



# Democracy and Development in a Fragmenting World

Geopolitics, Power Shifts, and the Fate of the Liberal Order  
Summer School for Master students

**1 – 5 June 2026**

online sessions: 23 - 24 April and 11 May

University of Belgrade  
BELGRADE • SERBIA

# PROGRAMME



Co-funded by the European Union



**Circle U.**  
European University Alliance

# Course Information

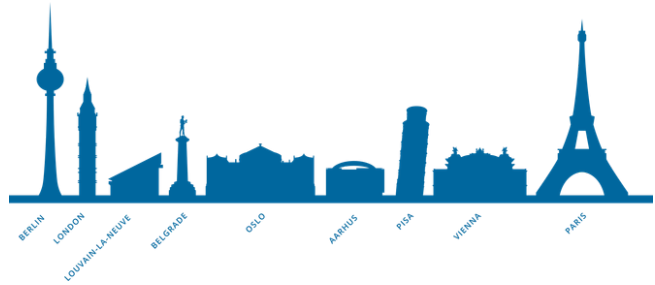
This interdisciplinary summer school examines democracy and development under conditions of major global transformation. It situates persistent global poverty and inequality within a fragmenting international order marked by geopolitical rivalry, democratic backsliding, climate disruption, and contested models of governance. Recent disruptions within long-standing security alliances, including growing uncertainty around the cohesion and credibility of NATO, extraordinary demands such as the proposed purchase of Greenland, and the return of unilateral military actions by major powers, such as the intervention of the U.S in Venezuela, have further eroded global stability. These developments have generated deep insecurity across regions, not least in Europe, where assumptions about peace, alliance solidarity, and the durability of the liberal order can no longer be taken for granted.

Rather than treating poverty as a purely technical or domestic challenge, the course explores how national development trajectories and global inequality are increasingly shaped by shifting power relations, weakened multilateralism, and competing visions of political and economic order. The course equips students with analytical tools to critically assess how democracy, human rights, corruption, climate change, foreign aid, and inequality interact with broader geopolitical dynamics to shape development outcomes. How can poverty reduction be sustained in an era of democratic erosion, protectionist economic policies, and growing uncertainty about the viability of the liberal international order?

# Course Information

A central focus of the summer school is governance across scales, from local to global. We will critically examine the roles of multilateral organizations, national governments, non-state and civil society actors in promoting (or constraining) development and democratic accountability in a multipolar world. Themes such as elections, international interventionism, populism, redistribution, and social cohesion are analyzed not only as domestic political issues, but as factors embedded in wider geopolitical struggles and global policy regimes.

Offered under the auspices of the Circle U. University Alliance, the summer school brings together students and scholars from across Europe. Through lectures and discussions, participants are introduced to key theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of democracy, development, inequality, and world order, fostering a comparative and interdisciplinary understanding of how power shifts are reshaping both development prospects and the future of liberal democracy.



## Online Portion Overview

Part 1			Part 2	
Time	Thursday (23.4)	Friday (24.4)	Time	May (11.5)
11:00-11:30	Introductory remarks	18:00-19:00	10:00-11:00	Lecture
11:30-12:15	Matrix Exercise Introduction	Open Conversations Series	11:00-11:15	Break
11:15-12:30	Break		11:15-12:00	Program Orientation
12:30-13:15	Foresight Exercise			

## In Person Portion Overview



УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У БЕОГРАДУ  
UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

Time	Monday (1.6.)	Tuesday (2.6.)	Wednesday (3.6.)	Thursday (4.6.)	Friday (5.6.)
10:00-11:00	Introductory Lecture	Lecture	Lecture	Lecture	Lecture
11:30-12:30	Matrix Serious Game	Lecture	Lecture	Lecture	Group presentations
12:30-13:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
13:30-16:00	Matrix Serious Game	Group work	Group work	Group work	Group presentations
16:00-18:00		Belgrade Walking Tour		Guided visit of the Museum of Contemporary Art	

## Daily overview online



### Thursday, 23 April

Time	Lecturer	Topic	Literature
11:00-11:30	Prof. Nemanja Džuverović University of Belgrade	Introduction to the Summer School	N/A
11:30-12:15	Milan Varda University of Belgrade	Matrix Exercise Introductions	Zwack and Palicka (2005); Brynen (2019); Price (2026).
12:15-12:30	Break		
12:30-13.15	Prof. Nemanja Džuverović University of Belgrade	Foresight Exercise	Deep Dish on Global Affairs; Mark Leonard's World in 30 Minutes

### Friday, 24 April

Time	Lecturer	Topic	Literature
18:00-19:00	Prof. Branko Milanović City University of New York	From Global Convergence to Multipolar Conflict	Blog: Global Inequality and More 3.0, Milanović (2025)

### Monday, 11 May

Time	Lecturer	Topic	Literature
10:00-11:00	Prof. Barbara de Cock UCLouvain	Shifting Boundaries in Political Discourse: A Linguistic View on the Global Transformation	Ekström et al. (2018)
11:00-11:15	Break		
11:15-12.00	Prof. Nemanja Džuverović & Miloš Bojičić University of Belgrade	Program Orientation	N/A



Monday 1 June			
Time	Lecturer	Topic	Literature
09:30-10:00	Introduction: Prof. Nemanja Džuverović, University of Belgrade & Prof. Dan Banik, University of Oslo	Course overview, introduction of the lecturers and admin team.	N/A
10:00-11:00	Prof. Dan Banik, University of Oslo	Who Gets What and Who Decides? Democracy, Redistribution, and the Politics of Poverty	Banik (2011); Banik (2022); Banik and Mawdsley (2023); Biermann et al. (2023)
11:00-11:30	Break		
11:30-12:30	Prof. Nemanja Džuverović & Milan Varda University of Belgrade	Matrix Serious Game – Invasion of Greenland and Race for the Arctic	TBC
12:30-13:30	Lunch		
13:30-15:30	Prof. Nemanja Džuverović & Milan Varda University of Belgrade	Matrix Serious Game – Invasion of Greenland and Race for the Arctic	TBC
15:30-16:00	Introductions to group work		
Tuesday 2 June			
Time	Lecturer	Topic	Literature
10:00-11:00	Dr Valentin Domann Humboldt- Universität	Scalar Politics of the Populist Radical Right	Miller-Idriss (2019); Santamarina and Ince (2025)
11:00-11:30	Break		
11:30-12:30	Prof. Sophie Coeuré Université Paris Cité	Human Rights from Cold War to Multipolar World: Universal Values or Geopolitical Tools?	Badalassi (2018); Richardson- Little (2019)
12:30-13:30	Lunch		
13:30-15:30	Group work		
15:30-17:30	Belgrade Walking Tour		

Wednesday 3 June			
Time	Lecturer	Topic	Literature
10:00-11:00	Prof. Lars V. Johannsen Aarhus University	Shifting Center of Gravity: From the Western-liberal order to Multipolar Realities in the Global Political Economy	Duggan et al. (2022); Eliasson and Garcia-Duran (2023); Hopewell (2025); Wajner et al. (2024)
11:00-11:30	Break		
11:30-12:30	Prof. Filip Ejodus University of Belgrade	Geopolitical Europe	Ben (2025), Matthias and Tocci (2026)
12:30-13:30	Lunch		
13:30-16:00	Group work		
Thursday 4 June			
Time	Activity	Topic	Literature
10:00-11:00	Ass. Prof. Veljko Mijušković University of Belgrade	Tariffs as Weapons: Trade Wars and the Unravelling of the Liberal Economic Order	Dür, and Invernizzi (2025); Menguaslan (2025)
11:00-11:30	Break		
11:30-12:30	Prof. Claudia Matthes Humboldt-Universität	The Connection between Democratic Resilience, Development and Modernisation	Vachudova et al. (2024), Boese et al. (2021)
12:30-13:30	Lunch		
13:30-16:00	Group work		
16:00-18:00	Guided visit of the Museum of Contemporary Art		
Friday 5 June			
Time	Activity	Topic	Literature
10:00-11:30	Prof. Dan Banik University of Oslo	Global Governance in a Fragmenting World: Democracy, Development, and The Future of Multilateralism	Bull and Banik (2025); Banik and Bull (2022); Hardin (1974); Singer (1972)
11:30-12:00	Break		
12:00-13:30	Group Presentations		
13:30-14:30	Lunch		
14:30-16:00	Group Presentations		

# Introducing our lecturers

**Nemanja Džuverović** is a professor in Peace Studies at the University of Belgrade. He is also a visiting professor at Northwestern University. His research areas include critical peacebuilding, political economy of liberal peacebuilding, international statebuilding in the Balkans, and sociology of International Relations. He has been visiting researcher at the University of Manchester (Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute), the University of Uppsala (Department of Peace and Conflict Research), the University of Bradford (Department of Peace Studies and International Development) and the University of Granada (Institute for Peace and Conflicts). He is co-editor of the Journal of Regional Security and program co-director of the MA Peace, Security and Development.

**Dan Banik** is a professor of political science, director of the Oslo SDG Initiative at the Centre for Global Sustainability, and affiliate professor at Faculty of Medicine, University of Oslo. He is also Academic Director of the Democracy Hub at Circle U. European University Alliance and Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria. His books include Political Transition, Poverty, and Inclusive Development in Malawi: The Democratic Dividend; Poverty and Elusive Development; and Starvation and India's Democracy. Prof. Banik was a Visiting Professor and Consulting Scholar at Stanford University (2010-2017) and a Visiting Professor at China Agricultural University (2012-2017). He is the host of the In Pursuit of Development podcast with listeners in 160 countries.

# Introducing our lecturers

**Branko Milanović** is a Senior Scholar at the Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality at the City University of New York. In 2019 he was appointed the honorary Maddison Chair at the University of Groningen. He served as lead economist in the World Bank's Research Department for almost 20 years, leaving to write his book on global income inequality, *Worlds Apart* (2005). He was senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington (2003-2005) and has held teaching appointments at the University of Maryland (2007-2013) and at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University (1997-2007). **He was a visiting scholar at All Souls College in Oxford, and Universidad Carlos III in Madrid (2010-11).**

**Barbara de Cock** holds an MA both in Linguistics and Literature, and in European Studies, and a PhD in Spanish linguistics (KULeuven). She is currently professor of Spanish linguistics at UCLouvain. Her research concerns a wide variety of political and societal discourses, which directly or indirectly play a role in democratic decision-making and which point at the challenges for ensuring an adequate representation of the diversity present in society. This includes work on the discourse by politicians on social media, (online) activism concerning sustainability, hate speech, discourses on human rights abuses, discourse on populism (<https://www.discourseonpopulism-uclouvain.com/>), healthcare discourse.

# Introducing our lecturers

**Valentin Domann** is a geographer and postdoctoral researcher at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. His research focuses on the spatial dimensions of authoritarian formations and socio-spatial transformation processes, with particular attention to conflicts over space, political ecology, and planning for just socio-ecological transitions. A key feature of his work is collaborative knowledge production across research and teaching, including transdisciplinary cooperation with practitioners and collective forms of writing and publishing.

**Sophie Coeuré** is a professor of contemporary history at Université Paris Cité. Her research and teaching interests include Russian - Soviet and European modern History, Communism in a globalized world, displaced cultural properties, and the comparative political and cultural history of archives. Her current research project focuses on dissident movements and the defence of human rights in USSR and the “Eastern bloc” in the 1950-1990s, transnational mobilizations and information flows. She develops teaching and joint reflection with students on public history, the political uses of history.

# Introducing our lecturers

**Lars V. Johannsen** is an associate professor in the Department of Political Science at Aarhus University, where his work bridges comparative politics and global political economy. His research centres on corruption, populism, and global political economy. He has a strong area of expertise in the Baltic states and Slovenia. He has authored more than 180 contributions in six different languages, and his publications span debates on institutional design and the historical roots of anti-corruption policy, historic and present populism, globalization and the new precariat, a global study linking corruption to access to justice, and examined public administration flexibility and rule bending risks contributing to debates on how to reconcile responsiveness with impartial and rules based governance. Currently, he is working on a book *Gunboat Capitalism: Neomercantilism and the Global Political Economy in the 21st century*.

**Filip Ejodus** is a professor of security studies at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Political Science. In his academic research, he studies how identity, memory, emotions and rationality affect security policy and international interventions. He also specializes in security sector reform, defence policy, civil-military relations and EU as a global actor. The geographic focus of his interests are the Western Balkans, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East. He is also co-Editor in Chief of *Journal of Regional Security*. In addition to these academic interests Filip has been closely involved with public policy as a board president of the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, academic coordinator at the Belgrade Security Forum and the co-chair of the Regional Stability in South East Europe Study Group at the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes.

# Introducing our lecturers

**Veljko Mijušković** is an assistant professor at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Economics and Business where he teaches Transport Economics, Marketing Logistics, International Logistics, Transport Policy and Development, Management of Supply and Logistics. He is the author of two monographs and numerous articles in Serbian and international journals. He is an active consultant in the field of business economics and a lecturer and translator for English and Spanish. He has been visiting researcher in Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania, France and Italy.

**Claudia Matthes** is a senior lecturer at HU Berlin's Department of Social Sciences and Director of its international MA Programmes. She has been a Circle U Chair for Democracy already since 2021 and is currently also leading the Jean Monnet Chair "ShapingEU". Her specialisation includes European integration, comparative democracy studies, institutional and actor-centred approaches to political science and German domestic politics. Since 2016, she has been acting as the department's Erasmus Coordinator and teaches regularly at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara/Turkey and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

# Introducing our lecturers

**Milan Varda** is a Researcher and PhD candidate at the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Political Science. His research is centered around critical approaches to peace, security and global governance. More specifically, he is interested in how identity, memory and perception impact the strategic decisions of political actors, mostly approaching the issues through the lenses of ontological security, strategic culture, and role theory. Empirically, he is mostly interested in the Eastern Europe and the South East Europe. He is very passionate about using serious games for policy analysis, strategic foresight, and as a tool for teaching. He has participated in several international research projects on EU security, democracy and enlargement.

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## SYLLABUS



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# Syllabus

## Online portion

### Day 1:

#### ***Foresight Exercise***

- Podcast: [Deep Dish on Global Affairs, Europe's Security Wake-Up Call](#)
- Podcast: [Mark Leonard's World in 30 Minutes: The world in 2026](#)
- Podcast: [In Pursuit of Development](#)
- Website: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/>
- Podcasts: The New Humanitarian ([Rethinking Humanitarianism & What's Unsaid](#))

#### ***Matrix Exercise***

- Zwarts, Natalia and Ondrej Palicka (2025). Wargaming: The Surprisingly Effective Tool That Can Help Us Prepare for Modern Crises. Link: <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2025/11/wargaming-the-surprisingly-effective-tool-that-can.html>
- Brynen, Rex (2019). Seminar and Matrix Games (power point presentation). Montreal: McGill University.
- Price, Tim (2026). Aftermath: What Next for Venezuela (pages 5-7 only)

#### ***Recommended Reading***

- Ejodus, Filip, Đorđe Krivokapić, Rastko Popović, Marko Kovačević, Milan Varda & Aleksandra Ilić-Rajković (2026) 'From Pentagon to Classroom: RAND's Hegemony as a Pedagogical Tool in Graduate IR and Security Studies' *Journal of Political Science Education*, DOI: 10.1080/15512169.2026.2612711

# Syllabus

## Online portion

### Day 2:

- Milanović, Branko (2025). The Great Global Transformation: National Market Liberalism in a Multipolar World. London: Allen Lane.
- Blog: [Global Inequality and More 3.0](#)

### Day 3:

- Ekström, Mats, Marianna Patrona and Joanna Thornborrow (2018) 'Right-Wing Populism and the Dynamics of Style: A Discourse-Analytic Perspective on Mediated Political Performances', Palgrave Commun 4 (83).

# Syllabus

## In person portion

### Lecture 1:

- Banik, Dan (2011) 'Growth and Hunger in India', Journal of Democracy 22 (3): 90-104.
- Banik, Dan (2022) 'Democracy and Sustainable Development', Anthropocene Science 1: 233–245
- Banik, Dan and Emma Mawdsley (2023) 'South–South Cooperation and Global Development in a Multipolar World: China and India in Africa', Journal of International Development 35 (4)
- Biermann, Frank, Sun, Yuxian, Banik, Dan, Beisheim, Marianne, Bloomfield, Michael J., Charles, Aurelie, Chasek, Pamela, Hickmann, Thomas, Pradhan, Prajal and Sénit, Carole-Anne (2023) 'Four Governance Reforms to Strengthen the SDGs: A Demanding Policy Vision can Accelerate Global Sustainable Development Efforts', Science 381(6663):1159-1160

### *Highly recommended:*

- Conversations with Atul Kohli, Adam Przeworski, James C. Scott, Daron Acemoglu, Francis Fukuyama, Ian Shapiro, Nemanja Džuverović, and many more on the In Pursuit of Development podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/in-pursuit-of-development/id1517346182>

# Syllabus

## Lecture 2 (Matrix Serious Game):

Reading for the Matrix Serious Game will be distributed to each group separately

## Lecture 3:

- Miller-Idriss, Cynthia (2019) 'The Global Dimensions of Populist Nationalism', *The International Spectator* 54 (2): 17–34.
- Santamarina, Ana and Anthony Ince (2025) 'Urban Neighbourhoods and Far-Right Spatial Strategies: Displacement, Infrastructure and Civic Life', *Dialogues in Urban Research* doi.org/10.1177/27541258251337053

## Lecture 4:

- Badalassi, Nicolas (2018) 'From Talleyrand to Sakharov: French Diplomacy in search of a Helsinki Effect', in Nicolas Badalassi, Sarah B. Snyder (eds.), *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1975-1990*, New York: Berghahn Books, 74-96.
- Richardson-Little, Ned. (2019) 'The Failure of the Socialist Declaration of Human Rights', *East Central Europe* 46: 318-341.
- Interviews with Cristal Montañéz Baylor (Venezuela), "Non Violent Movements" <https://www.bushcenter.org/freedom-collection/cristal-montanez-baylor-nonviolent-movements> and Václav Havel (Czechoslovakia), "Charter 77" <https://www.bushcenter.org/freedom-collection/vaclav-havel-charter-77>

## *Recommended readings*

- Shanghai Cooperation Organization, declaration of the meeting of the Council of Heads of State in Tianjin, China, on September 1, 2025, In English: <https://www.diplomacy.edu/resource/tianjin-declaration-of-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization/>  
In French: <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2025/09/02/declaration-tianjin-ocs/>

# Syllabus

## Lecture 5:

- Duggan, Niall, Juan Carlos Ladines Azalia and Marek Rewizorski (2022) 'The Structural Power of the BRICS in Multilateral Development Finance: A Case Study of the New Development Bank', *International Political Science Review* 43(4): 495–511.
- Eliasson, Johan and Patricia Garcia-Duran (2023) 'New is Old? The EU's Open, Sustainable and Assertive Trade Policy', *Global Policy* 14: 9-18.
- Hopewell, Kristen (2025) 'Unravelling of the Legal Trade Order: Enforcement, Defection and the Crisis of the WTO Dispute Settlement System', *International Affairs* 101 (3): 1103-1117.
- Wajner, Daniel F., Sandra Destradi and Michael Zürn (2024) 'The Effects of Global Populism: Assessing the Populist Impact on International Affairs', *International Affairs*, 100 (5): 1819-1833.

## *Recommended readings*

- Agarwal, Manmohan and Sushil Kumar (2023) 'BRICS Countries' Increasing Role in the World Economy, Including Institutional Innovation', *BRICS Journal of Economics* 4 (2): 173-191. Read especially section 7 (pages 186-188)
- Farrell, Henry and Newman, Abraham (2025) 'The Weaponized World Economy: Surviving the New Age of Economic Coercion' *Foreign Affairs* 104 (5): 8-23.
- Bolhuis, Marijn A., Chen, Jiaqian and Kett, Benjamin (2023) 'The Costs of Geoeconomic Fragmentation', *Finance & Development (IMF)*, pp.35-37  
<https://www.imf.org/en/publications/fandd/issues/2023/06/the-costs-of-geoeconomic-fragmentation-bolhuis-chen-kett>

# Syllabus

## Lecture 6:

- Tonra Ben (2025) 'The Union's Westphalian Mirage: Geopolitics and EU Foreign Policy', *European Politics and Society* doi: 10.1080/23745118.2025.2565202
- Matthijs Matthias and Nathalie Tocci (2026) 'Can the Contingent Escape Its Trump Trap?' *Foreign Affairs* 105 (1)154-165

## Lecture 7:

- Dür, Andreas, and Alessia Invernizzi (2025) 'Weathering the Storm: US Trade Policy Beyond Trump', *International Organization* 79 (S1): S194–208.
- Mengüaslan, Hikmet (2025) 'Offensive Mercantilism and the Crisis of Liberal International Order: Reinterpreting the U.S.-China Trade War', *Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12 (1): 176-202.

## Lecture 8:

- Boese, A. Vanessa, Amanda B. Edgell, Sebastian Hellmeier, Seraphine F. Maerz and Staffan I. Lindberg (2021) 'How Democracies Prevail: Democratic Resilience as a Two-Stage Process', *Democratization* 28 (5): 885-907.
- Vachudova, Anna Milada, Danijela Dolenc and Adam Fagan (2024). 'Civic Mobilization Against Democratic Backsliding in Post-Communist Europe', *East European Politics and Societies* 38 (4): 1144-1165.

# Syllabus

## Lecture 9:

- Bull, Benedicte and Dan Banik (2025) 'The Rebirth of the Global South: Geopolitics, Imageries and Developmental Realities,' Forum for Development Studies 52(2), 195–214.
- Banik, Dan and Benedicte Bull (2022) 'Multilateralism to the Rescue? Beijing's Support for Multilateral Institutions during the COVID-19 Crisis', International Quarterly for Asian Studies, 53: 207–230.
- Hardin, Garrett (1974) 'Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor', Psychology Today
- Singer, Peter (1972) 'Famine, Affluence, and Morality', Philosophy and Public Affairs 1(1): 229-243.

## *Highly recommended:*

- Conversations with Peter Singer, Daron Acemoglu, Jeffrey Sachs, Francis Fukuyama, Joseph Nye, Pranab Bardhan, Achim Steiner, Ronny Patz, and many more on the In Pursuit of Development podcast, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/in-pursuit-of-development/id1517346182>