

## The European Great Powers Today

### One. Studying the Great Powers

What is a great power? The renowned German historian Leopold von Ranke defined great power status militarily as the capacity to defy all other powers combined, and historically as the ability to represent a distinct principle in world politics. This class will explore how definitions of great power status have evolved over the past two hundred years, and what might constitute great power status today. Mahan saw the key as lying in naval strength, Mackinder in control of the Eurasian 'heartland'. Paul Kennedy famously argued that the fate of the great powers was determined by how well they dealt with 'imperial overstretch'. Today, we include metrics like 'soft power' and other factors.

Allison, Graham, "The New Spheres of Influence: Sharing the Globe with Other Great Powers." *Foreign Affairs* 99 (2020)

Dickson, Monday E., "Great Powers and the Quest for Hegemony in the Contemporary International System." *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal* 6.6 (2019): 168–176.

Edelstein, David M., *Over the Horizon: Time, Uncertainty, and the Rise of Great Powers* (Cornell UP, 2017).

Kassab, Hanna Samir, *Grand strategies of weak states and great powers* (Springer, 2017).

Mearsheimer, John J., *The tragedy of great power politics* (New York, 2001)

Shiffrinson, Joshua R. Itzkowitz, *Rising titans, falling giants: how great powers exploit power shifts* (Cornell UP, 2018).

Ward, Steven. *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers* (2018)

Xuetong, Yan, *Leadership and the rise of great powers* (Princeton UP, 2019).

## Two. The rise of the Great Powers

This class will explore the development of the global state system from the much-misunderstood Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, through the completion of the 'pentarchy' to the end of the Cold War. We will trace the predominance of the various European great powers such as Spain, France, Prussia, Germany, Russia and the British Empire, until their eclipse by the 'superpowers' in the twentieth century. We will ask what the common themes and patterns are, whether the contest was just about power or also a clash of 'principles', be they religious, political or racial. Finally, we will address the role of domestic factors and ask whether these drove great power politics or whether internal structure was in fact shaped by the demands of the international system.

Allison, Graham, *The Thucydides trap* (New York, 2017)

Bridge, Roy, and Roger Bullen (eds), *The Great Powers and the European States System 1814-1914* (2nd ed. 2004)

Kennedy, Paul, *The rise and fall of the Great Powers* (London, 1987)

McKay, Derek; Scott, H.M., *The rise of the great powers* (London, 1983)

Maass, Matthias. *Small states in world politics: The story of small state survival, 1648–2016* (2017).

O'Brian, Patrick K. *Atlas of World History* (2007)

Simms, Brendan, *Europe the struggle for supremacy, 1453 to the present* (London, 2013)

## Three. The United Kingdom

England was one Europe's major players since the Middle Ages, but it was only as the United Kingdom that Britain grew to world power status. Her greatest influence was in the Nineteenth century, when many referred to a *Pax Britannica*, which was seen not merely in military but also economic and normative terms. The British Empire achieved its greatest territorial extent just after the First World War. Thereafter it declined rapidly, but Britain remained a substantial actor. We will ask to what extent this remains the case and how

notions Global Britain, and recent developments such as Brexit bear on the question as the future of the United Kingdom itself is sometimes called into question.

Barnett, Corelli, *Audit to war. The illusion and reality of Britain as a great nation* (London and Basingstoke, 1983).

Bew, John, *Realpolitik. A history* (Oxford, 2016)

Foster, Peter, *Facing facts. Is British power diminishing? Project for the study of the 21st century* (2015)

Morris, Justin, 'how great is Britain? Power responsibility and Britain's future global role', *British Journal of Politics and international relations* 13 (2010), pp. 326-47

Peden, G. C. "Suez and Britain's Decline as a World Power." *Historical Journal* (2012), pp. 1073–1096.

Sanders, D., *Losing an empire. Finding a role: British foreign policy since 1945* (Basingstoke, 1990)

Simms, Brendan, *Britain's Europe. A thousand years of conflict and cooperation* (London, 2016)

#### **Four. Russia**

Russia's identity has long been tied up with the notion of *dershavnost*, or 'great-powerness'. It has also seen itself as the protagonist of a wider principle or mission from the 'Third Rome' to the defender of 'sovereign democracy' today. From its modest origins as Muscovy, Russia reached its greatest territorial extent as the Soviet Union after 1945. Then it collapsed and became as one wag put it 'Upper Volta with rockets'. In recent years, President Putin has sought to renew Russian power in the world. We ask how this project is faring and whether Russia's enduring military might can compensate for her economic, political and demographic weaknesses.

Adomeit, Hannes, 'Russia s a great power in world affairs. Image and reality', *International Affairs*, 71 (1995), 35-68.

Allison, Roy, *Russia, the West, and military intervention* (Oxford, 2013)

Belopolsky, Helen, *Russia and the challengers. Russian alignment with China, Iran and Iraq in the unipolar era* (Basingstoke, 2009)

Conradi, Peter. *Who lost Russia? How the world entered a new Cold War* (London, 2017)

Kalb, Marvin, *Imperial gamble. Putin, Ukraine and the New Cold War* (Washington, 2015)

Laruelle, Marlene, *Russian Eurasianism. An ideology of empire* (Baltimore, 2012ed.)

Neumann, Iver B., "Russia as a great power, 1815–2007." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11.2 (2008): 128–151.

Oldberg, Ingmar, 'Russia's Great Power Ambitions and Policy Under Putin', in Kanet R.E. (eds) *Russia. Studies in Central and Eastern Europe* (London, 2007)

Rich, Paul B., 'Russia as a great power' in *Small Wars & Insurgencies: Vol. 20, Crisis in the Caucasus. Russia, Georgia and the West*, pp. 276-299 (2009)

Shevchenko, Alexei, and Larson, Deborah Welch, *Quest for Status: Chinese and Russian Foreign Policy* (New Haven, 2019)

## **Five. France**

France has historically been one of the European great powers, but it was largely eliminated as an independent actor by Hitler. After the liberation in 1944, she revived her great power aspirations, which were epitomized most obviously by the establishment of her nuclear *force de frappe* and her attempt to chart an independent path in Europe and the world. Though still one of the world's largest economies, France is afflicted by anxiety over status. This class will explore whether she is indeed still a great power, whether she has gained leverage through Brexit and whether even has a meaningful separate existence outside of the EU framework.

Bozo, Frédéric. *French Foreign Policy since 1945: An Introduction* (Berghahn Books, 2016).

Cerny, Philip G. *The Politics of Grandeur: Ideological Aspects of de Gaulle's Foreign Policy*. (1980).

Kempin, Ronja (ed.), *France's foreign and security policy under President Macron* (Berlin, 2021)

Lequesne, Christian. "French foreign and security challenges after the Paris terrorist attacks." *Contemporary security policy* 37.2 (2016): 306–318

Marange, Celine and Susan Stewart, *French and German approaches to Russia* (Chatham House (November 2021)

Szewczyk, Bart F., 'Macron's vision for European autonomy crashed and burned in Ukraine', *Foreign Policy*, April 2022

Tertrais, Bruno, *French nuclear deterrence policy, forces and future* Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Paris 2019)

## **Six. Germany**

Germany's great power history is famously one of great ambition and equally epic failure. After the Second World War, Germany was subject to considerable international restraints, and embraced these (especially in the EU framework) positively. In past decades Germany has abjured great powers ambitions, accepted nuclear prohibitions, and sought to position herself as a 'civilian power'. More recently, she has gained in 'soft power' and also in economic heft through the growth of her economy and the structure of the Euro. Over the past few months, however, Germany has been in crisis following the collapse of her Russia policy and the onset of her energy crisis. This class will explore these themes and investigate whether Germany has the capacity and the desire act as a European great power.

Ash, Timothy Garton, *In Europe's name. Germany and the divided continent* (London, 1993)

Forsberg, Tuomas. "From Ostpolitik to 'frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German foreign policy towards Russia." *International Affairs* 92.1 (2016): 21-42

Kundnani, Hans, *The paradox of German power* (London, 2014).

Maull, Hanns W. and Sebastian Harnisch (eds), *Germany as a civilian power* (2001)

Paterson, William E., 'Reluctant hegemon? Germany moves centre stage in the European Union', *Journal of Common market Studies*, 49 (2011), 57-75.

Siddi, Marco. "German foreign policy towards Russia in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis: A new Ostpolitik?." *Europe-Asia Studies* 68.4 (2016): 665–677.

Yoder, Jennifer A. "From Amity to Enmity: German-Russian Relations in the Post Cold War Period." *German Politics & Society* 33 (2015): 49–69.

## **Seven. The European Union**

Historically, Europe has been the playground of the great powers, not a great power herself. In the mid-twentieth century, though, a group of visionaries re-conceived and began to remake the continent as a player in her own right. Despite the early failures – for example that of the European Defence Community – the EU has become an actor in the great power world. This class will ask how seriously we should take the Common Defence and Security Policy and other initiatives? Is 'Europe' condemned to be an economic giant but a military dwarf? Or is she already a great power? How dependent is she on UK and especially US military support? How much damage has Brexit done to the EU's strategic aspirations?

Bickerton, Christopher, *European integration. From nation states to member states* (Oxford, 2012)

Leonard, Mark, *Why Europe will run the twenty-first century* (London, 2005)

Moravcsik, Andrew. "Europe: The quiet superpower". *French Politics*. **7** (2009) 403–422

Pace, Michelle, 'The construction of EU normative power', *Journal of Common market Studies*, 45 (2007), 1041-64.

Simms, Brendan, 'Towards a mighty union. How to create a democratic European superpower', *International Affairs*, 88 (2012), 49-62.

Sinn, Hans-Werner, *The Euro trap. On bursting bubbles. Budgets, and beliefs* (Oxford, 2014)

Zielonka, Jan, *Europe as Empire. The nature of the enlarged European Union* (Oxford, 2006)