

**History 223**  
**The European Underworld, 1800-2000: A Social and Cultural History**

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Office Hours: Mon. 9-11 or by appointment

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Lectures: MWF 12:05-12:55  
1217 Humanities

Course Description

In his essay on “The Usefulness of Crime,” Karl Marx suggested that criminals were a productive force in society: they spurred the creation of new laws, police, the criminal justice system and its bureaucracy, and the morality of the middle classes. Taking Marx’s cue, this course explores the contributions of the European criminal underworld to “legitimate” society. Each lecture develops a case study of a particular crime, criminal, or punishment. The case studies will help us answer questions about the social history of crime and penal institutions: for example, who becomes an armed robber, and why? Furthermore, each case study illustrates how crime has shaped (and been shaped by) major social, economic, and cultural changes in modern Europe: Drug smuggling is a notable example of how consumer tastes and pleasures combined with economic globalization to produce a revolution in the European market for illegal drugs.

The first unit of the course outlines a comparative history of crime and punishment in nineteenth-century Europe, when the specter of the urban “dangerous classes” compelled states to alter their use of capital punishment, criminalize traditional economies, and introduce new forms of police. In the second unit we explore the internal dynamics of the underworld from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. During this period criminals and detectives became more skilled and professional; they adopted new technologies of transportation, weaponry, and surveillance; and they organized themselves into specialist units. The late twentieth century witnessed the “transnationalization” of criminality and policing. In the final unit of the course, case studies in robbery, soccer hooliganism, and drug trafficking will demonstrate how crime is more than a comparative European phenomenon—indeed, it is a transnational social feature connected by criminal networks and international police forces. The course concludes by looking at patterns of urban revolt and disorder across Europe.

Course Objectives

- To reveal how European states “used” crime to extend their power through institutions such as courts, prisons, and police forces.
- To portray crime as a transnational phenomenon in which men, money, and commodities flow across borders, thereby linking together networks of criminals and police forces in Europe.
- To demonstrate how criminality relates to major themes in European history: urbanization and industrialization, imperialism, technological change, warfare, consumerism, and immigration.
- Students will engage with primary source material—police reports, court records, memoirs—in readings, essays, and presentations.
- To introduce students to the methods of social and cultural history.

### Required Textbooks

Course Packet (hereafter CP) available in the Humanities Copy Center

Clive Emsley, *Crime and English Society, 1750-1900* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2005)

John King, *The Football Factory* (London, 2004 edition)

### Assignments and Grading

Students will complete two written assignments and one oral presentation. The first written assignment is a three-page research memorandum in which students will briefly discuss three sources relating to a chosen lecture topic. Memoranda may serve as the platform for the students' second written assignment, an essay of 8-10 pages on one of the lecture topics (or on a topic chosen in consultation with me). The oral presentation is a group project in which 3-4 students will lead discussion (10-15 minutes) on some aspect of crime and popular culture.

Students will write two essay examinations. The midterm exam evaluates knowledge of readings and lectures from Unit I, while the final exam will be an open-ended essay in which students will be expected to integrate the major themes of the course.

Grading: In-class participation (15%), Midterm exam (15%), Research memorandum (10%), Essay (20%), Presentation (20%), Final exam (20%).

## **Unit I: New Problems and New Solutions in Crime, 1800-1870**

### Sept. 5-7: Capital Punishment and the Spectacle of State Power

Reading: Emsley, Chapter 1 *plus* pp. 253-267

CP: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 3-31; *The life of Robert Avery, who was executed at Winchester, for forgery, March 23, 1805*

### Sept. 10-14: Industry, Economy, and the Creation of the "Dangerous Classes"

Reading: Emsley, Chapters 2-3, 5-6

CP: Patrick Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* (1795), v-xiv; E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 76-79, 89-94, 107-115; "Factory Rules," pp. 118-119

### Sept. 17-21: Era of Penal Transformation: Police, Penal Reform, and the Rise of the Prison

Reading: Emsley, Chapters 9-10

CP: V.A.C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, Chapter 3, "Carnival or Consent?" (pp. 90-105); Jeremy Bentham, "Panopticon," in *Works* (1843), pp. 39-45, 60-63; Richard J. Evans, "Police and society from absolutism to dictatorship," in *Rereading German History* (1997), pp. 65-86

### Sept. 24-28: The Criminal Empire: Thugs, Dacoits, and Criminal Tribes in British India

Reading: CP: *Report on the Working of the Criminal Tribes Act in the Bombay Presidency* (1927); *Selected Records Collected from the Central Provinces and Berar Secretariat Relating to the Suppression of Thuggee 1829-1832* (1939), pp. 1-2, 15-19, 45-55, 104-107

## Unit II: The Era of Criminal Sophistication, 1870-1950

### Oct. 1-5: The Professionalization of Criminals and Reorganization of Detective Forces

Reading: Emsley, Chapter 7

CP: Henry Mayhew, *The Morning Chronicle Survey of Labour and the Poor: The Metropolitan Districts Volume 3* (1861), pp. 79-87; A.L. Beier, "Identity, Language, and Resistance in the Making of the Victorian 'Criminal Class': Mayhew's Convict Revisited," pp. 499-515; Billy Hill, *Boss of Britain's Underworld* (1955), pp. 15-52; Sharpe and Burke, *Glossaries of Criminal Slang*

### **\*Research memorandum due October 5\***

### Oct. 8-12: Turf Wars: Urban Gangs and Organized Violence

Reading: CP: Andrew Davies, "Street Gangs, Crime and Policing in Glasgow during the 1930s: The Case of the Beehive Boys" (1998), pp. 251-267; Film—*Brighton Rock*

### Oct. 15-19: Villains into Thieves: Criminality during the Second World War

Reading: CP: Edward Smithies, "The Black Market," in *Crime in Wartime: A Social History of Crime in World War II*, pp. 58-77 [Review session on Oct. 17, exam on Oct. 19]

### **\*Midterm Exam October 19\***

### Oct. 22-26: Women's Challenge to Criminology: Shoplifters, Drug Peddlers, and Prostitutes

Reading: Emsley, Chapter 4

CP: Cesare Lombroso, *The Female Offender*, pp. 103-114, 125-133; Patricia O'Brien, "The Kleptomania Diagnosis" (1983), pp. 65-77

### Oct. 29-Nov. 2: Confidence Tricksters, The White Slave Traffic, and Dangerous Drugs: The Origins of International Criminal Cooperation

Reading: CP: Richard J. Evans, "The Many Identities of Franz Ernst," in *Tales from the German Underworld*, pp. 136-165

### **Begin student presentations**

### Nov. 5-9: The Criminal as Hero? Depictions of Crime in Popular Culture

Reading: CP: Martin Wiener, "The de-moralizing of criminality," in *Reconstructing the Criminal* (1990) pp. 215-224; E. Carrabine et al., *Crime in Modern Britain*, Chapter 5: "Crime and popular culture," pp. 108-134

## Unit III: Crime without Borders, 1950-2000

### Nov. 12-16: The Aristocrats of Crime: Armed Robbers and Criminal Self-Fashioning

Reading: CP: Robert Allerton and Tony Parker, *The Courage of His Convictions* (1962), pp. 85-114; Film—*The Italian Job*

### Nov. 19-21: Fight Club: The History and Sociology of Soccer Hooliganism

Reading: John King, *The Football Factory*

CP: R. De Biasi, "The policing of hooliganism in Italy" (1997), pp. 213-227

Nov. 26-30: Advanced Disciples of Margaret Thatcher? The Criminal Entrepreneurship of Drug Traffickers

*Reading:* Film—*Layer Cake*; CP: Howard Parker, *U.K. Drugs Unlimited* (2001), pp. 1-13; House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, *Drug Trafficking and Related Serious Crime* (1989), v-xiii; J.W.E. Sheptycki, “Transnational Policing and the Makings of a Postmodern State,” *British Journal of Criminology* Vol. 35, No. 4 (1995), pp. 613-635

Dec. 3-7: Crime, Ideology, and Popular Respect for the Law

*Reading:* CP: E. Carrabine et al., *Crime in Modern Britain*, Chapter 3: “Crime and everyday life,” pp. 51-78

**\*Essays due December 7\***

Dec. 10-14: The Empire Strikes Back? Urban Riots in Western Europe

*Reading:* CP: John Lea, “Social Crime Revisited,” *Theoretical Criminology*, Vol. 3 (1999), pp. 307-326

**Final Exam TBA**