

History 474
European Social History, 1830-1914
Fall 1991
8:50 MWF
1101 Humanities

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Office hrs. 10-11 MW
and by appt.
Tel.: 265-2578

This is a survey of European social history from 1830 to 1914. The course considers the interaction of social-economic relations, political power, and cultural discourse while focusing on working class men and women as well as elites and the middle classes. It places particular emphasis on the social stresses of capitalist modernity in England, France, and Germany, but it encompasses other European and non-European countries when this is possible or necessary. The chronology is approximate since the period under consideration is difficult to understand without an introductory discussion of the French and industrial revolutions (taking us back into the eighteenth century) and a more extended look at World War I and its impact (taking us into the 1920s). I make no attempt to construct a blow-by-blow narrative, opting instead for multiple narratives and themes as well as an excursus on Germany, the most important European country of the second half of the nineteenth century.

The reading includes a novel, an "ethnographic" account of working-class life, scholarly monographs, and other secondary literature. Reading requirements are fairly demanding, though in some cases the reading should go quickly, and students who plan ahead should have no problem staying abreast of the assignments. Students are expected to have completed the required reading by the end of each of the six course segments, although the lectures will be a good deal more useful to students if they complete the reading before or during each segment. The recommended reading is designed to give students more background on nineteenth-century Europe. Required reading is available at the University Book Store and required as well as recommended reading is on reserve.

Assignments include one in-term exam, one focused essay of roughly 10-12 typed, double-spaced pages, and one final exam. Both exams will include a choice of essay questions and short-answer identifications. Questions for the essay will be distributed later in the semester. The course will have a grader whose primary responsibility is the reading of exams and papers. Students who have specific questions about the grading of these assignments should see the grader, but those who would like to discuss substantive issues raised by the course material or who need clarification of the assignments should see me. Each assignment accounts for about one third of the final grade, although I do give extra consideration to students who improve their performance as the semester goes by.

Required Reading

Honoré de Balzac, Pere Goriot (Signet)
Modris Eksteins, Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age (Anchor)
Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England (Academy)
Richard J. Evans, Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera Years, 1830-1910 (Penguin)
Eric Hobsbawm, The Age of Empire, 1875-1914 (Vintage)
Bonnie G. Smith, Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton)

Recommended Reading

Carlo M. Cipolla, ed., The Fontana Economic History of Europe, Vol. 3: The Industrial Revolution, and Vol. 4 (Parts 1 and 2): The Emergence of Industrial Societies (Collins/Fontana)
Theodore Hamerow, The Birth of a New Europe: State and Society in the Nineteenth Century (North Carolina)
E.J. Hobsbawm, The Age of Capital 1848-1875
-----, The Age of Revolution 1789-1848 (NAL)
Bonnie G. Smith, Changing Lives. Women in European History Since 1700
Peter N. Stearns, European Society in Upheaval: Social History Since 1750 (Macmillan)
Roland N. Stromberg, European Intellectual History Since 1789 (Prentice-Hall, Fifth Edition)

Course schedule

1. Revolutionary Context (Sept. 4 to Sept. 13)

Topics

Introductory concepts and themes; industrial revolution in England; the French Revolution

Reading

Balzac, Pere Goriot, entire book

2. European Societies in Upheaval (Sept. 16 to Sept. 27; no class Sept. 20)

Topics

Industrialization and urbanization; changes in working-class life; politics and ideology to 1848

Reading

Engels, Condition of the Working Class, 50-110, 127-158, 223-246, 275-292

3. Revolution, Reaction, Rhetoric (Sept. 30 to Oct. 11)

Topics

1848 and its impact; a new political culture; gender and politics; Europe in the age of capital

Reading

Smith, Ladies of the Leisure Class, entire book

EXAM--OCTOBER 11

4. The Most Modern Nation: Society and Politics in Germany (Oct. 14 to Nov. 8)

Topics

The Hamburg cholera epidemic as an allegory of German modernity; creation of German nation state in 1870; modernization, urbanization, industrialization; German political culture before and after 1890; the drive for a German global politics; the German path to modernity

Reading

Evans, Death in Hamburg, 1-179, 226-402, 465-568

ESSAY DUE--NOVEMBER 11

5. Successful Failure and the Age of Empire (Nov. 11 to Nov. 27)

Topics

Second industrial revolution; nationalism; democracy; a culture of time and space; imperialism

Reading

Hobsbawm, Age of Empire, 13-218

6. "War is Like Christmas" (Dec. 2 to Dec. 13)

Topics

International rivalries; Sarajevo; the social reality of war; war and modernity; towards the contemporary age

Reading

Eksteins, Rites of Spring, 9-207

FINAL EXAM--THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2:45