



Peace and Security:

Reflecting on the 80th Anniversary of the End of World War II

July 2, 2025 | Villa La Pietra, Florence
Via Bolognese, 120, 50139 Firenze FI, Italy

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, a watershed moment that redefined international institutions, norms, and power structures. The legacies of that postwar order continue to shape our geopolitical landscape, even as they are increasingly contested by rising powers, regional realignments, and global crises.

Set against this backdrop of profound transition, this interdisciplinary workshop at NYU Florence's Villa La Pietra brings together philosophers, political scientists, historians, and policymakers from China, Europe, and the United States. Our shared aim is to revisit the philosophical foundations of war and peace, the evolution of conflict resolution, and the contested values that underpin global governance.

Central to our inquiry is a reflection on the contemporary relevance of inherited global categories, such as *the West*, *the East*, *the Global North*, and *the Global South*, and the enduring power of associated value frameworks such as "Occidental" rationalism or liberalism and "Oriental" harmony or holism. These conceptual geographies not only shape international relations and ideological fault lines but also influence how peace, justice, and order are understood and pursued across different cultures.

On July 2, 2025, Villa La Pietra's historic setting will serve as a space for critical dialogue:

- How do historical experiences—especially those shaped by WWII's aftermath—continue to inform dominant and alternative visions of security and world order?
- Can the ideals of cosmopolitanism or new forms of universalism gain traction in a fragmented world defined by technological disruption, climate crises, and shifting power centers?
- Is it possible for ideological pluralism and great-power competition—particularly in the context of U.S.-China relations—to coexist with enduring stability?
- How can we rethink global ethics when inherited civilizational distinctions—such as West vs. East or North vs. South—are both challenged and reinforced in today's discourses?

Through forward-looking, interdisciplinary discussions, this workshop does not merely seek to diagnose the problems of our time. It aims to foster creative thinking about viable pathways toward a more equitable and peaceful international order. By bridging historical reflection with philosophical analysis and policy insight, it aspires to make a meaningful contribution to reimagining peace and global ethics in the 21st century.

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

DAY 1 – JULY 2, 2025

I. Morning Academic Sessions

Structured presentations by leading philosophers and scholars responses

9:00 – 9:30 | Welcome and Framing the Day

- **Welcome Remarks:** *Maria Adele Carrai* (NYU Shanghai)
 - **Introductory Reflection:** *Prof. Shijun Tong* (NYU Shanghai)
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9:30 – 11:00 | Session I – Global Ethics, Peace, and Justice

Moderator: *Maria Adele Carrai* (NYU Shanghai)

This session brings together four senior philosophers to examine foundational questions about peace, justice, and the moral obligations of states and societies. Interdisciplinary respondents will reflect on how these insights intersect with politics, diplomacy, and global development.

Presenters:

- *Prof. Shijun Tong* (NYU Shanghai) – *Bertrand Russell and the Ethics of Peace*
- *Prof. Thomas Pogge* (Yale University) – *Justice and Global Responsibility*
- *Prof. Qing Liu* (East China Normal University) – *Chinese Intellectual Traditions and the Philosophy of Peace*
- *Prof. Gunnar Skirbekk* (University of Bergen) – *Philosophy, Modernity, and the Global Ethos*

Commentators:

- *Aurelio Insisa* (IAI)
- *Filippo Fasulo* (ISPI)
- *Silvia Menegazzi* (LUISS)
- *Ivan Rasmussen* (NYU Shanghai)

Format:

- 12-minute presentations
- 5-minute responses

- 15-minute open discussion
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11:00 – 11:30 | Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:45 | Session II – Philosophy, Conflict, and Pluralism in a Fragmented World **Moderator:** *Ivan Rasmussen* (NYU Shanghai)

Presenters:

- *Prof. Gerard Delanty* (University of Sussex) – *Universalism and Pluralism in Global Ethics*
- *Prof. Petar Bojanic* (University of Belgrade) – *Philosophy and Conflict*
- *Prof. Asger Sørensen* (Aarhus University) – *Democracy, Pedagogy, and Global Peace*

Commentators (non-philosophers):

- *Aleksandar Stojanović* (NYU Shanghai)
- *Alessia Amighini* (ISPI) – Political economy of fragmentation
- *Enrico Fardella* (John Cabot University) – China, modernity, and intellectual diplomacy
- *Giorgio Prodi* (University of Bologna) – Comparative governance and regionalism

Format:

- 12-minute presentations
 - 5-minute responses
 - 15-minute open discussion
-

II. Afternoon Roundtables

Interdisciplinary, semi-structured discussions for broader dialogue and reflection

12:45 – 14:00 | Lunch *Garden of Villa La Pietra*

14:00 – 15:30 | Roundtable I – Rethinking Peace in a Time of Fragmentation **Moderator:** *Enrico Fardella* (John Cabot University)

Guiding Questions:

- What philosophical, cultural, or religious traditions shape our understanding of peace today?
- Can non-Western and non-Northern traditions contribute to a shared global ethics of peace?
- How do shifting narratives around "the West," "the East," "the Global South," and "the North" impact contemporary understandings of peace?

Core Discussants:

- *Gunnar Skirbekk, Qing Liu, Petar Bojanic, Alessia Amighini, Silvia Menegazzi, Ivan Rasmussen*
Listeners/Note-takers: *Filippo Fasulo, Giorgio Prodi*
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15:30 – 15:45 | Coffee Break

15:45 – 17:15 | Roundtable II – Global Order and the Weight of History

Moderator: *Jennifer Rudolph (WPI)*

Guiding Questions:

- How has the idea of global order evolved since WWII?
- How do imagined geographies—North/South, East/West—continue to shape global politics?
- Can past forms of internationalism be reimagined for today's fragmented world?

Core Discussants:

- *Thomas Pogge, Gerard Delanty, Aurelio Insisa, Shijun Tong, Enrico Fardella, Asger Sørensen*
Listeners/Note-takers: *Maria Adele Carrai, Aleksandar Stojanović*
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III. Evening Reception

18:00 – 21:00 | Aperitivo & Dinner (Location TBD)

Informal conversation and networking

DAY 2 – JULY 3, 2025

10:00 | Guided Tour of Villa La Pietra

*A private historical and architectural tour of the estate
(Optional, but highly encouraged)*

Participants:

- Alessia Amighini, Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale
- Petar Bojanic, University of Belgrade
- Maria Adele Carrai, NYU Shanghai
- Gerard Delanty, University of Sussex
- Enrico Fardella, John Cabot University
- Filippo Fasulo, Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale
- Aurelio Insisa, Istituto Affari Internazionali
- Qing Liu, East China Normal University
- Silvia Menegazzi, LUISS
- Thomas Pogge, Yale University
- Giorgio Prodi, University of Bologna
- Ivan Rasmussen, NYU Shanghai
- Jennifer Rudolph, WPI
- Gunnar Skirbekk, University of Bergen
- Asger Sørensen, Aarhus University
- Aleksandar Stojanović, NYU Shanghai
- Shijun Tong, NYU Shanghai

In partnership with:

Asia Society Policy Institute
US-China Institute



Bio of Participants



Alessia Amighini is Co-Head of Asia Centre and Senior Associate Research Fellow at ISPI. She is Associate Professor of Economics at the Department of Economic and Business Studies (DiSEI) at the University of Piemonte Orientale (Novara, Italy). Amighini previously worked as an Associate Economist at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, Geneva, Switzerland). Alessia holds a PhD in Development Economics from the University of Florence (Italy) and a Master in Economics as well as a BA in Economics from Bocconi University (Milan, Italy). She has published in many international peer-reviewed journals such as *China Economic Review*, *World Development*, *The World Economy*, *International Economics*, *China and the World Economy*. Alessia also published chapters in several books for Edward Elgar, Harvard University Press, Oxford University Press, Palgrave, Routledge; she coauthored *‘L’economia della Cina’* (Carocci, 2007) and *Macroeconomics: A European Perspective* (Pearson, 2010 and 2013). She has contributed to several international research projects sponsored by Central Bank of Sweden, Inter-American Development Bank and UNU-WIDER. Alessia is a member of the ASEFUAN (Asia-Europe Foundation University) Alumni Network since 1998.



Petar Bojanic is Principal Research Fellow at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory of the University of Belgrade. He is also a founding Director of the Center for Advanced Studies Southeast Europe, University of Rijeka, and President of the Institute for Democratic Engagement Southeast Europe in Belgrade. Petar began his academic journey investigating the themes of war, violence, and institutional dynamics under the guidance of Jacques Derrida and Etienne Balibar. He developed his theoretical work at esteemed institutions, such as Cornell, Birkbeck, and the Käte Hamburger Kolleg. He was Principal Investigator on a project examining the ethics of war in Orthodox Christianity and the eastern European tradition at the University of Yekaterinburg until the war in Ukraine. Demand for Petar’s expertise has resulted in him being visiting professor at renowned universities worldwide, including in Aberdeen, Bologna, London, Turin, and Rome. Petar’s research on war, ethics, violence, and Jewish political theory has been profoundly shaped by his exploration of institutions and counter-institutions, contributing significantly to the field of violence studies. At THE NEW INSTITUTE, Petar is involved as Chair of the program [Bitter Victory: Is Victory Possible in the 21st Century?](#) in the academic year 2024/25.



Maria Adele Carrai is an Assistant Professor of Global China Studies at NYU Shanghai. Her research explores the history of international law in East Asia and investigates how China's rise as a global power shapes norms and redefines the international distribution of power. She co-leads the Research Initiative 'Mapping Global China,' and is the author of *Sovereignty in China. A Genealogy of a Concept since 1840* (CUP 2019) and co-editor of *The China Questions 2 - Critical Insights into US-China Relations* (HUP 2022). Before joining NYU Shanghai, she was a recipient of a three-year Marie-Curie fellowship at KU Leuven. She was also a Fellow at the Italian Academy of Columbia University, Princeton-Harvard China and the World Program, Max Weber Program of the European University Institute of Florence, and New York University Law School.



Gerard Delanty is an interdisciplinary sociologist with a strong interest in social theory and the cultural and historical analysis of social and political questions. His work focuses in particular on the comparative analysis of modernity in a global perspective and on processes of social change in Europe. Much of his research explores the implications of globalization for understanding the social world. He has authored eleven books—many of which have been translated into multiple languages—and edited seven volumes. In addition, he has published over 100 scholarly articles on topics including social and political theory, European identities, globalization, nationalism, and the cultural and historical sociology of modernity.

He joined the University of Sussex in September 2007 as Professor of Sociology, following a tenure at the University of Liverpool, where he had been Professor of Sociology since 1996. Since 2021, he holds the title of Emeritus Professor of Sociology. He earned his B.A. in 1982, M.A. in 1984, and Ph.D. in 1987 in sociology and philosophy from University College Cork, Ireland. He was also a DAAD Fellow at Frankfurt University in 1985–86.



Enrico Maria Fardella is an Associate Professor in the Department of Social and Human Sciences at the University of Naples 'L'Orientale'. He serves as the Director of the ChinaMed.it Project, Associate Director of the Guarini Institute for Public Affairs at John Cabot University in Rome, and a Global Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. He is also an Honorary Life Member of Trevelyan College at Durham University and sits on the editorial boards of the *European Journal of East Asian Studies* and *Orizzonte Cina*. Previously, Dr. Fardella held the position of Associate Professor at Peking University, where he also served as Director of the Center for Mediterranean Area Studies. Additionally, he was a Fellow of the Science & Technology China Program of the European Commission. His research interests encompass the history of Chinese foreign policy, as well as China's relations with the European Union, the Middle East, and Italy, from the Cold War to the present.



Filippo Fasulo is Co-head of the Geoeconomic Centre and Senior Research Fellow of the Asia Centre at the Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI). He also works as an adjunct professor at the Catholic University of Milan and is a Research Affiliate at the Sant' Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa. He has previously worked as director of the Italy-China Foundation's Centre for Business Research (CeSIF) and has served as a member of the scientific committee and deputy editorial director of the journal "Mondo Cinese".



Aurelio Insisa is Senior Research Fellow for Asia within the "Global actors" programme at the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). Aurelio holds a PhD in Chinese history from the University of Hong Kong, where he lectured for six years. He was the 2023-24 Jean Monnet Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute.

His research portfolio covers the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China, with a focus on China's relations with the European Union and its member states, and Indo-Pacific security, as well as cross-Strait relations between Beijing and Taipei. His main fields of expertise are Chinese propaganda, strategic communications, and hybrid threats/grey zone operations, as well as connectivity and economic statecraft.

Aurelio is the co-author of the volume *Sino-Japanese Power Politics* (Palgrave, 2017) and has published numerous studies for the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, as well as for academic journals such as *International Affairs*, *China Quarterly*, *The Pacific Review* and *Asia Major*.



Liu Qing is the Zijiang Distinguished Professor at East China Normal University. He received his Ph.D. degree in Political Science from the University of Minnesota. His main research interests lie in intellectual history, political philosophy and world politics. His publications include: *Lectures on Modern Western Thought* (2021), *Great Reversal: Intellectual Trends in the West since 2000* (2021), *The Myth of Chineseness* (2013) and *The Undetermined Moment: Modernity and Western Thought* (2006). Liu Qing has received fellowships from the MacArthur Foundation (1994-95), American Social Science Research Council (Summer 1996), the Fulbright Scholar Program (2007-08), and the Program for New Century Excellent Talents of the Chinese Ministry of Education (2008).



Silvia Menegazzi is Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, Luiss Guido Carli, where she teaches International Relations and Asian Studies. Between 2021 and 2023 she was EAVI Fellow at the Elliott School of International Affairs (GW). Dr. Menegazzi held research and teaching positions at Luiss Guido Carli, Roma Tre University, the China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU), the University of Warwick (PAIS). She is the author of the book *Rethinking Think Tanks in Contemporary China* (Palgrave 2018) and co-author of the book *New Regional Initiatives in China's Foreign Policy. The Incoming Pluralism of Global Governance* (Palgrave 2018, with Matteo Dian). She has also been published in a variety of publications including *East Asia Forum*, *China Brief*, *AsiaMaior* and *ChinaFile*. Her research interests focus primarily on comparative regionalism and global governance, EU-Asia relations, foreign policy, think tanks and non-governmental actors of contemporary Asia (China, Japan, Korean Peninsula).



Thomas Winfried Menko Pogge is a German philosopher and is the Director of the Global Justice Program and Leitner Professor of Philosophy and International Affairs at Yale University, United States. In addition to his Yale appointment, he is the Research Director of the Centre for the Study of the Mind in Nature at the University of Oslo, Norway, a Professorial Research Fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at Charles Sturt University, Australia, and Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire's Centre for Professional Ethics, England. Pogge is also an editor for social and political philosophy for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and a member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letter.



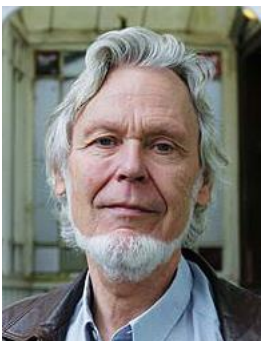
Giorgio Prodi is Associate Professor in applied economics at the University of Ferrara, Department of Economics and Management. He is Director of Asia and Pacific relations at Bologna Business School. His research activities center on the study of structural changes in the manufacturing sectors and the Chinese economy, with particular emphasis on the impact these changes have on Italian companies. On these topics he has published articles in international journals such as the *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, *Journal of Evolutionary Economy*, *Scientific Reports* and *International Review of Economics and Finance*. In addition to research, he carries out consultancy activities and is a member of the Board of Directors of some manufacturing companies. He is Partner and member of the board of Turin World Affairs Institute.



Ivan Willis Rasmussen is the Undergraduate Coordinator of Social Sciences and an Associate Professor of Practice in Political Science at NYU Shanghai. Prior to joining NYU Shanghai, he was a Visiting Assistant Professor of Government at Hamilton College and a Research Fellow with the International Security Program at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center. His research has appeared in the *Asian Journal of Public Affairs* and the *Chinese Yearbook of International Law and Affairs* with a co-authored book, [*At the Dawn of Belt and Road: China in the Developing World*](#) (RAND Report). Dr. Rasmussen has taught and researched at a variety of institutions including Hamilton College, Tufts University, Harvard Kennedy School, Boston College, and Renmin Daxue (People's University in Beijing). He previously worked for the US Department of State, Duke University/Gates Foundation, and the RAND Corporation. Dr. Rasmussen is a member of the American Political Science Association, International Studies Association, and Association of Asian Studies along with acting as a reviewer for various journals.



Jennifer Rudolph is Professor of Asian History and International and Global Studies at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, where she is also the Director of the university's China Hub and its project centers in Hangzhou and Taipei. Previously, she served as the Executive Director of the Harvard China Fund and Harvard's Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, and she continues to be a Research Associate there. A member of the National Committee on US-China Relations, her current research focuses on political identity in Taiwan. Her most recent book *The China Questions: Critical Insights into a Rising Power* (Harvard University Press, 2018), co-edited with Michael Szonyi, has been published in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and soon Russian. *The China Questions II: Critical Issues in the US-China Relationship* will be out in August 2022 (Harvard University Press, 2022).



Gunnar Skirbekk is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Bergen, where he was also the founding director of the Center for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities. A distinguished member of both the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences and Letters, Skirbekk has contributed significantly to the fields of philosophy of science, modernity, and intercultural dialogue. Having studied in Oslo, Paris, and Tübingen, he later conducted research and held academic positions at institutions including the University of California, San Diego; the University of Nice; Freie Universität Berlin; and East China Normal University, where he served as Advisory Professor. He also worked closely with thinkers such as Herbert Marcuse and Avrum Stroll.

Skirbekk is the recipient of numerous honors, including the Lauritz Meltzer Award for outstanding research and the Tønnes Andenæs Award (with Nils Gilje) for their influential *Filosofihistorie* (A History of

Western Thought). His work has been translated into over 20 languages, and in 2013, he was named Nynorsk User of the Year for his contributions to public discourse.



Asger Sørensen is Associate Professor in Philosophy of Education at Aarhus University, Denmark, holding a mag. art. (1992) and a Ph. D. (1999) in Philosophy from University of Copenhagen, Denmark. He has been invited to lecture (in Danish, English and Spanish) at universities at five continents, e.g. in the U.K., Germany, France, Spain, Sweden, China, Mexico, and Uruguay. He is currently vicepresident of the Danish corps of university censors in philosophy, and earlier he has served as spokesperson of the Nordic Summer University and as president of the Danish Philosophical Society.



Aleksandar Stojanovic is an Assistant Professor of Practice in Economics at NYU Shanghai and a scholar in law and economics. His research, published in peer-reviewed journals across both disciplines, focuses on the outcomes of interactions between the legal system and informal institutional arrangements in international investment, trade, and finance. Aleksandar teaches game theory, comparative and international economics, as well as comparative law and data policy and governance.



Tong Shijun became Chancellor of NYU Shanghai in 2020 after holding a long-term position as Professor of Philosophy at East China Normal University (ECNU) since 1994. Tong joined ECNU first as a student in 1978, after having spent three years as a farm worker on Chongming Island from 1975-1978. At ECNU he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy in 1982 and a Master of Arts degree in philosophy in 1984—the same year he began his career teaching at the university. In 1988 Tong took his first trip to Norway as a visiting scholar, and then he went on an academic journey leading to a doctoral degree at the University of Bergen in 1994. As a philosopher, Tong specializes in epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, and comparative philosophy. He has authored more than 10 books and over 100 papers, mainly in Chinese and English, and has translated several books from English and German into Chinese, including Jürgen Habermas's *Faktizität und Geltung*. In 1998, he spent six months as a guest professor at Philipps-Universität Marburg in Germany and from 2000-2001 worked as a visiting research Fulbright Scholar at Columbia University in the US. In addition to numerous awards and honors for his teachings, research, and writing, he has been a member of the Social Science Committee of China's Ministry of Education (MOE) since 2004 and a Foreign Member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters (Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi) since 2010.