

History 475: European Social History, 1914 to Present

Spring 2015, MW 2:30-3:45 (1217 Humanities)

Instructor: R. Koshar (rjkoshar@wisc.edu)

Office Hours: 4101 Humanities (MW 4-5 & by appt.)

Course Rationale: In twentieth century Europe politics and society became intertwined as never before. Not only did war and political conflict shape daily life throughout the century; but social and economic issues, from mass unemployment and commercialization to gender relations and urban transformation, also called forth state action. The study of social history in the past century therefore demands close attention to the scope and nature of political power, and to the ideologies that envisioned how power was to be distributed, and how societies were to be remade. What were the major ideologies of twentieth century Europe? How did they imagine the societies over which they laid claim? To what social conflicts and trends did they respond? How did identities based on class, nation, gender, race, religion, generation, and locale relate to ideological reflection, society, and political practice? How did these changes affect individuals?

Goals: The pedagogical goals of the course are: to deepen your knowledge of late modern European social history in all its drama and complexity; to build your expository and critical skills through writing and discussion; to give you familiarity with a primary source that has become ubiquitous in contemporary culture, namely “life writing” (e.g., memoir, autobiography, diary); to relate this source critically to larger historical narratives and problems; and to consider how study of the past relates to present day events. **In order to further these goals, I do not allow electronic devices (laptops, smartphones, e-readers, etc.) in the classroom.**

Assignments and Grading:

Three-credit students: one four-page paper (Feb. 16), one ten-page (minimum) research paper (Apr. 29), a midterm (Mar. 11), a cumulative final (May 13), and discussion.

Four-credit students: one eight-page paper consisting of either one or two essays (Feb. 16), one fourteen-page (minimum) research paper (Apr. 29), a midterm (Mar. 11), a cumulative final (May 13), and discussion.

(Students will receive more information in the course of the semester on the research papers.)

Graduate Students: a seminar-length research paper (25-30 pgs.), midterm, and final.

All students are urged to familiarize themselves with guidelines concerning plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism or cheating will be dealt with severely. For university policy on academic misconduct and plagiarism: <http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/students/>.

Due dates for papers and exam dates are firm; exceptions will be considered only in cases of dire personal crisis, or the end of human history, in which instance the information contained herein is no longer applicable.

Discussion: While I'll include discussion throughout lectures, we will have seven separate lecture periods when we'll discuss primary source reading. For these class sessions, a number of students will be designated as "lead discussants," or panelists, and asked to comment on pre-circulated questions before the entire class has the chance to weigh in on the reading. Each class member will serve as a lead discussant at least twice. These discussions usually become quite lively, so be ready to critique, argue (respectfully), and enjoy. The success of each discussion is of course dependent on your attending all lectures and staying up-to-date with course readings. Your discussion grade hinges not only on the thoughtfulness and coherence of your comment as a panelist but also on your contributions to general class discussion.

Undergraduate Grading:

Shorter essay(s)=15%

Research paper=25%

Discussion=15%

Midterm=20%

Final=25%

Graduate Grading:

Research paper=55%

Midterm=20%

Final=25%

These are flexible percentages. In some cases, the instructor may adjust percentages, e.g., to reflect a student's progress in the course of the semester. Grade Scale: A=100-93; AB=92-88; B=87-83; BC=82-78; C=77-70; D=69-60.

Required Reading (available for purchase and on reserve):

Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (Vintage Books)
Emilie Carles, *A Life of Her Own: The Transformation of a Countrywoman in Twentieth-Century France* (Penguin)
Ernst Jünger, *The Storm of Steel: From the Diary of a German Storm-Troop Officer on the Western Front* (Penguin)
Carlo Levi, *Christ Stopped at Eboli. The Story of a Year* (Farrar Straus Giroux)
Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Penguin)
Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City. A Diary* (Picador)
Giorgio, *Memoirs of an Italian Terrorist* (Carroll & Graf)
Jana Hensel, *After the Wall: Confessions from an East German Childhood and the Life that Came Next* (Public Affairs)

Course Schedule:

Lecture titles and dates are approximate.

Jan 21 Course Introduction

Reading: Mazower, ix-xv, 3-40

1. "On and On, Up and Up" (Ramsey McDonald)

Jan 26 Economies & Societies, I

Jan 28 Economies & Societies, II

Reading: Mazower, 41-103, start Carles

Feb 2 "Isms" Take Command: Mass Politics to 1914

Feb 4 Mass Culture to 1914: A "Nervous Irritability"?

Reading: continue Carles

2. The Thirty Years' War

Feb 9 Discussion of Emilie Carles

Feb 11 Did Europeans Sleepwalk into World War I?

Reading: finish Carles; start Jünger

Feb 16 World War I as "Storm of Steel"

Feb 16 First paper due

Feb 18 From Military to Civil Wars

Reading: finish Jünger

Feb 23 Discuss Jünger
Feb 25 Italian Fascism and Italian Society
Reading: Mazower, 104-211

Mar 2 The Most Liberal Society in Europe: Weimar Germany
Mar 4 Nazi Mobilization
Reading: start Carlo Levi

Mar 9 Dark Valley: European Fascisms in Power: the 1930s
Mar 11 **Midterm**
Reading: continue Carlo Levi

Mar 16 The Bloodlands of World War II
Mar 18 Discuss Carlo Levi
Reading: finish Carlo Levi; start Primo Levi

Mar 23 Genocide
Mar 25 Discuss Primo Levi
Reading: finish Primo Levi; Mazower, 212-326

Mar 28-Apr 5 Spring Recess

3. From Hot to Cold War

Apr 6 European Society, Resistance, Postwar
Apr 8 Discuss *A Woman in Berlin*
Reading: *A Woman in Berlin*

Apr 13 From Trauma to Miracle?
Apr 15 Real Existing Socialism
Reading: start Giorgio

Apr 20 The West: Lennon, not Lenin
Apr 22 Discuss Giorgio
Reading: finish Giorgio; start Hensel

4. Peace?

Apr 27 Collapse of Communism

Apr 29 Discuss Hensel

Apr 29 Second paper due

May 4 Divided Regimes of Memory

May 6 Neo-Liberal Triumph?

Reading: Mazower, 327-403

May 13 In-Class Final 2:45-4:45