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### **Comments on Area Studies BA course**

In my opinion the Area Studies course was designed in the right way for BA students during the 4 EU+ workshops in Prague. What I mean by that is that the structure of the course is reasonable and particular topics are in the correct order, starting from contemporary issues to attract students with the course and show that its main focus won't be only on theories and historical background. However, definitions and evolution of area studies in general are crucial topics which will be presented during the second or third lecture. According to me the course is a perfect blend of theory, methodology and contemporary issues thanks to the case studies presented during the lectures. The biggest advantage of the course are the mentioned case studies of particular regions (continents). It is a great opportunity for BA students to study about each region in order to be able to decide their region of interest. What is more, the course is also designed to make students familiar with different approaches to area studies, seen from the perspective of various disciplines, which is a huge asset given the fact how much interdisciplinary area studies are. The only element of the area studies course that is a little bit unclear to me is the final paper. I am not sure if I remember it well but it was supposed to be some written feedback of the course from students. According to me the final assignment should be some mini project in a form of presentation made by students in groups about the area of their interest from the perspective of the discipline that seems most appealing for them. Students doing their own research and preparing presentations would be able to actually determine if they would like to continue their further studies on the given region.

### **Suggestions on teaching Area Studies in general**

According to me it is required to make specialisations in the BA course of international relations including the specialisation in area studies. Such a solution will enable students to actually become experts from their region of interest. The first years of studies would include the general subjects which are necessary to understand international relations, focusing on theory, methodology and historical background as well as the given language of the region of interest. In the 3rd year students would mainly focus on the chosen region in different aspects in a more practical dimension, including study visits at embassies or international institutions. Moreover, I think it is crucial to make students realise what Area Studies are. At the

University of Warsaw we have the specialisation in Area Studies in MA course but unfortunately not many students are interested in it as much as in specialisation in diplomacy. It can be because students were never familiar with what area studies are in practice apart from the theory. In a simple way, Area Studies needs good advertising among BA students showing them that they can actually become an expert of a particular region in a practical way. Moreover, I have noticed that some regions are more popular than others. For example nowadays it is more likely to do research on the region of North America or Asia and not on Africa or Eastern Europe (Russia). The regions of less interest should be presented even in a more encouraging way to students and surely we should not omit them. In Area Studies our goal should be to promote diversity.