belts and Roads

June 02, 2026 – July 16, 2026

Natalia Fedorova, Smolny Beyond Borders

A world model is a cognitive framework that helps one navigate the world; it also defines the borders of that world and limits what is possible within it. Buckminster Fuller proposed the seminal metaphor of "Spaceship Earth," formulating the possibility of a cybernetically governed world in which the needs of everyone can be met. This course reviews key world models, beginning with ancient concepts like the Mandala and concluding with the Chilean Project Cybersyn—a machine-governed state. Recent developments in spatial AI enable creating digital doubles of organisms, processes, and spaces. Will the digital simulation of the physical world by spatial AI be better at solving this world's problems?

Credits: 3 US/ 6 ECTS

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Songs of Protest

June 16, 2026 – July 22, 2026

Lina Kassem, American University of Afghanistan

We will explore the realm of protest songs, inquiring into their ability to voice dissent, catalyze change, and energize social and political movements. This course navigates diverse protest songs that have played a central role in shaping worldwide pursuits for justice, equality, and human rights. Throughout this course, we will immerse ourselves in music from various cultures, analyzing its global impact. Additionally, we will investigate music's role in resistance and its multifaceted functions within organized protest movements.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS

Student Voting, Civil Rights, and the Practice of Democracy

June 22, 2026 – July 28, 2026

Jonathan Becker, Bard College

The course uses the 26th Amendment, which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 and outlawed age discrimination, as a prism through which to examine both the history of disenfranchisement and the fight for voting rights in the United States today. It has a particular focus on critical college constituencies, including students, faculty, staff, and institutional leaders. The course will also focus on case studies exploring how college communities promoted, defended, and expanded the right to vote. Guest lectures will feature major actors and practitioners in the sphere of voting rights and democracy.

Student participants will ideally be participating in civic work over the summer and/or will work with on-campus or off-campus voting organizations during the semester. Those who do not will be expected to participate in some civic engagement work to be agreed upon with the faculty.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

The International Relations of Global Sport

June 08, 2026 – July 10, 2026

John Stanlake, American University of Afghanistan

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This course introduces students to the multiple ways in which sport serves as a lens for understanding social, cultural, economic, and political forces at both national and global levels. Sport is not merely a form of entertainment; it reflects broader power structures, social hierarchies, and cultural identities, while also functioning as a platform through which change can occur. There are many ways in which sport acts as an agent for transformation, shaping public discourse, influencing policy decisions, and affecting diplomatic relations. At the same time, key arenas of political and social life can be better understood through interactions that take place within and around sport. The course analyzes interactions among multiple actors, including states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, corporations, identity groups, and individuals. Using specific sporting events and institutions as case studies, students will examine how these actors pursue interests, exercise power, and negotiate conflict. Topics include international governmental and non-governmental organizations, human rights and migrant worker abuse, diplomatic crises and geopolitical tensions, nationalism and identity formation, protests and social movements, and the political economy of major sporting events. By the end of the course, students will have developed a deeper understanding of the social, political, and economic forces that shape the global system. They will also gain insight into how these forces interact across cultures and borders and how sport both reflects and influences broader global dynamics.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

The Multidimensional Legitimation Strategies of Authoritarian Regimes

June 01, 2026 – July 09, 2026

Francesca Chiarvesio, Bard College

The course offers a general introduction to political legitimacy and legitimation strategies in authoritarian contexts. The aim is to familiarize students with the scholarship on democratic backsliding and mechanisms of manipulation, co-optation, and repression of public opinion, elites, and opposition. The course is timely as it provides tools to understand the current global wave of democratic backsliding, and the institutional, ideological, and performance-based reasons underpinning the resilience of authoritarianism. By offering an overview of scholarship on political legitimacy, this course equips students with the tools to critically consider democratic backsliding and counteract it.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

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Thinking About Democracy

June 01, 2026 – July 23, 2026

[Christopher Henderson](#), American University of Afghanistan

This course explores democracy as both a normative ideal and a set of practices, encouraging students to critically appraise what democracy is, what it is not, and what it could become across varying contexts and spaces. Through engagement with key foundational and contemporary texts, students will explore key themes such as citizenship, free speech, liberalism, religion, capitalism, secularism, media, truth, and resistance. Each text is supplemented by a recorded discussion between selected experts on each theme/text and Jeffrey C. Goldfarb, who developed the essence of this course from the New School's Democracy Seminar. Through further exploration and discussion of these concepts in and outside of class, students will become familiar with the historical and contemporary affordances and constraints of democracy and how they relate to one another. By thinking about democracy in this way, students will begin to appreciate the global and multicultural dimensions of democracy, gaining insights into how various societies do and/or may interpret and implement democratic principles.

Credits: 3 US / 6 ECTS

Using Large Language Models in Political Science

June 01, 2026 – July 21, 2026

Gennadii Iakovlev, Bard College

This course focuses on applying modern LLM-based techniques in political science and offers a structured overview. Over 5 weeks (15 150-minute sessions), we will cover the foundations of NLP, explore practical applications of LLMs in political science, employ LLM-based analysis, and learn how to assess the reliability and validity of these methods critically. By the end of the course, students will be equipped with both the theoretical understanding and practical tools to incorporate the LLM-driven NLP into their own research.

Credits: 4 US / 8 ECTS