



Ages of Globalization

Advanced Learning Program for Higher Education

A groundbreaking educational initiative now launching for
Higher Education Institution Learners & Educators

Ages of Globalization is an innovative global program based on Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs' seminal book that explores the story of humanity across the world and over time. This online course traces 70,000 years of human, economic, and environmental history through the seven ages of globalization, and the forces shaping our interconnected world. It empowers learners to explore humanity's history of interdependence and change, shaped by geography, technology, and institutions, to better address and solve the challenges we face today.

The Ages of Globalization (AoG) is a free course and designed for a global audience – students, educators, and lifelong learners – eager to deepen their understanding of global history and take action for sustainable development.

This new AoG program is specifically tailored for learners and educators in higher education.

As part of this new program participants will have access to:

- 10 live lectures with Professor Sachs (February to April 2026)
- Dynamic video lectures and lesson plans
- Monthly live sessions with world leaders
- Virtual visits to UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- Action-based learning activities & maps

“Our history is one of interdependence – globalization – as well as change, driven by geography, technology, and institutions. By understanding our shared history, we can also understand how to meet the great challenges of our time.”

Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs
President, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network
& Columbia University Professor

Join the 13,000+
learners and educators
from 165 countries
already making a
difference with AoG!



Ages of Globalization for Higher Education

Call to Higher Education Institutions

In February 2026 an AoG **Program for Higher Education** will be debut with LIVE lectures from Jeffrey D. Sachs. To follow this **ten-week program** from **3 February to 7 April**, **Higher Education Institution learners and educators** are invited to join weekly live global classroom sessions via Zoom.

Learners and educators will have the opportunity to directly engage with Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs to explore specific issues and topics across 10 Learning Modules.

Register now for the LIVE lectures from Jeffrey D. Sachs

Spring 2026 lectures begin: Feb 3, 2026 08:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

<https://columbiauniversity.zoom.us/meeting/register/H-aLWZ2iTtSiw-GlaMouA>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Zoom meetings.

Please visit the Ages of Globalization website Higher Ed Program page, enroll as a learner or educator to access the 10 Learning Modules.

Whether you're an individual, part of a classroom, or a life-long learner, everyone is welcome to enroll in this Higher Ed Program!

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Know more about the course from Dr. Lucia Rodriguez [here](#)



Ages of Globalization for Higher Education

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Ages of Globalization for Higher Education is a two-part college-level course inspired by Jeffrey D. Sachs' acclaimed book of the same name.

The flexible, self-paced online module format is available year-round and a special interactive live session will be offered in Spring 2026, where students can engage directly with Professor Sachs on key topics.

This rigorous academic program provides students with an in-depth understanding of the forces shaping our interconnected world, emphasizing their relevance to the environment, politics, technology, and other critical areas.

Through partnerships with various educational institutions, AoG seeks to cultivate a new generation of capable and committed leaders dedicated to building a sustainable and equitable world.

PART I

Fall 2025 (leading up to any time before live lectures begin in February 2026):

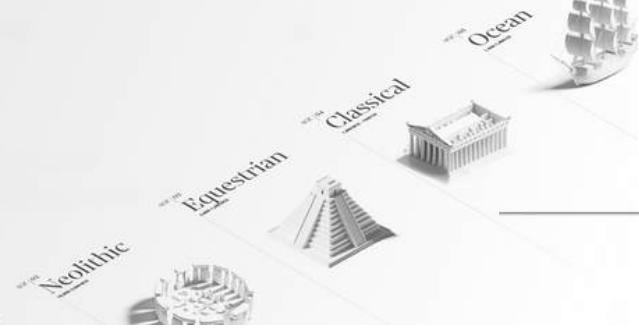
- Open period for interested students to complete the **10 self-paced AoG modules** online. The online modules will be available for students to access in 2026 as well, but familiarizing with the contents of AoG before the February live lecture launch is recommended. **Learners** sign up [here](#). **Educators** sign up [here](#).

PART II

Spring 2026:

- All course participants – both learners and educators – can follow the **10-week live course** via Zoom, with one-hour sessions each week facilitated by Professor Sachs. Sign up [here](#).
- During these sessions, students will explore specific topics (listed below) on designated days.

Please note that Institutions of Higher Education are encouraged to adapt and localize the course content to fit their needs and their institution's academic calendar.



Ages of Globalization for Higher Education Syllabus

COURSE TOPICS & 10 LIVE LECTURE DATES 2026

Course Professor: Jeffrey D. Sachs

1. The Seven Ages of Globalization.....	February 3
2. Geography.....	February 10
3. Technology.....	February 17
4. Institutions.....	February 24
5. Sustainable Development & the SDGs.....	March 3
6. The Rise of Empires in the Ancient World.....	March 10
7. The Rise of Western Power after 1500.....	March 17
8. From Western Dominance to Multipolarity.....	March 24
9. The Sustainability Imperative.....	March 31
10. The New Multilateralism & Sustainable Development to 2050.....	April 7

COURSE OUTLINE

Education is the key to building more peaceful and sustainable societies. AoG offers a powerful solution by advancing Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education, focusing on **three core learning outcomes**:

- Knowledge & Solution-Oriented Thinking – understanding global history, sustainability challenges, and solutions.
- Social & Emotional Skills – cultivating empathy, intercultural understanding, and leadership for collaborative action.
- Action-Taking for Sustainable Transformations – turning ideas into action by leading change in the personal, societal and political spheres.

By understanding humanity's shared history through this course, students will:

- Understand sustainability challenges and their complex interlinkages, explore disruptive ideas and alternative solutions.
- Build core values and attitudes for sustainability, cultivate empathy and compassion for other people and the planet, and motivate to lead the change.
- Take practical action for sustainable transformations in the personal, societal and political sphere.



Ages of Globalization for Higher Education

KEY QUESTIONS THAT WILL BE EXPLORED

1. What are the main drivers of global-scale change?
2. How do geography, technology, and institutions interact?
3. How do changes in one region affect other regions?
4. How has global interdependence changed throughout history?
5. What lessons can we glean from each age of globalization to help us meet our challenges today?
6. How can the world in the 21st century achieve prosperity, social inclusion and environmental sustainability in this 7th age of globalization?
7. How should our global governance be reorganized to achieve sustainable development in our multipolar world?
8. How can we secure global peace possible, and how can global ethics help to secure peace?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Students should complete the self-paced Higher Ed AoG course in the Fall. For students and educators that do not get an opportunity to access the online course, the modules will be available all throughout 2026. Taking the self-paced course prior to the February live lecture launch is recommended.
- For students participating as part of a class, a course coordinator is required for the Spring section of AoG.
- Course coordinators should localize the course's global hour of content led by Professor Sachs to suit their local or regional context.
- The ten Spring course live lectures will be delivered sequentially online, allowing students to participate at the same time from different locations in a virtual classroom.

COURSE READINGS

- Sachs, Jeffrey D. (2020), *The Ages of Globalization: Geography, technology, and institutions*, Columbia University Press
- Topic-specific readings recommended under each lecture in the syllabus



Ages of Globalization for Higher Education

COURSE CREDITS

AoG for Higher Ed while open to all, invites universities and colleges to integrate AoG as part of a year-long credit-bearing course. It is recommended that students receive academic credit for completing both parts of the course (Fall and Spring). Credits should be awarded by the students' respective academic institutions. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network does not grant credit for any of its courses. However, upon successful completion of both course sections and upon written request from the coordinator of Ages of Globalization at the participating institution, a certificate of participation—signed by Professor Sachs—can be issued to the participating academic institutions and their students.

SPRING LIVE COURSE STRUCTURE

Class Schedule: Each live session will be held every Tuesday at 8:00 a.m. EST.

Preparatory Work: Students should complete assigned readings prior to each class session.

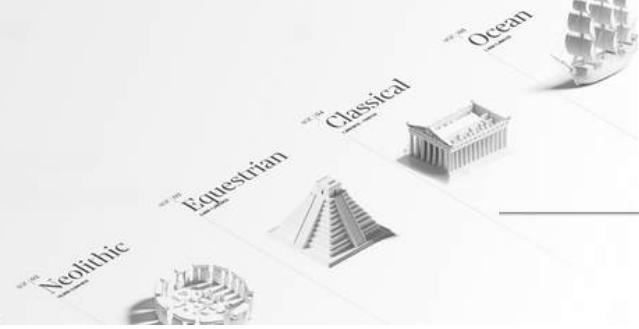
Course Format: This course will be conducted as an online seminar at the higher education level.

Session Structure: Professor Sachs will deliver a 30 to 40-minute lecture on the topic of the day, followed by a Q&A session. Students will use Slido, a platform for live questions and polling.

Technical Requirements: Each participating class should have their camera turned on during sessions, allowing Professor Sachs and students to see each other via Zoom.

Participation Expectations: Due to the collaborative and participatory nature of the course, students are expected to attend every session. Students are expected to come prepared by completing the assigned readings and actively participating in class discussions.

Post-Session Activity: It is expected that after the global hour with Professor Sachs, participating classes will hold an additional session to localize and adapt the discussed topics to their local or regional context. During this post-session activity, AoG coordinators will design assignments that encourage their students to not only deepen their understanding of the Ages of Globalization in relation to sustainable development but also develop activities related to the topic that are relevant to their local context.



Spring 2026

Curriculum: 10 MODULES for the LIVE LECTURES

Module 1: THE 7 AGES OF GLOBALIZATION

Introduces the framework of seven historical ages shaped by geography, technology, and institutions, tracing humanity's journey from hunter-gatherers to the digital age.

- **Introduction to The Ages of Globalization**

- 8 billion of us living in an interconnected world
- Interconnected in many crucial ways: trade, finance, tourism, technology, climate
- Huge challenges facing us today, especially young people
- Sustainable Development is our goal
- History helps us to understand how to achieve our goals

- **The Seven Ages of Globalization**

- Why seven ages?
- The drivers of change: environment, technology, and institutions
- From Homo Erectus to 8 billion of us
- From hunting and gathering to urban life
- Seven Ages: Paleolithic, Neolithic, Equestrian, Classical, Ocean, Industrial, Digital

Module 2: GEOGRAPHY

Explores how climate, topography, rivers, trade routes, and disease patterns have influenced economies, societies, and global interconnection.

- **The Environment as Home and Shaper of Economy**

- Climate zones and economy
- Topography
- River systems
- Trade Routes
- Disease patterns and environment



Module 3: TECHNOLOGY

Examines the role of innovation – from tools and infrastructure to industrialization and digital technologies – in driving transformation across all seven ages.

- **2 million Years of Technological Advancement**
 - Types of technology
 - Technological change
 - Innovation through all seven ages
 - Empire: Infrastructure
 - Ocean Age and Industrialization
 - Digital

Module 4: INSTITUTIONS

Looks at the evolution of social, political, economic, and religious institutions, and their role in shaping how humans live and interact.

- **Institutions and How We Live**
 - Human beings as “social animals”
 - Politics
 - Property and Economy
 - Religion, Culture, Ethics
 - International Relations

Module 5: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & SDGs

Connects today's urgent challenges – poverty, inequality, and division on a crowded planet – to the global vision of peace, prosperity, and sustainability.

- **Our Great Challenges Today**
 - 8 billion people on a crowded planet
 - Poverty in the midst of plenty
 - A deeply unequal & divided world
 - The complexities of modern life
 - Finding Peace & Cooperation in a deeply divided world



Module 6: THE RISE OF EMPIRES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Traces the emergence of great empires across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, highlighting their contributions to culture, governance, and exchange.

- **The Equestrian Age: 3,000 – 1,000 BCE**
 - The Ancient Steppes – Uzbekistan
- **The Classical Age – West: 1,000 BCE – 1,500 CE**
 - The Golden Age of Athens – Greece
 - The Macedonians, Alexander the Great at Mieza – Greece
 - The Macedonians, Alexander the Great the King – Greece
 - The Roman Forum – Italy
 - The Mongols – The Registan – Uzbekistan
- **The Classical Age – East: 1,000 – 1,500 CE**
 - The Great Wall of China
- **The Emergence of Islam: 620 CE**
 - The Umayyad Empire – Spain

Module 7: THE RISE OF WESTERN POWER AFTER 1500

Explores the birth of global empires, colonial expansion, and the institutions that consolidated Western dominance.

- **The Birth of Global Empires**
 - The Escorial – Spain
 - The Chapel of Santa Maria Antigua – Spain
 - Palacio Rio Branco – Brazil
- **Competition Among European Empires**
 - London – England
 - Blenheim Palace – England
 - Bank of England – England
 - Versailles – France
 - Hofburg Palace – Austria
- **The Rise of the US to Global Predominance**
 - Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States



Module 8: FROM WESTERN DOMINANCE TO MULTIPOLARITY (POST-1950)

Examines the shifts since 1950 – from decolonization to the rise of new powers – toward a more multipolar world order.

- **The Post-Colonial World (Post-1950)**

- The Ancient Steppes – Uzbekistan
- Century of Humiliation and the birth of the PRC – China
- End of Colonial Rule – India
- Crossroads of the East-West, North-South – Turkey
- Multi-Cultural – Brazil

Module 9: THE SUSTAINABILITY IMPERATIVE

Focuses on today's environmental crossroads, addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, circular economy, and pathways to 2050.

- **Climate Change**

- Great Challenges: Saving the Environment
- The Great Rainforests – Brazil

- **Pathways to 2050**

- **The Future of Work, Technology, Living Patterns, and Politics**

- Demographic Change
- Automation, Artificial Intelligence
- Two Paths: Utopia or Dystopia
- Urban Life: Time Allocation
- Care economy

- **The World in 2050: Building the Future We Want**

- How to Achieve Sustainable Development
- Choosing Peace over War
- Global Ethics
- Harnessing the Digital Age
- The Leadership of Young People



Module 10: THE NEW MULTILATERALISM

Considers how international institutions and global ethics can guide cooperation for peace, justice, and sustainable development in the decades ahead.

- The United Nations: UN Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Sustainable Development Goals, New York, USA
- The World Bank and International Monetary Fund, Washington DC
- Global Ethics: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Challenges (philosophers)



[Find out more](#)



Visit our [FAQs](#) page
or contact us directly to learn more:

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