



**Warrnambool**

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Semester 1, 2023

International Affairs with Gerry Engwerda

Warrnambool Library, Room 2, Mondays 10.30

Tutor zooms in from Wodonga, participants face to face and on  
zoom

27 February. The story of Russia

This session will present an overview of Russia's history beginning with the Rurik Dynasty and Kievan Rus and then moving on to Vladimir, Ivan IV and the Romanov greats Peter and Catherine. From there we will look at the recurring themes or preoccupations in Russian history and how they inform Russia's present priorities and behaviour.

13 March. Iran

Repression works until it doesn't. There is no question that underlying the current tensions are issues that go beyond the forced hijab. Economic injustice, inflation and a lack of faith in the future have all been contributing factors in the current unrest. Young Iranians are frustrated by decades of economic mismanagement alongside the impact of international sanctions and they hold the Iranian leadership accountable for both issues. They are less inclined to blame the west as their government does.

The Iranian government for its part feels that any relaxation on the rules that govern women's dress will be Berlin Wall moment for them and the beginning of the end for the theocratic state. This session will look at all of those factors and where this conflict and division nation will go from here.

27 March. The Little Ice Age

Only in the last decade have climatologists developed an accurate picture of yearly climate conditions in historical times. This development confirmed a long-standing suspicion: that the world endured a 500-year cold snap -- *The Little Ice Age* -- that lasted roughly from A.D. 1300 until 1850. The Little Ice Age tells the story of the turbulent, unpredictable and

often very cold years of modern European history, how climate altered historical events.

#### 24 April. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is based on the principle that human intelligence can be defined in a way that a machine can easily mimic it and execute tasks, from the simplest to those that are even more complex. The goals of artificial intelligence include mimicking human cognitive activity. In this session we will look at how AI is being used, future applications and how it might change the way we live and interact with machines.

#### 8 May. Is the US in decline?

Has the current extreme polarisation signalled the end of America's predominance in the post war world, or can it rebound as it has done so successfully in the past? Will its demography, its record of innovation, see it out of its current malaise or are the problems too deep seated to be easily overcome? What would a post America world look like? Is the American Empire going to go the way of all empires and how would Americans themselves adapt to these changed circumstances.

#### 22 May. Borders and boundaries

Borders mark where a state starts and finishes, where legal authority over a people is exercised. But some are bizarre, many ignore geography and all change over time. Why are some borders simply straight lines and why does Africa have so many of them? This session will look at how borders keep some people out, how border security feeds into populism, how they may become places of conflict but also how they might lead to an exchange of ideas, goods and innovation.

### **Tutor Profile**

**Gerry Engwerda.** I am a retired High School teacher. In my 43 years in the classroom, I taught English, History and International Relations and as well worked part time for Latrobe University. I am now happily retired in Yackandandah where we, (my wife, Ellen and I), have lived for the past 40 years. We have four children and ten grandchildren who take up all the time not taken by U3A. I am an aviation enthusiast and a terribly

average cook who likes nothing better than to be left alone with a nice glass of red and a good book.