

Glossary

- Age of Discovery* – The period in history from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century when the European seafaring powers commanded the sea and ‘discovered’ other parts of the globe.
- Anachronism* – An error of chronological logic or misplacement of chronology.
- Anthropocene* – A period in history, the most recent geological epoch, in which the presence of human beings has made an imprint on the surface of the Earth by way of radioactive fallout, microplastics and heavy metals and influencing the Earth’s climate.
- Bias* – A prejudice against someone or something that leads to unfair attention or representation in research.
- Bipolarity* – An international order with two dominant powers, such as during the period of the Cold War with the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.
- Capitalism* – An economic system in which the means of production are privately owned (instead of by the state) and used to generate and maximize profit.
- City-state* – Territorial unit based on a city and its immediate surroundings.
- Civilization* – A complex society bound together by common rule, sharing a common territory, identity, means of communication and religion.
- Clash of Civilizations thesis* – Theory developed by Samuel Huntington which distinguishes nine civilizations in the world (Western, Orthodox, Latin American, Islamic, African, Hindu, Buddhist, Sinic and Japanese) based on shared culture, identity and religion. It claims that future conflict will take place on the fault lines between these civilizations.
- Cliodynamics* – Field of study based on quantification of historical phenomena and processes. An important exponent of this field is Peter Turchin. The term derives from Clio, the Greek muse of history.
- Cold War* – Period between 1945 and 1989 where there was an active rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union based on different ideologies, capitalism versus communism. The confrontation remained ‘cold’ with the exception of a series of ‘hot’ wars in the developing world.
- Comparative Research Design* – An approach to conducting research through comparison. This comparison can focus on different groups of people, time frames, locations, themes but also definition, concepts and theories.
- Constitutional Order* – A political order based on a constitution. Usually based on a written foundational document to specify rights and obligations and also to inform norms, expectations and behaviors.
- Counter-Modernity* – Intellectual movement against modernity which places emphasis, in differing degrees, on the spiritual, nature, ethics and culture. The central idea is that Western modernity has lost all ethics and spirituality.
- Culture* – The ideas and practices that award meaning to activities in human societies.
- Democracy* – System of government by the people for the people.
- Democratic Peace Theory* – Theory based on the insight, originally suggested by Immanuel Kant, that democracies do not fight war against each other. Democratic peace has had a large influence on foreign policy; the promotion of democracy is believed to act as a deterrent against war.

- Despotism* – Repressive rule based on the exercise of dictatorial power, usually by one individual sometimes also by a group.
- Discourse* – A coherent system of words, communications, meaning and practices that together construct our understanding of phenomena.
- Economy* – Social arrangements or aspects of social relations that concern the provisioning of (im)material needs and wants, in different forms and social scales (households, local, national and world). Economies share several key features, including social actors (e.g., individuals, firms, and states), institutions (i.e., formal and informal rules), as well as technologies and organizational techniques.
- Empire* – A large geographical space ruled by a single state with a population that shares a sense of common identity.
- End of History Thesis* – Thesis which sees the end of the human ideological development in the attainment of liberal democracy. The thesis has a longer pedigree but was popular at the end of the Cold War and during the demise of Soviet communism.
- Enlightenment* – The Enlightenment is an intellectual and scientific movement in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in which scientists and philosophers aimed to establish dominance over natural phenomena. By using reason and rational deduction, increased insights could be gained into the workings of the natural world and humans living within it. The malleability of nature also resulted in policies aimed at ‘enhancing’ and ‘purifying’ the human race.
- Environmental Determinism* – The idea that the pre-existing environmental conditions determine the subsequent development of society.
- Environmental History* – A field of history concerned with understanding the impact of the environment on civilizational development, as well as the role of humans in changes to the environment.
- Environmental justice* – A form of justice involving developing and upholding of the rules and regulations on the protection of the environment for all people.
- Environmentalism* – The idea that the environment deserves protection and is in need of efforts of restoration and improvement for its general condition and status.
- Epistemology* – The approach to knowledge and how to arrive at it, taking into account its foundations, methods, and validity.
- Feudalism* – Type of rule based on a hierarchy of patrons who are tied to clients, who in their turn can act as patrons to others. In this hierarchical system goods, labor and favors flow up and down this system, to substantiate claims to authority, legitimacy and rule. This was the dominant system of rule in Medieval Europe until the ‘Age of Revolutions’ and is still in existence in many other parts of the world.
- Geopolitics* – Approach to international affairs which focuses on the interplay between geography, power and politics.
- Global Citizenship* – The field of World History operates in the belief that the study of the process of ever-increasing connections can help in the formation and education of future generations of responsible and informed global citizens. This is the cosmopolitan ideal of the field.
- Grassroots Activism* – Community based collective action focused on a particular cause or theme, involving the population directly.
- Great Divergence* – Historians use the term ‘The Great Divergence’ to describe the process where Europe’s GDP per capita grew much faster than the GDP per capita of the rest of the world. While before roughly 1800 all places in the world were equally prosperous, and perhaps China was the wealthiest part of the world, Europe – in particular Britain – diverged from the rest of the world after 1800.
- Great Game* – Concept used to describe the rivalry between the British and Russian Empires in the nineteenth century over control of the central Asian landmass.

Hard Power – Coercive instruments in the shape of military and economic capabilities to influence the behavior of an opponent.

Historicism – The study of history in its unique context, time and place. It is the task of the historian to try to get as close as possible to the lived historical experience.

Historiography – The pre-existing knowledge base including, importantly, debate about a particular historical subject. It is the existing recorded state of understanding history.

History – The study of change over time in the human past.

Humanism – Intellectual movement focused on the human in its natural environment.

Human Rights – A set of norms and principles with universal application to guide behavior and interaction. Codified in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and translated in national, regional and international law.

Ideology – a body of coherent thought which influences and justifies the thinking and repertoire of actions of individuals, groups and societies.

Imperiogenesis theory – An explanation for the development of mega-empires through the confrontation between nomadic and sedentary populations, triggering a mutual reinforcing cycle of organization and confrontation.

Interdisciplinarity – Several distinct academic disciplines are used to create a synergetic effect towards a common understanding.

Islamism – The belief that Islam contains all the answers and solutions for dealing with the questions of modernity. This discourse, thus, makes use of Islamic language and symbols. It is also referred to as political Islam.

Kingdom – Territorial unit ruled by a hereditary monarch, i.e. a king or queen

Liberalism – Political philosophy focused on the individual, bestowed with individual rights, liberties and equality before the law.

Marxism – Political philosophy developed by Karl Marx (1818-1883) in his book *Das Kapital* (1867). It sees the world as consisting of and being driven by structural and material factors that determine its development.

Meaningful Communication – The deliberate act of transferring information through a verbal (speech or writing) or non-verbal (such as drawing, movement, objects) medium.

Meta-History – The interpretation of history according to an overarching meaning or internal logic, leading towards an ultimate end point.

Modernity – A set of ideas focused on rationality, science, secularism, democracy and cosmopolitanism. It reflects both on a time frame in which these ideas came about and gained traction, at the end of the eighteenth century, as well as to an outlook on the world as either pre-modern and modern.

Multipolarity – An international order with multiple strong powers, such as after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in the early nineteenth century in Europe. This was also called the ‘Concert of Europe’ or a system of the balance of power, with strong powers balancing against each other and against one dominant state.

Nationalism – A political philosophy and political movement focused on an idea and practice of the nation, which is based on shared identity and solidarity.

Negative Rights – Rights that are conceptualized as preventing the subjection to a specific kind of action.

Nuclear imperialism – Imperialist activities to establish and maintain control over nuclear production and output (including weapons production) at the cost of communities in the developing world. Think for instance of the mining of uranium, as a core ingredient for nuclear fuel.

Oligarchy – Rule by a small group, often sharing a distinct identity of ethnicity, social-class, military standing or religion.

Oral History - The study of history through orally transmitted sources. Historians distinguish between sources which are part of an oral tradition and the field of Oral Literature, such as epic poetry or folklore, and oral sources which recount only a one generational/individual memory of certain historical events. Such life stories and interviews are recorded after the historical events have occurred, and as such provide a testimony of both the past and the present. At the same time, they offer historians evidence on otherwise undocumented events or perspectives.

Orientalism - Essentialist approach to the Orient as constituting immutable and stereotyped characteristics of Arab and Asian culture and traditions.

Pan-Arabism - A movement and discourse that emphasized that the Arab-speaking countries in the MENA region constitute one people as they share a common history, a linguistic bond, and culture that was more important than religious or ethnic boundaries

Politics - The ability to decide who gets what, where, when and how.

Positive Rights - Rights that are conceptualized as seeking subjection to a perceived just action.

Post-Colonial Theory - Theory focused on the continuities and discontinuities in language, understanding, practices and organization between colonial and post-colonial societies. It is focused on power disparities in these domains.

Post-Structuralism - A philosophical and theoretical approach that focuses on interpretivist and discursive practices based on the role of language. Language creates and shapes what we perceive to be real but post-structuralists believe there is no reality beyond that.

Power - The ability to make others do what you want them to do and which they were not inclined to do in the first place

Presentist perspective - Idea that only the present matters and the experience of today is the standard to measure all things.

Primary sources - Sources produced at the time of historical events, by contemporaries, unmediated by others in ex post facto interpretation.

Racism - The belief that the human population can be biologically categorized in clear and distinct groups, i.e. 'races', which have inherited and essential characteristics that define their behavior and abilities, and that these differences mark a 'natural' and inevitable inferiority or superiority.

Religion - A set of beliefs inherent to humankind focused on the divine which inform a set of practices which are carried out individually as well as communally.

Religious Syncretism - A combination of different, usually opposing, religious beliefs and practices.

Republic - Form of government in which authority is held by the people through elective representation.

Secondary sources - Sources produced after the historical events containing interpretation and assessments which are part of the debate of history.

Silk Roads - Concept used to describe the trade routes connecting, via land and sea, Asia, Europe and Africa.

Soft Power - Instruments of attraction and co-option to influence the behavior of an opponent.

Sovereignty - Supreme or ultimate authority and freedom of action. There is no internal or external higher source of authority.

State - A territorial unit with a monopoly of force within that territory. Usually with a bureaucracy entailing a legal, fiscal and social order.

Teleology - Reasoning based on the perceived outcome. Evidence is interpreted in such a way that it confirms the supposed outcome of events.

Theocracy - A system of rule based on ultimate power resting with God. God's representatives on Earth rule on his behalf.

- Thucydides Trap* - A theory developed by Graham Allison, based on ideas offered by Greek historian Thucydides, that a rising power will challenge a dominant one and this challenge will end in armed conflict. Examples are among others the rivalry between Athens and the emergent Sparta and the emergence of a unified Germany at the end of the nineteenth century challenging British dominance.
- Unipolarity* - An international order with one dominant power, such as the dominance of the United States immediately after the end of the Cold War.
- Vietnam Syndrome* - A perception held by US Cold War hawks in the aftermath of the defeat in the Vietnam War (1954-1973) that the US people had become overly wary of military interventions.
- War* - Violent engagement by at least two identifiable actors commanding force, claiming to represent a group of people to realize a political cause. It involves aggression, destruction and the use of lethal violence.
- World History* - The study of history from a world perspective focusing on the spread of people, goods and ideas and increased interconnectedness.
- World System Theory* - The world is divided into three sets of states depending on the role they play in economic production: Core-countries, semi-periphery and periphery countries. Core countries rely on capital intensive production and a skilled labor force, whereas periphery countries have production processes focused on labor intensive production with low-skilled workers.