

National University of Ireland, Maynooth

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Third Arts, 2017-18

HY 310: EUROPE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: AN AGE OF EXTREMES?

First semester

7.5 credits

Monday at 11.00; Tuesday at 10.00

Lecturers: Professor Filipe Meneses, Dr John Paul Newman

Course description

The Twentieth Century was a time of enormous disruption and transformation in Europe. Two world wars completely transformed the continent and its relationship with the rest of the world. Its peoples were divided like never before by competing ideologies, some of which demanded the total surrender of the individual to a higher cause. Parliamentary democracy was almost extinguished, as all manner of alternatives vied for supremacy. After 1945 Europe was divided into East and West, a reflex of the burgeoning struggle between the two superpowers, the USSR and the United States. This 'Cold War' was seen by most observers as a reality whose permanence was unquestionable, but it lasted a mere four decades before one of those superpowers disappeared. In the meantime, the dream of European unity had taken root, leading to the establishment of the European Union at a time of seeming ideological exhaustion.

This module has been designed to examine the changes that have taken place in Europe since 1900. Rather than covering all of the events in detail, it attempts to focus on a number of significant ideas and trends, and on attempts by historians to understand these. In so doing, it aims to acquaint students with significant historical debates and controversies regarding this period of European history.

Aim and objectives

Aims and Objectives: the module will enable students to reflect critically on the key questions and problems of the study of twentieth-century Europe, with particular emphasis on the role of war, revolution, and mass politics on the shaping of European history.

Assessment

Assessment of this module is divided into three parts.

- Tutorial participation: ten-minute in-class presentation based on an assigned reading + follow-up report, 1,000 words (see below), 15%
- Tutorial essay, 3,000 words, 25%
- Two-hour exam, 60%

Essay titles:

1. Did the October Revolution in Russia undermine the 'Wilsonian Order' after the First World War? Why or why not?
2. Did Italian Fascism / German National Socialism represent change or continuity when it came to gender relations?
3. 'The experience of Czechoslovakia before the Munich agreement tells us that large ethnic minorities did not represent an obstacle to the success of the newly independent states created in 1919'. Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. How important was collaborationism to Nazi occupation during the Second World War? Answer with respect to France, Yugoslavia or Italy.
5. Did the building of the Berlin Wall secure communist rule in the German Democratic Republic?
6. Why did the crisis in Algeria dominate French political life in the second half of the 1950s?

Students will be required to submit their essays to Turnitin.

Tutorials

Tutorials are centred around texts **which all students must read in advance and which are posted on Moodle**. Each week there will be two **ten-minute (timed)** student presentations based on that week's readings, summarizing the author's key arguments and their strengths and weaknesses. After the presentations, a generalized class discussion will take into account both presentations and the week's question. On the basis of this discussion, each presenter will then revise her/his work and submit (at the next tutorial meeting) a thousand-word written review of the text. **This assignment is worth 15% of the final mark.**

Reading

There is one core textbook in this module, which students must secure and read independently of other, more specific readings. It is Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London, 1999). There are multiple copies of this book in the library, and it is available for purchase at the Campus Bookstore. In addition to Mazower's book, Michael D. Richards and Paul R. Waibel's *Twentieth Century Europe: A Brief History, 1900 to the Present* (Oxford: 2014) provides a highly-useful overview of the key developments and processes of European history in the twentieth century. **For purposes of essay and exam preparation, an expanded reading list is available on Moodle.**

Lecture Schedule

Lecture 1. Introduction

Lecture 2. Europe at the Turn of the Century: The Era of Mass Politics

Lecture 3. The Origins of the First World War

Lecture 4. The First World War

Tutorial: The 'Fischer Thesis' and the Origins of the First World War

**READING: (All students): Keith Nielson, '1914: The German War',
European History Quarterly Vol. 44 N. 3 (July 2014),**

DISCUSSION: Was Germany guilty of starting the First World War?

Lecture 5. Revolutionary Russia

Lecture 6. Peacemaking at Versailles

Tutorial: Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*

PRESENTATION 1: Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War One*. Chapter 14: 'How (not) to Pay for the War'.

PRESENTATION 2: Harry Elmer Barnes, 'The Public Significance of the War-Guilt Question', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Volume 175 (September 1934), 11-18.

DISCUSSION: Was Versailles a victors' peace?

Lecture 7. Making 'New Europe': Eastern and Central Europe in the 1920s

Lecture 8. The Rise of Fascism: Italy after the War

Tutorial: Contrasting explanations of Fascism and its origins

PRESENTATION 1: Emilio Gentile, 'Fascism as Political Religion', *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 25 N. 2/3 (May 1990), 229-51.

PRESENTATION 2: Paul Corner, 'The Road to Fascism: An Italian *Sonderweg*?', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 11 N. 2 (May 2002), 273-295.

DISCUSSION: How do you account for the origins of Fascism in Italy?

Lecture 9. The Golden Age of the Weimar Republic

Lecture 10. The Rise of the Nazis

Tutorial: Beyond Versailles

PRESENTATION 1: Peiter Fritzsche, 'Did Weimar Fail?', *Journal of Modern History* Vol. 68 N. 3 (Sept. 1996), 629-56.

PRESENTATION 2: Conan Fischer, 'The SA of the NSDAP: Social Background and Ideology of the Rank and File in the Early 1930s', *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 17 N. 4 (October 1982), 651-70.

DISCUSSION: What were the strengths and weaknesses of Weimar democracy?

Lecture 11. The Soviet Experiment: from Lenin to Stalin

Lecture 12. International Communism and the Comintern

Tutorial: Stalinism

PRESENTATION 1: Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'The Nature of the Soviet System', *Slavic Review*, 20/3 (October 1961)

PRESENTATION 2: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford, 1999), Chapter 8 'A Time of Troubles'

DISCUSSION: Was Soviet society 'totalitarian'?

Lecture 13. Between Aggression and Appeasement: Europe, 1936-1939

Lecture 14. The Second World War: Military and Political Considerations

Tutorial: Total War in the Age of Totalitarianism

PRESENTATION 1: David Welch, 'Nazi Propaganda and the *Volksgemeinschaft*: Constructing a People's Community', *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 39 N. 2 (April 2004), 213-38.

PRESENTATION 2: Gesine Gerhard, 'Food and Genocide: Nazi Agrarian Politics in the Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union', *Contemporary European History* Vol. 18 N. 1 (February 2009), 45-65.

DISCUSSION: How did its interpretation of defeat in the First World War affect Nazi Germany's preparations for, and conduct, of the Second World War?

Lecture 15. Collaboration and Resistance in Occupied Europe

Lecture 16. The Holocaust

Tutorial: The Origins of the Holocaust

PRESENTATION 1: Contribution by Daniel J. Goldhagen to ‘The “Willing Executioners”/“Ordinary Men” Debate [available at http://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Publication_OP_1996-01.pdf]

PRESENTATION 2: Contribution by Christopher Browning to ‘The “Willing Executioners”/“Ordinary Men” Debate [available at http://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Publication_OP_1996-01.pdf]

DISCUSSION: How did the Second World War enable the Holocaust?

Lecture 17. The Cold War: Myths and Realities

Lecture 18. The Stalinization of Eastern Europe

Tutorial: The Stalinization of Eastern Europe

PRESENTATION 1: Norman Naimark & Leonid Gibianskii, ‘Introduction’, *The Establishment Of Communist Regimes In Eastern Europe, 1944-1949*.

PRESENTATION 2: Vladimir Tismaneanu ‘Introduction’ and Ken Jowitt ‘Stalinist Revolutionary Breakthroughs in Eastern Europe’ in Vladimir Tismaneanu (ed.), *Stalinism Revisited: The Establishment of Communist Regimes in East-Central Europe* (Budapest, New York: 2009).

DISCUSSION: 1) Why was Stalinism an appealing alternative for so many people in Europe after 1945?

Lecture 19. Youth in Revolt? The 1960s

Lecture 20. The European Project

Tutorial: Peace and Prosperity after 1945

TUTORIAL ESSAY DUE

PRESENTATION 1: Alan S. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* 2nd Edition (London, 1999), Chapter 6, ‘The Lives and Teachings of the European Saints’.

PRESENTATION 2: Perry Anderson, *The New Old World* (London, 2011), chapter 1, ‘Origins’.

DISCUSSION: Was the European project was a by-product of Cold War divisions?

Lecture 21. Thatcherism

Lecture 22. The Fall of Communism

Tutorial: The Erosion of the Eastern Bloc

READING: Matthias Middell ‘1989’ in S.A. Smith *The Oxford Handbook of Communism*

PRESENTATION: Timothy Garton Ash, ‘Reform or Revolution’, in *The Uses of Adversity* (Cambridge: 1989)

DISCUSSION: Did people power bring down communism in 1989?

Lecture 23. The Wars of Yugoslav Succession

Lecture 24. Conclusion; student assessment; exam discussion

Tutorial: The Fall of Yugoslavia

TUTORIAL ESSAY RETURNED

READING: Andrew Wachtel and Christopher Bennet 'The Dissolution of Yugoslavia' in Charles Ingrao and Thomas A. Emmert *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies: A Scholars' Initiative*

DISCUSSION: Why was the collapse of Yugoslavia so violent?