

HUM-422

Understanding modern Switzerland I

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Cursus	Sem.	Type
Humanities and Social Sciences	MA1	Obl.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	3
Session	Winter
Semester	Fall
Exam	During the semester
Workload	90h
Weeks	14
Hours	3 weekly
Courses	2 weekly
Project	1 weekly
Number of positions	60

Summary

This course provides a general introduction to Swiss history, its culture, its economy and its political system since 1848 until today.

Content

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS COURSE IS FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS ONLY (i.e. students who did not attend Swiss schools before University). During the fall semester, two-hour lectures will give a general introduction to Swiss history, culture, economy and politics and discuss Swiss particularities such as the question of languages, the system of direct democracy, Switzerland's strong economic position, and the country's firm engagement on the international scene.

Study Plan:

- I. Mapping Switzerland
- II. Switzerland as a cultural and political labyrinth
- III. The Wealth of a nation
- IV. Switzerland and the world.

During the spring semester the students will be asked to write a research paper on a specific subject, which they will select in consultation with the instructors.

Keywords

Switzerland, history, culture, political institutions, economic structure, foreign policy.

POLY-perspective :

- interdisciplinary perspective
- citizen perspective

<https://www.epfl.ch/schools/cdh/cdhs-vision/>

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Analyze the key factors of the political, economic and social development of Switzerland
- Contextualise the main phases of Swiss history from 1848 and replace them in their international context
- Synthesize the main elements of Swiss history, its culture, its economy and its political system
- Argue about the causes of the wealth of a nation

Transversal skills

- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking

Teaching methods

- Fall Semester: Ex cathedra courses
- Spring Semester: Tutorial for research paper

Expected student activities

Active participation in class during the fall semester. Paper to be written within a group of 3-4 students on Swiss history during the spring semester (project in Swiss history + oral presentation).

Assessment methods

Evaluation on a semester basis (grade associated to 3 ECTS). Fall semester evaluation is about knowledge acquisition (25% short report on a conference held during the semester; 75%: multiple choice questionnaire exam). Spring semester evaluation is about the realization of the project. More information is given at the beginning of the academic year.

Supervision

Office hours	No
Assistants	No
Forum	No

Resources

Bibliography

- C. Trampusch, A. Mach (ed.), *Switzerland in Europe*. (Routledge, 2011); Kreisi, Hanspeter, et al. *Contemporary Switzerland: Revisiting the Special Case*. New York: Palgrave, 2005; *Switzerland, National Socialism, and the Second World War. Report of the Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland-Second World War*. Zurich: Pendo Verlag, 2002.
- C. H. Church, R. C. Head, *A Concise History of Switzerland*. (Cambridge University Press: 2013).

Ressources en bibliothèque

- [Contemporary Switzerland: Revisiting the Special Case / Kriesi](#)
- [Switzerland, National Socialism, and the Second World War](#)
- [A Concise History of Switzerland / Church](#)
- [Switzerland in Europe / Trampusch](#)