

Essay and Discussion Questions

## Europe and Eurasia Higher Education Questions

Help students understand Europe and Eurasia through these essay and discussion questions.

### Question 1

It can be tempting to imagine Europe and Eurasia as a homogeneous or unified region. How does the contemporary history of Europe and Eurasia reveal national and international divisions across the continent?

### Question 2

How have religious, ethnic, and cultural divides shaped the contours of modern European politics? How do these tensions continue to drive robust political debates across the continent?

- Alternatively, select a country from the Europe and Eurasia region. Assess existing social and political divisions within your chosen country. Could it be argued that your country represents broader divisions on the continent? Why or why not?

### Question 3

Explain, in your own words, the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. In your opinion, should the Soviet Union's rise be remembered as a story of incredible industrial achievement, a story of terror and political repression, or a mix of both? Why?

### Question 4

Why might some consider Russia to be an outlier when compared to other European and Eurasian countries? In your opinion, how should European countries respond to Russia's recent military incursions and growing influence? Why?

### Question 5

How has the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) evolved in both size and mission since its formation in 1949? Why has NATO's future become a subject of increasing concern over the past decade?

### Question 6

To what extent is Europe and Eurasia still shaped by the legacy of the Cold War? Assess how effective the continent, as a whole, has been in responding to the challenges associated with this legacy.

### Question 7

Describe the history of the European Union's formation. What has this historic union aimed to achieve for its members? What pathways—and challenges—exist for the European Union's future?

- The European Union is a political institution that has bound large portions of the continent together in spite of historic rifts. Evaluate, in your own words, the strengths and weaknesses of this institution. Alternatively, evaluate a country's possible reasons to join—or leave—the European Union.

## Question 8

Why might some observers consider Europe and Eurasia to be a democratic stronghold? Conversely, why might other observers note concern about democratic backsliding on the continent? What comment would you add to this conversation?

## Question 9

Europe and Eurasia have a complex relationship with migration and immigration: where some Europeans have positive attitudes towards migrant populations, many other Europeans have negative attitudes. Draft a policy memo to the leader of a European or Eurasian country on the topic of migration. Your memo should assess both sides of the debate and ultimately provide a recommendation on the country's stance towards immigration.

## Question 10

In your own words, describe the social and cultural traditions that link Europeans and Eurasians together today. In other words, how have events like football matches, singing contests, student exchanges, and tourism helped create a European identity beyond the political identity fashioned by the European Union?