

# HISTORY 120: EUROPE AND THE MODERN WORLD, 1815 TO THE PRESENT



A contemporary depiction of Giuseppe Garibaldi's entry into Naples, September 7, 1860

## Course Information

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Instructor:	Prof. Brandon Bloch ( <a href="mailto:bjbloch@wisc.edu">bjbloch@wisc.edu</a> )
Office Hours:	Wed. 1-3 p.m. or by appointment (Humanities 5118 or online)
Teaching Assistants:	Matthew Akins ( <a href="mailto:mmakins@wisc.edu">mmakins@wisc.edu</a> ) Patrick Eickman ( <a href="mailto:peickman@wisc.edu">peickman@wisc.edu</a> )
TA Office Hours:	Matthew Akins: Thurs. 2:30-4:30 p.m. (online) Patrick Eickman: Tues. 12-2 p.m. (Humanities 4269)
Semester:	Fall 2023
Lecture:	Mon./Wed./Fri. 9:55-10:45 a.m. (Science Hall 180)
Sections:	*Wed. 3:30-4:20 p.m. (Humanities 2221) [Akins]
(*FIG section)	Wed. 4:35-5:25 p.m. (Humanities 2111) [Akins]

Wed. 5:40-6:30 p.m. (Humanities 2631) [Eickman]  
Thurs. 8:50-9:40 a.m. (Humanities 2125) [Eickman]  
Thurs. 9:55-10:45 a.m. (Humanities 2125) [Akins]  
\*Thurs. 11:00-11:50 a.m. (Vilas Hall 4004) [Eickman]  
Thurs. 12:05-12:55 p.m. (Humanities 2211) [Eickman]  
\*Thurs. 1:20-2:10 p.m. (Humanities 2631) [Akins]

Modality: In-person  
Credits: 4 (section registration is required)  
Requisites: None  
Course Designations: Breadth – Either Humanities or Social Science  
Level – Elementary  
L&S Credit – Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S  
Canvas site: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/362154>

## Course Description

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This course surveys a vast subject: the transformation of Europe, from the aftermaths of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars to today's European Union. We will explore Europe's evolution across the dramatic nineteenth and twentieth centuries along a range of axes—political and economic as well as social, cultural, and intellectual. This period is key to understanding the emergence of our contemporary world. It saw the explosive growth of capitalism; centralization of modern nation-states; rise of mass politics; recasting of gender and the family; proliferation of industrial warfare; and emergence of ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, socialism, communism, and fascism. Europe was deeply intertwined with the wider world throughout our period: first through colonialism and imperialism, and since the post-1945 era of decolonization, through ongoing ties with its former colonies. This course is necessarily also a world history.

The aim of the course is not, primarily, to teach you the “facts” of European history, though you will be introduced to key people, places, and events. Instead, we will focus on core themes to draw connections across time and space. Three sets of questions will guide us:

### **War and Revolution**

Why was modern European history so violent? What are the drivers of war and revolution, and how did Europeans seek—sometimes successfully, often not—to avoid them? Was war more a cause, or a result, of Europe's social, political, and economic

transformations? Can we draw parallels between the violence practiced by European states in the colonial world and on the European continent?

### **The Nation-State and National Identities**

How did Europe end up with 44 independent countries—more than any other continent proportional to its size? What is the relationship between the state (a political entity that exercises sovereign control over a territory) and the nation (a community that supposedly shares a common language, history, and culture)? When and why did Europeans identify themselves as members of nations? What were, or are, the alternatives to the nation-state?

### **Colonialism, Imperialism, and their Aftermaths**

Why did European states seek to conquer and rule vast territories in Asia and Africa? What was the impact of imperialism on European domestic politics? How did colonial entanglements shape Europeans' ideas about race, nationhood, and modernity? How did metropolitan Europeans come to terms—or fail to come to terms—with Europe's colonial past following post-1945 decolonization?

## Learning Outcomes

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This course is designed as an introduction to college-level history, and does not assume any prior background. (History majors are, of course, also welcome!) The premise is that history is not a static collection of facts, but an evolving process of debate and interpretation. Lectures and assignments are structured to introduce you to the skills of historical analysis: reading critically; interpreting primary sources; evaluating competing arguments; and presenting your own ideas in lucid and compelling prose. Writing assignments build in complexity over the semester, and lectures and sections will devote time to practicing the skills you will need to succeed in these assignments. The purpose of the course is as much to introduce you to central themes of modern European history as to help you become a better reader, writer, listener, communicator, and thinker.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Develop an understanding of historical thinking that includes interpretation and analysis, not simply names, dates, and facts
- Apply evidence from primary sources to evaluate competing historical interpretations
- Infer the contexts of primary sources based on prior knowledge and in-text clues
- Articulate a concise thesis statement

- Defend a historical argument using primary sources in clear and compelling prose
- Assess the significance of war and revolution, nationalism and the nation-state, and colonialism and imperialism as forces of change in modern European history

## Course Book

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Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (New York: Signet Classics, 2008). ISBN: 9780451531032.

This book is available for purchase at the University Book Store and is placed on reserve at College Library in Helen C. White Hall.

## Course Requirements

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\*Further details on all assignments, including expectations, guidelines, and rubrics, will be available on Canvas.

### 1. Top Hat (10%)

We will use the online platform Top Hat to facilitate an interactive classroom during lectures. Your Top Hat grade will be based primarily on in-class polling and short-answer questions. In addition, you will be asked to contribute one-paragraph discussion posts on the course readings (approximately 150 words each) during weeks 2, 3, 4, and 9. Each post is due by the beginning of section, and should address that week's readings. Reading questions will be distributed in advance.

Top Hat questions and discussion posts will be graded complete/incomplete, and will serve as a record of your attendance at lecture. You will be permitted three excused absences from lecture, for any reason. If you need to miss lecture more than three times due to illness, religious observance, or personal or family emergency, please let Prof. Bloch know.

### 2. Section Participation (20%)

Weekly section discussions, where you will have the opportunity to apply concepts from lecture and try your hand at primary source analysis, are crucial to your learning in the course. You will have a free pass to miss one section meeting, for any reason. Beyond that, please inform your TA in advance if you need to miss section due to illness,

religious observance, or personal or family emergency. Unexcused absences will lower your section participation grade. Participation in peer reviews during section meetings will also count toward this portion of your grade.

Please keep in mind that the quality of your contributions to section discussions is as important as the quantity, and that asking a well-informed question counts as participation. We recognize that participation may come more easily to some than others. If you would like to discuss strategies for speaking in class, feel free to set up a meeting with Prof. Bloch or your TA.

Section participation will be evaluated holistically at the end of the semester; we are certainly not grading each individual comment you make in class! You will receive a provisional participation grade midway through the semester, which you will have the opportunity to improve during the second half. A high score in this area will reflect consistent preparation to discuss the readings; engagement with the tools of primary source analysis introduced in class; and respectful, constructive interaction with your peers. Each section will collectively develop a list of group discussion norms at the beginning of the semester, and adherence to these norms will also count toward your section participation grade.

### 3. Two Primary Source Essays (35%)

The culminating writing assignments are two essays on primary sources. The first essay (3-4 double-spaced pages) will address Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and is due in lecture on Oct. 25. The second essay (5-6 double-spaced pages) will address an autobiography or memoir of your choice relating to the experience of war in the first half of Europe's twentieth century. It is due in lecture on Dec. 6. For the second essay, you will be given a list of books from which to choose (though you may also choose a different book with the permission of your TA).

For each essay, you will be asked to submit an outline and a draft introductory paragraph one week in advance of the deadline, for peer review in section. We will spend time in lecture and section discussing the qualities of a strong history essay. The first essay counts for 10% of your course grade; the second essay counts for 20%; and the preliminary assignments (graded Complete/Incomplete) count for 5%.

## 4. Two Quizzes (15%)

In lieu of a midterm exam, we will have two low-stakes quizzes, to be held in lecture on Oct. 6 and Nov. 10. Each is worth 7.5% of your grade, and covers five weeks of the course material. You may bring one single-sided page of notes (typed or handwritten) to each quiz. Each quiz will consist of two short analyses of primary sources: one source discussed in class, and one source you haven't seen before (but that you'll be able to analyze using the historical contexts and interpretive skills introduced in class).

## 5. Final Exam (20%)

A final exam will be held on Thurs. Dec. 21 from 2:45-4:45 p.m. (Location TBD). The exam will include two primary source analyses and one essay. The primary source analyses will cover material since second quiz, while the essay will ask you to draw connections across different parts of the course. You will be permitted to bring one single-sided page of notes (typed or handwritten) to use during the exam.

## Grading:

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A: 93-100	AB: 88-92	B: 83-87	BC: 78-82
C: 70-77	D: 60-69	F: Below 60	

## Credit Hours:

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The credit standard for this 4-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 180 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (45 hours per credit, or 12 hours per week). This includes regularly scheduled meeting times, reading, writing, group work, individual consultations with the instructors, and other student work as described in the syllabus. Since lecture and section meetings count for **4 hours of direct instruction per week**, you should plan to allot an average of 8 hours per week outside of class for course-related activities.

## Late Work:

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If you are unable to meet an assignment deadline, please let Prof. Bloch or your TA know as soon as possible and we can work out a plan for you to get caught up. We understand that life can be unpredictable, and that you may require an extension due to illness, religious observance, or personal or family emergency. In cases of unexcused late work, we reserve the

right to apply a deduction to late assignments out of fairness to other members of the class. Typically, this deduction will be 3 points (out of 100) per day late.

Please note that we are not able to accept any written work for this course after Thursday, Dec. 21, the last day of the exam period. Incomplete grades can only be granted to students who are unable to complete the final exam due to “illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond their control.” For the university policy, see: <https://registrar.wisc.edu/incompletes/>.

## Academic Integrity

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The exchange of ideas is at the core of academic inquiry, and you are encouraged to discuss the course material with your classmates. However, all work that you submit for a grade should reflect your own thinking and writing, and should adhere to proper citation practices in the discipline of history. Passing off another person’s words or ideas as your own is not only unfair to your peers; it is also theft of the original author’s work, shutting out their voice from the academic conversation.

In my experience, violations of academic integrity tend to have two causes: either a) lack of awareness about citation standards, or b) procrastination, followed by panic. The course is designed to mitigate both of these factors. We will discuss how to cite your sources for each assignment; if you’re unsure about a particular case, don’t hesitate to ask. I have also implemented scaffolding in the assignment structure, with intermediate assignments due before each essay. If you are worried about not finishing an assignment as a deadline approaches, please email Prof. Bloch or your TA! We can always work out solutions to help improve your organization, and it’s much better to accept a late penalty (or turn in less than perfect work) than to cheat. If you plagiarize (and be assured that we will catch it—it’s really not difficult), then we have to deal with the case as a disciplinary infraction rather than a learning opportunity. Serious academic misconduct must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

## A Note on ChatGPT and AI...

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AI technologies can help you generate ideas about a topic and write with greater speed and efficiency. However, these tools frequently produce false information, and can easily become a substitute for the independent thinking that college is meant to foster. We will have ongoing conversations about the use of generative AI as a writing tool throughout the semester. Guidelines on the permissible use of AI will be provided with each assignment.

In general, AI tools may be used in the following ways in History 120:

- Brainstorming ideas and constructing outlines for your essays. If you utilize AI in this capacity, you will be asked to append a note to your final paper explaining how you used the AI tool—including the prompts you submitted—and whether you found it helpful.
- Studying for quizzes and the final exam. You are welcome to ask an AI tool clarifying questions about the course material, but please beware, the responses you receive may be incorrect or incomplete. You are ultimately responsible for the accuracy of your answers submitted on quizzes and the final exam.

Please do not use AI tools for the following:

- Completing short assignments such as Top Hat posts or in-class writing exercises. These assignments are meant as low-stakes opportunities to try out ideas and ask questions about the course; AI would make them superfluous.
- Drafting the two take-home essays. You are not permitted to directly import text generated by AI into your essays, or to submit a paper that is merely a revised version of a draft written by AI. I am implementing this policy for two reasons: a) AI does not function as a “source” (for reasons we will discuss in class); and b) the purpose of History 120 is to develop your skills as an independent writer (which will allow you to use AI more critically in the future). Submitting text generated by AI in either of the two essays will be regarded as a violation of academic integrity.

## Technology

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Please come to lecture with a laptop or smartphone in order to participate in the Top Hat exercises. Laptops are permitted (but not required) in section for taking notes and referencing readings. Of course, we ask that you refrain from checking email or social media during class. You are certainly permitted to do additional research on the course topics online; however, be aware that online sources are not necessarily reliable, and any outside sources used in your assignments (not expected or required) need to be cited. Information generated by AI tools such as ChatGPT should be treated with caution, and you should not turn in assignments written by artificial intelligence (see the note on Academic Integrity above). If you face challenges accessing the technology necessary to succeed in this course, please reach out to Prof. Bloch as soon as possible.



## Accessibility

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We are committed to ensuring that all students receive equal access to the course materials and equitable opportunities to achieve the course learning goals. If you experience or anticipate any challenges related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please let Prof. Bloch know as soon as possible. I am happy to explore a range of options for removing barriers to your learning. If you have a disability, or think you might have a disability, you may also wish to work with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>) to discuss accessibility in this and other courses, including possibilities for official accommodations. All communications regarding accessibility will remain confidential.

## A Note on Sources

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The course raises sensitive issues surrounding war, violence, racism, nationalism, and imperialism. It is crucial that we remain respectful of one another's viewpoints in class discussions. If you disagree with a classmate (and debate and disagreement are encouraged!), then be sure to direct your comments at the idea, not the person. It is often helpful to summarize a peer's idea before disagreeing, to ensure you have really understood it. Each section will develop a "group agreement" at the beginning of the semester, outlining shared discussion norms and expectations for the classroom community. Please do not hesitate to meet with Prof. Bloch or your TA if you have concerns about any aspect of the course content.

## Additional Resources

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UW-Madison and the History Department make available a wide range of resources to foster your academic success and personal wellbeing. It's a good idea to familiarize (or re-familiarize) yourself with the following:

### University Writing Center

<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

Individual consultations, workshops, and online guides on all aspects of academic writing.

### History Lab

<http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>

A resource center for undergraduates in history courses staffed by experienced graduate students, who are available to assist you with writing history papers. You can sign up online for an individual consultation at any stage of the writing process.

### Greater University Tutoring Services

<https://guts.wisc.edu/>

Study skills support and peer tutoring across academic subjects.

### McBurney Disability Resource Center

<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>

Contact the McBurney Center if you have or think you may have a disability to discuss a range of possible accommodations.

### Mental Health Services

<https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>

### Resources on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

UW-Madison is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment and offers a variety of resources for students impacted by sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. The Dean of Students Office has compiled a comprehensive guide to resources on and off campus, including both confidential resources and options for reporting: <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/report-an-issue/sexual-assault-dating-and-domestic-violence/>.

## Course Schedule

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Readings and discussion posts are due by the beginning of section, unless otherwise noted (\*).  
Essays are due by the start of lecture. Guidelines and rubrics for all assignments will be posted on Canvas. All readings, except those in the course book, will be available on Canvas. See the “Modules” tab for week-by-week links.

### **Week 1: Introduction**

Wed. Sept. 6: Course Introduction: What is Modern Europe?

Fri. Sept. 8: Legacies of the Enlightenment and French Revolution

#### Reading:

- \*National Assembly, “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen” (1789) [read for lecture on Fri.]
- \*Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Women” (1791) [read for lecture on Fri.]

*\*First section meetings on Sept. 6-7*

### **Week 2: Revolution and Reaction**

Mon. Sept. 11: Europe under Napoleon

Wed. Sept. 13: The Industrial Revolution

Fri. Sept. 15: Conservatism and Liberalism in the Restoration Era

#### Reading:

- E. T. A. Hoffmann, “The Sandman” (1816)

#### Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #1 due in section

### **Week 3: The Limits of Restoration**

Mon. Sept. 18: The Nationalist Challenge

Wed. Sept. 20: Socialism and the Working Class

Feb. Sept. 22: Revolutions of 1848

#### Reading:

- \*“Testimony Gathered by Ashley’s Mines Commission” (1842) [read for lecture on Wed.]
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto” (1848), pp. 73-92

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #2 due in section

**Week 4: Making Nation-States**

Mon. Sept. 25: Nationalism and Republicanism after 1848: Italian Unification

Wed. Sept. 27: The Paradoxes of Liberal Nationalism: German Unification

Fri. Sept. 29: Gender, Class, and the French Third Republic

Reading:

- Giuseppe Mazzini, "Toward a Holy Alliance of the Peoples" (1849)
- Camillo di Cavour, "Letter to King Victor Emmanuel" (1858)
- Giuseppe Mazzini, Public Declaration in London (1859)
- \*Hubertine Auclert, "The Political Rights of Women" (1878) [*read for lecture on Fri.*]

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #3 due in section

**Week 5: The Social Question**

Mon. Oct. 2: Cities and the "Social Question"

Wed. Oct. 4: Review for Quiz #1

Fri. Oct. 6: Quiz #1

Reading:

- \*Josephine Butler, "The Contagious Diseases Acts" (1871) [*read for lecture on Mon.*]
- \*Clara Zetkin, "Women's Work and the Organization of Trade Unions" (1894) [*read for lecture on Mon.*]

**Week 6: Race and Imperialism**

Mon. Oct. 9: Origins of the "New Imperialism"

Wed. Oct. 11: Colonial Genocide: The Congo Free State

Fri. Oct. 13: Race and Colonial Cultures

Reading:

- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899)
- Oral Histories on the Equateur District, Congo (ca. 1883-1908)

**Week 7: Fin-de-Siècle Ideologies**

Mon. Oct. 16: New Nationalisms in the Habsburg Empire

Wed. Oct. 18: The Coming of the First World War

Fri. Oct. 20: The July Crisis: Debate

Reading:

- \*Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (1896), pp. 43-54 [read for lecture on Mon.]

Assignment:

- Outline and draft introduction for Essay #1 due in section

**Week 8: The Great War**

Mon. Oct. 23: The Great War: Trench Warfare and Occupations

Wed. Oct. 25: The Home Front

Fri. Oct. 27: Making a Postwar Order

Reading:

- Belá Zombory Moldován, *The Burning of the World: A Memoir of 1914*, pp. 88-115
- \*Woodrow Wilson, Fourteen Points Address (1918) [read for lecture on Fri.]

Assignment:

- Essay #1 due Oct. 25 at the start of lecture

**Week 9: Interwar Politics and Culture**

Mon. Oct. 30: Interwar Culture and the “New Woman”

Wed. Nov. 1: The Rise of Fascism and Nazism

Fri. Nov. 3: The Depression and the Unmaking of Democracy

Reading:

- FILM: Josef von Sternberg, dir. *The Blue Angel* (1930)
- \*Benito Mussolini, “The Achievements of the Fascist Revolution” (1929) [read for lecture on Wed.]
- \*Louise Solmitz, Diary Entries on Hitler’s Seizure of Power (1933) [read for lecture on Fri.]

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #4 due in section

**Week 10: Crises of Democracy**

Mon. Nov. 6: New Internationalisms and the Coming of the Second World War

Wed. Nov. 8: Review for Quiz #2

Fri. Nov. 10: Quiz #2

Assignment:

- Book selection for Essay #2 due in section, and begin reading

**Week 11: Total War and Genocide**

Mon. Nov. 13: World War II in Europe: From Poland to Stalingrad

Wed. Nov. 15: The Nazi Empire: Collaboration, Puppet States, and Resistance

Fri. Nov. 17: Holocaust and Genocide in East and West

Reading:

- Leyb Goldin, “Chronicle of a Single Day” (1941)
- Charlotte Delbo, “Arrivals, Departures” (1946)
- Continue reading book for Essay #2

**Week 12: Divided Europe**

Mon. Nov. 20: Origins of the Cold War

Wed. Nov. 22: Politics and Everyday Life under Communism [*lecture online*]

*Fri. Nov. 24: Thanksgiving Break*

Reading:

- Heda Kovály, *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague, 1941-1968* (1986), pp. 75-104

*\*No sections this week: Thanksgiving Break*

**Week 13: Imperial Reckonings**

Mon. Nov. 27: Decolonization and Colonial Legacies

Wed. Nov. 29: “Revolutions” of 1968?

Fri. Dec. 1: The (Re)Birth of Human Rights

Reading: [13 pp.]

- National Liberation Front, “Proclamation” (1954) *[read for lecture on Mon.]*
- François Mitterrand, “Speech in Response to FLN Actions” (1954) *[read for lecture on Mon.]*
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), excerpt *[read for lecture on Mon.]*
- \*Solidarity Union, “The ‘Twenty-One Demands’” (1980) *[read for lecture on Fri.]*

Assignment:

- Outline and draft introduction for Essay #2 due in section

**Week 14: A New European Order**

Mon. Dec. 4: From Social Democracy to Neoliberalism

Wed. Dec. 6: Immigration and the New Right

Fri. Dec. 8: The Fall of Communism

Assignment:

- Essay #2 due Dec. 6 at the start of lecture

*\*Last section meetings on Dec. 6-7*

**Week 15: Contemporary Legacies**

Mon. Dec. 11: Review for Final Exam

Wed. Dec. 13: Conclusions: Challenges for Europe Today

**\*Final Exam: Thurs. Dec. 21, 2:45-4:45 p.m. (Location TBD)**