LEARNING PROGRAMME

The Geopolitics of the Azores and the North Atlantic

5-DAY COURSE

25 learning hours | Course programme

The Geopolitics of the Azores and the North Atlantic – 5-Day Course

Introduction and Description

This course offers an academically rigorous and multidimensional exploration of the strategic, historical and geopolitical significance of the Azores within the broader Atlantic and global systems. Situated at the intersection of major maritime routes, transcontinental interactions and shifting geopolitical constellations, the Azores constitute a unique vantage point from which to understand the evolution of international order, the dynamics of power projection and the contemporary challenges shaping global security governance.

Drawing on foundational and advanced concepts from International Relations, Security Studies, Geopolitics and Strategic Studies, the course provides participants with a structured analytical framework for interpreting the Azores' role in both historical and contemporary strategic environments. Early sessions introduce the islands' historical development and examine their integration into Atlantic imperial networks, culminating in an in-depth case study of the late 16th-century Habsburg bid for mastery. This episode serves as an exemplary lens through which to analyse the interplay between geography, imperial ambition, maritime logistics and emerging global competition.

The programme then advances to the 20th century, tracing the Azores' transformation into a critical node for wartime operations, diplomacy and intelligence during the Second World War. Participants engage with primary and secondary perspectives to evaluate how Portuguese neutrality, Allied strategic imperatives and Axis maritime strategy converged on the islands, reshaping the transatlantic security landscape and laying the groundwork for post-war strategic arrangements.

Building on this historical trajectory, the course scrutinises the contemporary strategic relevance of the Azores through the prisms of NATO's evolving posture, EU defence initiatives, technological transformations and the increasingly complex geopolitical environment of the North Atlantic. Particular attention is devoted to emerging drivers of change, including climate-induced shifts in maritime geography, the Arctic's opening sea routes, the securitisation of undersea infrastructure and the renewed strategic interest of global powers in Atlantic domains.

Pedagogically, the course emphasises the integration of theoretical inquiry with applied analysis, encouraging participants to engage in scenario-building exercises, map-based strategic assessments and interdisciplinary dialogue.

Intercultural communication tasks, cultural visits and professional exchange sessions foster reflection on how national strategic cultures shape interpretations of security, power and cooperation. Moreover, participants develop competencies for embedding geopolitical and historical content into their teaching practice, using digital collaboration platforms (eTwinning, ESEP) to conceptualise cross-border educational projects.

By combining scholarly depth, experiential engagement and collaborative knowledge production, the course not only enhances participants' conceptual and analytical understanding but also strengthens their capacity to act as educators, facilitators and partners in European and international cooperation within the fields of geopolitics, security studies and global affairs.

Methodology and Assessment

The course employs a blended methodology combining expert input, interactive lectures, guided discussions, applied case studies, scenario analysis and collaborative group work. Cultural visits and experiential activities contextualise theoretical concepts within the Azorean environment, while structured intercultural exchanges strengthen communication and European cooperation skills. Digital tools (eTwinning, ESEP) support project-based learning and encourage sustained collaboration beyond the course. Continuous formative assessment is integrated through group tasks, reflective dialogues, micro-presentations and instructor feedback, culminating in a final presentation of outcomes during the closing session.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

Conceptual Understanding

• Analyse key concepts of International Relations, Security Studies, Geopolitics and Strategic Studies, and apply them to maritime and island contexts.
• Interpret the historical evolution of the Azores' strategic significance from early modern imperial competition to contemporary transatlantic security.
• Evaluate the changing geopolitical environment of the North Atlantic region, considering technological, environmental and global political trends.

Historical & Strategic Analysis

• Critically assess case studies such as the Habsburg bid for mastery and the Azores' role in WWII, drawing connections between past and present strategic imperatives.
• Examine the Azores' contemporary relevance within NATO, EU defence initiatives and wider Atlantic power dynamics.
• Apply scenario-building techniques to explore potential futures for the Azores and North Atlantic security landscape.

Pedagogical & Professional Competence

• Integrate geopolitical and historical insights into teaching strategies, curricular design and classroom-based inquiry learning.
• Use digital platforms such as eTwinning and ESEP to plan, coordinate and sustain international collaborative projects in geopolitics and related disciplines.
• Communicate complex geopolitical ideas in English with increased confidence, clarity and intercultural sensitivity.

Collaboration & Intercultural Development

• Engage constructively in intercultural dialogue, sharing professional perspectives shaped by different national and strategic cultures.
• Build cross-border networks for future cooperation in teaching, training, or research related to geopolitics and the North Atlantic.

Preparation

After registration participants will receive pre-course questionnaire which will be used by the trainer to learn about participants' teaching backgrounds and to assess their exact needs. Before the beginning of the course a basic reading list will be suggested to participants to prepare for the training. Participants will also be asked to prepare a presentation about themselves, their professional context and their culture. The presentation will be presented on the first day of the course to facilitate networking opportunities. Participants will receive information about the country they are going to visit in order to prepare them for their cultural experience.

Follow up

After the course participants will be asked to share what they have learned with the rest of the staff in their schools. Further books and articles to deepen the topic and contacts with some other practitioners all over Europe and in the world will be suggested by the trainer. The methods shared and explored and the bibliography given will allow the participants to complete and improve their educational path.

Certificate

Each participant will get a course attendance certificate and the Europass Mobility Document.

Accommodation

We do not directly offer accommodation and subsistence and participants are responsible for organizing it by themselves.

Paperwork

We also provide all the support with paperwork you might need for your Erasmus+ project documentation such as mobility agreement and registration letter.

Fee: 400 €

Cancelation policy

We have a flexible cancellation policy in force at the moment and you can cancel your registration up to 30 days before the course and receive a full refund. In case you don't cancel the registration more than 30 days before you will not receive any refunds, but you will be able to choose to attend any other confirmed course session later (within 6 months) without any additional costs. In case you are not able to travel, your school can send someone else to take

instead of you and you can change the details of the participant any time before the start of the course at no additional cost.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME (25 didactic hours - 5*45min per day) Monday to Friday	
Day 1	Introduction, Historical Foundations & Early Strategic Relevance
09.00 - 09.45	Introductions & Icebreakers
09.45 - 10.30	Course Overview & Learning Agreement
10.30 - 11.15	Overview of Azorean History
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Case Study: The Azores and the Late 16th Century 'Habsburg Bid for Mastery'
12.15 - 13.00	Guided walk to contextualise historical narratives
Day 2	International Relations, Security Studies & the Azores in Global Conflict
09.00 - 09.45	Overview of Concepts in International Relations & Security Studies
09.45 - 10.30	The Azores in 20th Century World History
10.30 - 11.15	Case Study: The Azores in WWII
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Group Discussion & Comparative Perspectives
12.15 - 13.00	Guidance on teaching materials, research interests, or school projects
Day 3	Geopolitics, Strategic Studies & the Azores in the Contemporary World
09.00 - 09.45	Overview of Geopolitics & Strategic Studies
09.45 - 10.30	The Azores in the Current Strategic Environment
10.30 - 11.15	Applied Analysis Workshop
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Visit to a site or institution related to Azorean identity or governance (TBA)
12.15 - 13.00	Reflection on cultural, political and strategic layers of the islands
Day 4	Futures Thinking, Pedagogical Tools & International Cooperation
09.00 - 09.45	What Geopolitics Can Tell Us About the Future of the Azores & the North

	Atlantic
09.45 - 10.30	Futures Scenario Workshop (part 1)
10.30 - 11.15	Futures Scenario Workshop (part 2)
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Introduction to eTwinning, ESEP and other EU digital platforms
12.15 - 13.00	Micro-planning of collaborative activities and exchanges
Day 5	Synthesis, Presentation of Outcomes & Closing Session
09.00 - 09.45	Designing Learning Outputs
09.45 - 10.30	Preparing the final presentations and individual support
10.30 - 11.15	Final presentations and feedback
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Evaluation & Reflection
12.15 - 13.00	Validation of learning outcomes and certification

*This is only a tentative timetable. The exact hours or the course might differ and will be announced for each session 2 weeks before the start. However, there will always be a total of 5 didactic hours per day and all will be in line with the Erasmus+ quality standards. The trainer might slightly modify the content in response to the needs of the group.

**Cultural and social programmes will be organized in addition to the academic programme. The exact cultural and social programme depends on the location, season, weather, etc.