

# Gianluca Spezza Ph.D, MSSc, MA

## Current Roles & Affiliations:

**Assistant Professor of International Relations & Social Sciences**, American University of Iraq-Sulaimani (AUIS)

**Director, Institute for Korean Studies in the Middle East** (중동의대표적한국학연구소), AUIS

**Associated Research Fellow**, Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP), Stockholm, Sweden

**Invited Professor**, Faculty of Economics & International Affairs, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand

**Phone:** • (+39) 333 106 2308 • (+964) 776 483 4431 | **Email:** spezzagianluca@gmail.com

**Languages:** English • Italian • Korean • Spanish | **Nationality:** Italian

### Research & Analysis Specialization

- International Organizations (UN, EU)
- Education and Human Development
- State Compliance with International Norms
- Epistemic Authority and Global Governance
- Korea, East Asia, Middle East

### Professional Expertise

- Research & Writing
- Teaching (Under- & Post-graduate)
- Political Analysis & Policy-making
- Project Management
- Education Consulting

## EDUCATION

<b>PhD (2018)</b>	International Relations, University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), UK Supervisor: Prof. Hazel Smith; Examiner: Prof. Ruediger Frank
<b>Certificate (2015)</b>	Korean Language, University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), UK
<b>MSSc (2013)</b>	Asian Studies, University of Turku, Finland
<b>Certificate (2001)</b>	Korean Language & Culture, Ewha University, South Korea
<b>BA+MA (2000)</b>	Humanities, University of Turin, Italy

## RELEVANT EXPERTISE (RESEARCH, TEACHING, WRITING, ANALYSIS, CONSULTING)

### Research, Analysis, Journalism

**Director (Sep 2023 - Present)**, Institute for Korean Studies in the Middle East (중동의대표적한국학연구소), American University of Iraq-Sulaimani (AUIS).

- *Profile:* The Institute was established out of my own initiative, and is funded by the Korean Government AKS Seed Program for Korean Studies (3-year grant; \$40,000 per year), awarded to me in June 2023. The Institute works on developing research about the Korean peninsula, Human Development, Education, and Korea's relations with the Middle East, particularly the Gulf states.
- *Research Projects:* Development of a monograph about the work of UN agencies for Education and Human Capital in North Korea (Palgrave 2024); see the publications list for details. Development of academic articles on the relations between the Middle East and both South and North Korea.

**Visiting Research Fellow (June-Sep 2022)** Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia (ERINA), Niigata, Japan

- *Research Projects:* Development of my own monograph (Palgrave 2024) and one article (see *Publications*).

**Associated Research Fellow (Feb 2021 - Present)** Korea Center, Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP), Stockholm, Sweden.

- *Research Projects:* North Korea's socioeconomic and development issues, Inter-Korean relations, International Organizations. See the *publications* section below for published papers.

**Research Fellow (Aug 2018 - May 2021) DPRK Strategic Research Center, KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan**

- **Research Projects:** North Korea's socioeconomic and development issues, Korea relations with the UN system; International Organizations and state compliance with norms and treaties, EU foreign policy, Development aid, Fragile States, Education and Development (see *list of publications below for research output*).
- Conducting collective research at KIMEP's DPRK Strategic Research Center on: North Korea's foreign policy, Korean reunification, Inter-Korean relations; collective work on publications for: *South China Morning Post, Diplomat, Korea Herald, Globe Post, NK News, National Interest*.

**Independent Analyst (2012 - Present) NK News, IRIN News, The Guardian, The Diplomat, The Interpreter, Newsweek Korea.**

- Publishing research, analysis and op-ed features on Geopolitics in East Asia, North Korean society, North Korean foreign Policy and aid, Inter-Korean relations. Selected articles on [Google Scholar](#).

**Research Director (2012 - 2014) NK News, Seoul**

- Co-Developed the main news and information resource worldwide for professionals and academics working on North Korean affairs, through a solid presence on social media and relations with think tanks and institutions. Developed high-impact articles and communications weekly.
- Responsible for: English-language articles, think pieces, speeches, statements, quotes for social media, and other writing. Research and analysis features on North Korea and Inter-Korean relations, publishing weekly and managing an international network of contributors and experts, conducting interviews and reporting from conferences.

Teaching, Public Speaking, Academic Services, Dissertation Supervision

**Assistant Professor of International Relations & Social Sciences (Aug 2022 - Present) American University of Iraq, Sulaimani (AUIS)**

- **Designed and Taught undergraduate courses:**
  - \* Introduction to International Political Economy.
  - \* Globalization and the Political Economy of Tourism.
  - \* International Organizations (Theory and Practice of Institutions, International Relations and Law).
  - \* Political Economy of the E.U. (Institutions, Foreign Policy, Relations with the Middle East, Economy).
  - \* Korean Studies (Politics, History, Economy, Geopolitics and Development in Korea).
  - \* Society, Economy, Politics, and Security in East Asia (Contemporary Studies on Korea, Japan, China).
  - \* Civilizations: The Ancient World, the Middle Ages, Europe and Islam, the Modern World (Core Program).
- **Collegial activities:** Grant writing and management, Relationships with Embassies and Consulates, PR activities for the department of Social Sciences, hiring committees, program review and planning, syllabi and course review.

**Invited Professor (2020 - 2021) Faculty of Economics & International Affairs, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand.**

- **Designed and remotely taught two online courses:** "International Tourism Economics" and "Entrepreneurial Economics of Tourism" for the undergraduate program.

**Assistant Professor of International Relations (2018 - 2021) KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan**

- **Designed and Taught graduate and undergraduate courses:**
  - \* Politics of the European Union (institutions, norms, economy, trade, and foreign policy).
  - \* International relations of East Asia (security, development, international cooperation).
  - \* Globalization and Diversity: geography, demography, migration and human development.
  - \* The political use of language and media in IR and diplomacy.
- **MA Thesis supervision:** "Social protests and political reaction towards legislation on trade, immigration and social issues of the Trump administration" (December 2019, student graduated with A+).
- **Collegial activities:** hiring committees, program review and planning, syllabi and course review.

**Doctoral Researcher and Lecturer in International Relations and Asia-Pacific Studies (2017) UCLAN, Preston, UK**

- The PhD program required the analysis of complex information, including statistics, economic information and other qualitative and quantitative data; deployment of data in compelling, elaborate and persuasive text following the scientific method; formulation and testing of hypotheses; bibliographic research, literature review, presentation of data and conclusion.
- Co-taught courses at UCLAN with Prof. Ed Griffith for students in the final year of their *Asia Pacific studies*, BA program, 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2017. Topics include modern and contemporary Korean history; inter-Korean relations; international organizations and their role in East Asia; terrorism and contemporary issues in politics, economy, and societies of East Asia. Graded essay and research papers and provided feedback to student, organized seminars, designed lectures.

**Course Developer and Teacher (2017 - 2018) CIFAP, Pescara, Italy**

- Co-developed and taught courses (Basic & Advanced English, Business English, Human Resources Training, Working Abroad, International Trade & Marketing, English Certification Exam Preparation), for regional training centers and human resource centers in Abruzzo, Italy.

**Language Tutor (2015 - 2016) UCLAN, Preston, UK**

- Designed and Taught Italian language classes (grammar, conversation, public speaking, business Italian) at the *Worldwise Language Center*, University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), UK.

**PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCES, MEDIA****Books, Chapters, Peer-reviewed Articles, Refereed Conference Papers (Selected)**

- **Forthcoming Monograph: Knowledge, Human Capital and International Cooperation in North Korea - At the Nexus of Ideology and Development** (Palgrave, 2024).
- Spezza, G. (2023) "Understanding North Korea's Resilience through Economy, Laws and Governance: a Review of Introductory Sources and Essential Monographs", *Northeast Asian Economic Review*, 8(1): 17-28.
- Spezza, G. (2022) "UNICEF and epistemic authority in the DPRK, from humanitarian crisis to the Sustainable Development Goals: 1995-2015", *Journal of Peace and Unification* 12(3): 87-122.
- Bourdais-Park, J.W.; Spezza, G.; Bridges, B. (2022) "Evolution of EU-DPRK Interactions: shadow diplomacy and the possibility of hybrid security governance", *Asian Perspective* 46(3): 549-581. J. Hopkins University Press.
- Spezza, G. (2022) "North Korea, the UN, and the role of Science Diplomacy", *Peace Series* (4): 1-11, Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy.
- Spezza, G. (2021) "Education and development in North Korea: historical trajectory, persisting issues, and the push for a 'science-based economy' under Kim Jong Un", *Issue Brief Series* (2-11): 1-12, Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy.
- Spezza, G. (2020) "The Unwillingness to Take North Korea Seriously: Media Stereotypes, Problematic Sources and the Rhetoric surrounding the DPRK", in: Helgesen G, Harrison R. (Eds), *East-West Reflections on Demonization. North Korea Now, China Next?*, Copenhagen, NIAS Press: 155-173.
- Primiano, C.; Spezza, G. (2020) "Assessing the Trump administration foreign policy towards China and the DPRK: changes, lessons learned, and future outlook", *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Political Science* 71(1): 120-126.
- Spezza, G. (2015) "The Evolution of Education in the DPRK in the 2000s: International Cooperation, Elite Training and the Role of IT", in: IFES-Kyungnam University, "North Korea's 'Jangmadang' New Generation": 108-135.
- Spezza, G. (2014) "The Future of North Korea: Knowledge Gaps, IT and the Role of Education", in: Yim, D.W., Luna R. (Eds.), *North Korea Atlas. North Korean Cities Reading*, Seoul: DAMDI: 34-54.
- Spezza, G. (2014) "Education, International Cooperation and Future Challenges for the DPRK", *Wiener Beiträge zur Koreaforschung (Viennese Contributions to Korean Studies)*, Wien: Praesens (6): 53-74.

## International Media Presence (Selected)

- 2021: Interviewed on [Nikkei Asia](#): “North Korea food shortage turns into new Asia humanitarian crisis”, By G. Bernal, July 21.
- 2021: Interviewed on [Nikkei Asia](#): “North Korea bolsters arsenal with ‘world’s strongest weapon’”, By G. Bernal, January 15.
- 2017: Interviewed on [El Confidencial](#) (Spain) on the issues of UN sanctions on North Korea, the North Korean nuclear crisis, and the humanitarian situation in the DPRK
- 2015: Co-authored and published, on [The Guardian](#), *Icons of Rhetoric*, a modular media project dedicated to the analysis of images and data from North Korean media. The work was hosted at several galleries worldwide (UK, Italy, US, Sweden), with a final exhibition at The Guardian Gallery, London, in Winter 2014-2015.
- 2014: Interviewed on BBC Radio 4, April 25<sup>th</sup>, on The Status of [North Korean female refugees in South Korea](#).
- 2013: Interviewed on [Danish National Radio Broadcast](#) on North Korean refugees and human security, June 26<sup>th</sup>; the interview is in Danish. The English translation is available [here](#).
- 2013: Interviewed on BBC World News, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, for the special edition: “The UN panel for investigation on Human Rights abuses in North Korea” (video available at [Vimeo](#)).

## Invited Conferences and Seminars (Selected)

- 2022: Presenter at the Emerging Leaders Fellowship, National Institute for Unification Education, Seoul, Korea, May 19. *Presentation*: “Education, Development and International Cooperation in North Korea”.
- 2019: Presenter at the 9th Asia Research Forum (“Cooperation in Northeast Asia under the New Circumstances,”) organized by the Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP) and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Beijing, China, April 29. *Paper presented*: “Integrating North Korea into the economic fabric of Northeast Asia: challenges in human capital, education and development”.
- 2017: Presenter at the Seminar “Emerging North Korea”, A. A. School of Architecture, London, February 17. *Presentation*: “Twenty years after the North Korean crisis: social changes and development in the DPRK”.
- 2015: Presenter at the Conference “North Korea’s ‘Jangmadang’ New Generation: Who Are They and What Is Their Impetus for Change?” IFES-Kyungnam University, Seoul, June 23. Paper published: “The Evolution of Education in the DPRK in the 2000s: International Cooperation, Elite Training and the Role of IT”.
- 2013: Presenter at the “Engage Korea” Conference, Oxford University, May 4 - 5. *Presentation*: “Between Ideology and Globalization. North Korea’s use of education and IT. Lessons learned, challenges and opportunities”.

## Fellowships, Scholarships and Grants

- 2023-2026: AKS Seed Program for Korean Studies in Iraq (3-year grant; \$40,000 per year), Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea - Korean Studies Promotion Service (AKS-2023-INC-2230005).
- 2016: IFES SSPK Research Program, IFES-Kyungnam University, Seoul, Korea.
- 2014-2017: Fully funded doctoral program and research degree; £35,000 per year, UCLAN, Preston, UK.
- 2012: NIAS Supra Scholarship, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen, Denmark.

## OTHER WORK EXPERIENCES (NON-ACADEMIC)

## CC-Tech Support Executive (2010 - 2011) Booking.com, Amsterdam

- Handled an average of 140 daily requests for language assistance and technical support to Hotels and Customers worldwide in 4 languages (Italian/English/Spanish/Korean).
- Solved complaints procedures, credit card security and billing issues; managed travel reservations, hotel allotments and travel review.

**Project Manager (2009 - 2010) Abruzzo-Booking & LikelItaly, Pescara**

- Developed and marketed travel packages for tour operators in 15 European countries.
- Raised sponsorship funds €133,000 for the 2009 Italian National Congress of Engineering.
- Implemented marketing strategies for the development of eco-tourism in the Abruzzo national parks.
- Provided multilingual translation for websites and promotional material.
- Assisted hotels with allotments for the G8 Summit & the Mediterranean Games 2009.

**Interpreter & Delegate Assistant (2009) G8 Summit, L'Aquila**

- Assisted delegates from USA, EU and South Korea in press briefings and meetings.
- Provided additional translation assistance within the bilateral meetings rooms.

**Events Coordinator and Office Assistant (2007) IIC-Italian Consulate, Toronto**

- Created and maintained media communication and press releases for all the events organized by the Italian Institute of Culture (IIC) and the Consulate.
- Provided logistical support to events as well as translation and interpretation services.
- Assisted consular staff in cultural events (art exhibitions, lectures, seminars).
- Edited and updated press kit, newsletter, website and monthly events calendar.

**Business Development Area Manager (2003 - 2006) NABA, Bangkok & Ljubljana**

- Developed business strategies for the Asian educational market and trained local agents.
- Achieved official recognition of NABA programs within the OTOS Project by the Ministry of Education in Thailand, delivering a 50% increment in Asian enrollments from 2004 to 2006.
- Started and managed the NABA Asia Help-desk in Bangkok and Ljubljana; managed budget allocation and relationships with Italian Embassies in East Asia.
- Organized promotional events and participated in fairs related to Italian cultural exports; organized translation and distribution of educational material.
- Supervised online and print advertising for marketing campaigns, fairs and seminars.

**Business Developer (2001 - 2003) ICRI & DanteKorea, Seoul**

- Marketing development strategies & partner research for Italian Colleges seeking to recruit students in Asia.
- Participated in monthly recruitment fairs in Korea and China.
- Provided education consulting and visa assistance to Korean students.

**REFERENCES (Teaching, Research, Writing, Analysis)**

**Prof. Bob Perrins, Ph.D. (Direct Supervisor)**, Vice President, Academic Affairs, and Professor of History, American University of Iraq-Sulaimani (AUIS), Sulaimani, Iraq | Cell: +1 (310) 970-4001 (North America) -or- +964 (750) 300-7497 (Iraq) | E-mail : [robert.perrins@me.com](mailto:robert.perrins@me.com) -or- [robert.perrins@auis.edu.krd](mailto:robert.perrins@auis.edu.krd)

**Barin Kayaoğlu, Ph.D. (Teaching Supervisor)** Chair & Associate Professor of World History, Department of Social Sciences & Law, American University of Iraq-Sulaimani (AUIS), Sulaimani, Iraq | Tel: +964 53 511 2020, Ext. 1944 | Email: [barin.kayaoglu@auis.edu.krd](mailto:barin.kayaoglu@auis.edu.krd) -or- [barin.kayaoglu@gmail.com](mailto:barin.kayaoglu@gmail.com)

**Prof. Gerald Pech, Ph.D. (Teaching Supervisor)**, Dean, College of Social Sciences , KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan | Tel: + 7 777 3934 146 (mobile); + 7 727 2704349 (office) | Email: [gpech@kimep.kz](mailto:gpech@kimep.kz) -or- [gp@geraldpech.net](mailto:gp@geraldpech.net) |

**Heather Ann McCollum, Ed.D. (Teaching Supervisor)**, Dean of General Education, KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan | Tel: +7 (727) 270-43-14 | Email: [mccollum@kimep.kz](mailto:mccollum@kimep.kz)

**Prof. Hazel Smith, Ph.D. FRSA (Doctoral Research Supervisor/Mentor)**, Professorial Research Associate, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London; Professor Emeritus, Cranfield University. Email: [hs50@soas.ac.uk](mailto:hs50@soas.ac.uk) -or- [hazel.a.smith@btinternet.com](mailto:hazel.a.smith@btinternet.com) | Tel: +44 114 251 0946

**Prof. Sangsoo Lee, Ph.D. (Fellowship Supervisor)**, Deputy Director, Stockholm Korea Center, ISDP | Email: [slee@isdp.eu](mailto:slee@isdp.eu) | Tel: +46 (0) 734150058

**Prof. Dean Ouellette, Ph.D. (Research Adviser/Editor)**, Director for International Affairs and Associate Professor, IFES – Kyungnam University, Seoul | Email: [dean.ouellette@gmail.com](mailto:dean.ouellette@gmail.com) | Tel: +82 (0) 2-3700-0706; Fax: +82 (0)2-3700-0707

**Prof. Geir Helgesen, Ph.D. (Editor/Supervisor)**, Former Director at NIAS Copenhagen, Denmark, Professorial Research Associate, SOAS, London Email: [geir2019@gmail.com](mailto:geir2019@gmail.com)