

# **HISTORY 303:**

## **EUROPE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

**Prof. John McCole**

**PLEASE NOTE: the dates on the syllabus below are for fall term, and I may make other relatively small changes to the course for Fall.**

- Fall Term 2020
- This course will combine posted lectures (asynchronous) with one “live,” synchronous Zoom discussion every Friday from 12:30-1:20 p.m. See below for the section describing in more detail how lectures and discussions will work.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will cover the history of Europe in the twentieth century. But equally important, it's a course with a theme: democracy in Europe. It's not a complacent story about the inevitable triumph of democracy over the alternatives. Throughout this period, democracy had to be fought for, extended, reimagined, defended, and reinvented. Even the major alternatives to democracy, fascism and Soviet Communism, claimed to represent the will of the people more authentically than parliamentary democracy. And in our own time, Europe is again witnessing disturbing right-wing challenges to democracy. Our focus will be on what historians have called the “short” twentieth century, from 1914-1989; in our final week, we'll look at some major developments since then that have both favored democracy and created new dangers for it.

This course also has an approach, based on the fact that historians don't simply figure out what happened in the past. Just as importantly, we also ask and try to answer questions, especially “why?” questions. Why did the post-WWI spread of democracy prove so disappointing to so many Europeans? Why were they attracted to authoritarian alternatives during the interwar period? Why were western Europeans able to reach such a surprising consensus on how to reinvent parliamentary democracy after WWII? And why have the democratic hopes of the non-violent revolutions of 1989 in Communist Europe been threatened by the rise of illiberal, undemocratic forces?

Europe's twentieth century was partly a century of terrors and atrocities. Europeans

unleashed two devastating world wars; saw fierce ideological and political conflict between liberal democracy, fascism, and communism; and both carried out and confronted genocide and so-called “ethnic cleansing.” In the process, their relations with the rest of the world changed dramatically. The European nations began the century as the world’s dominant imperial powers. After two world wars, Europe was split into two halves, integrated into blocs dominated by “outside” powers, the USA and USSR, during the Cold War. In our time, Europeans are struggling to redefine their identities, their political loyalties, and their place in a multipolar, global society.

But the full picture is as contradictory and varied as Europe itself. Europe's twentieth century was also a time of exciting social and political transformation and cultural innovation. In postwar western Europe, parliamentary democracy was reinvented, not just restored. And in the second half of the century, Europe overcame many of its nationalist and ideological divisions and began a movement toward unification whose destination is still open. The legacies of earlier conflicts remain, and contemporary Europeans face new, difficult challenges. Still, a central question of this course will be how Europe succeeded in transforming itself so dramatically in the course of the twentieth century. To explore this question, we will examine the major social, political, and cultural movements that have vied to define and control Europe during the entire period. We will give full attention to the second half of the century and, in the final week, examine key developments in recent and contemporary Europe.

- How to reach me: [mccole@uoregon.edu](mailto:mccole@uoregon.edu) | (541) 346-5906.
- Office hours: I'll hold virtual office hours each week. Please use the calendar (on the far left) to sign up for a 15-minute, one-to-one conversation using Zoom. (I'll invite you for the time of the appointment.) If you'd like an appointment at another time during the week, I'm happy to arrange that; just let me know. For brief questions, and quicker answers, you can email me at any time ([mccole@uoregon.edu](mailto:mccole@uoregon.edu)).

GE: to be announced

**\*PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR THE COURSE SCHEDULE OF**

**CLASS-BY-CLASS TOPICS AND READINGS\***

## **How online lectures and discussions will work**

- Lectures:** I'll post two to three presentations online each week. You can watch these at any time during the week. I'll also make .pdf files of the slides available on Canvas under Modules. I strongly urge you not to fall behind!

- **Discussions:** each week on Friday, from 12:30-1:20, as a Zoom meeting, typically with part of the hour in breakout groups.

- **Preparing for discussions: three guidelines for doing well.**

I understand that in the current situation, your access to printing may be restricted. Therefore, the following is a recommendation but not a requirement:

1. **Print it out:** if we're discussing a document, print it out. Print out the reading and discussion questions as well. (I'll post them for each week under Modules.)
2. **Write as you read:** don't just highlight, mark up the printed documents and take notes on your printout of the discussion questions as you read. ***You'll learn much more if you do.*** If you've never done this, you'll be surprised at the results. ***The research shows that you'll learn more.***
3. **Start a folder:** keep your printouts of the discussion readings and questions in a physical folder dedicated to this class. It'll serve you well when reviewing for exams.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- a "take-home" midterm exam, after week 4 (20% of your course grade)
- a "take-home" final exam (20%) / June 4: the final exam requirement has now been modified. See my email and the details under Assignments > final exam.
- a paper analyzing ordinary Germans' support for the Nazi regime (20%), due date to be announced, but after the midterm
- a paper analyzing the nonviolent revolutions of 1989 that ended Communism in eastern Europe (20%), due date to be announced but during week 10
- several short quizzes on the lectures and reading in some weeks (10%)
- attendance and participation at live Zoom discussions, or completion of an alternative written assignment on the reading we're discussing that week (10%)

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO LEARN

1. A basic knowledge of the history of Europe in the twentieth century, including events and key dates; ideologies and ideas; political, social, and cultural movements; and major economic developments (a basic mastery of this knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient to do well);

2. How to think about history in terms of political, economic, social, and cultural forces and how they interact;
3. How historians and others go about explaining why things happened the way they did and not otherwise; let's call this historical reasoning (history is much more than just "what happened");
4. Some of the main controversies about Europe's twentieth-century history;
5. Skills in evaluating primary source documents; and
6. Basic visual literacy in the images and iconography of twentieth-century Europe.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **My grading policy**

The paper assignments will describe the criteria that will be used to grade them. I don't grade on a curve. I grade for accomplishment, not effort. In general, these are my standards for grading, which reflect the History Department's criteria:

- A: Work that distinguishes itself through its sophisticated grasp of the material, in addition to being well executed and reasonably free of errors.
- B: Work that solidly satisfies the assignment's main criteria but lacks the element of distinction that carries the work into the realm of excellence.
- C: Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria reasonably well.
- D: Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards, but which exhibits some engagement with the material.
- F: Work that is weak in every aspect and satisfies none of the assigned criteria.

### **Policy on late work**

Papers submitted late will be penalized. The penalty will be modest at first, then gradually increasing depending on how late. But it is always worth your while to submit work, even if it is late.

### **Academic honesty**

All work that you submit for this course, including papers and exams, must be your own, and it must have been produced for this course. Please be sure that you are familiar with the University's policies regarding academic honesty. When you submit work for the course, you are certifying that you have complied with these guidelines.

Be sure you do not inadvertently commit plagiarism. To learn more, I recommend [this excellent resource from Bowdoin College, which also explains how to cite things correctly.](#)

## READINGS

- **Required and available from the bookstore (aka Duck Store) and also easy to purchase online:**

- Konrad Jarausch, *Out of Ashes: A New History of Europe in the Twentieth Century*
- Robert G. Moeller, ed., *The Nazi State and German Society*
- Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*

The total cost for books should be less than \$35.

- **Online readings and pdf files:**

Please look in the course schedule below for the locations of online readings and links to download pdf files required for this course. All pdf files will also be available in the Modules section of Canvas.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### I. The Great War and the Consequences

**Week 1: Under the Volcano: Europe on the Eve of Disaster** (March 30, April 1, 3)

- 1 Introduction to the Course | Imperial Europe at its Zenith
- 2 Challengers, Nationalism, and Disruptive Forces

**reading:**

- Jarausch, Chs. 1: “Global Domination,” and 2: “Breakdown of Peace”
- Emmeline Pankhurst, [My Own Story](#) (1914) (excerpts online at that link--or go to this week's module and get a pdf version, which is more reader friendly but has typos)
- F. T. Marinetti, “[Manifesto of Futurism](#)” (1909) (online)

## **Week 2: World War I and the Russian Revolution (April 6, 8, 10)**

**1 Total War and the Consequences**

**2 Revolution from the Left: The Bolshevik Revolution and the Creation of the Soviet Union**

**reading:**

- Jarausch, Chs. 3: “Waging Total War,” and 4: “Bolshevik Revolution”
- Lenin, “[The Dictatorship of the Proletariat](#)” (online)

## **II. The Interwar Crisis**

### **Week 3: The Democratic Wave and Its Failures (April 13, 15, 17)**

**1 Hopeful, Divided, and Demoralized Democracies**

**2 Counterrevolution from the Right: The Birth of Fascism in Italy**

**reading:**

- Jarausch, Chs. 5: “Democratic Hopes,” and 6: “The Fascist Alternative,”
- Benito Mussolini, “[The Doctrine of Fascism](#)” (1932) (click to download .pdf)

### **Week 4: Interwar Social and Cultural Change (April 20, 22, 24)**

**1 Modernist Social and Cultural Revolution: Women and Mass Culture**

**reading:**

- Jarausch, Ch. 7: “Modernist Provocations”
- Virginia Woolf, [A Room of One's Own \(online\)](#), parts One and Six (pp. 4-21, 80-95)
- optional: I strongly recommend you watch Fritz Lang's blockbuster film "[Metropolis](#)" (1927)

## **MIDTERM EXAM**

### **Week 5: The Great Depression and the Rise of Nazism (April 27, 29, May 1)**

- 1 The Crisis of Capitalism: The Great Depression
- 2 Nazi Germany

**reading:**

- Jarausch, Chs. 8: “Devastating Depression,” and 10: Hitler’s *Volksgemeinschaft*
- George Orwell, [The Road to Wigan Pier](#), Part I, Chapter 5 (.pdf of the entire book; you’re only required to read that chapter)
- Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, excerpts (download this .pdf file):
  - “Reviving the Nation,” pp. 19-43
  - “Racial Grooming,” pp. 76-96

### **Week 6: The USSR, and the Road to Another World War (May 4, 6, 8)**

- 1 Stalinism in the Soviet Union
- 2 The Path to World War II

**reading:**

- Jarausch, Chs. 9, “Stalinist Modernization,” and 13, “Nazi Holocaust”
- Stalin, “[Speech to Industrial Managers](#)” on rapid industrialization (1931) (click on the

title to read it online)

- John Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel*, excerpt (.pdf file)

### **III. Postwar Europe, West and East**

#### **Week 7: From Europe's Nadir to Reconstruction in the West (May 11, 13, 15)**

- 1 The Catastrophes: World War, Occupation, Carnage, and Genocide
- 2 The Reinvention of Democracy in Western Europe
- 3 Preview: The 1989 Revolutions--**and** your second paper

#### **reading:**

- Jarausch, Chs. 13, "Nazi Holocaust," 14: "Bitter Victory," 15: "Democratic Renewal," and 19: "Economic Integration"
- [United Nations resolution on genocide \(1948\)](#) (click to read online)
- Steven Hill, *Europe's Promise*, excerpts (download this .pdf file):  
"The Rise of the European Way"  
"La Santé D'Abord" [Health Comes First]

#### **Week 8: Communist Europe and Decolonization (May 18, 20, 22)**

- 1 Post-Stalinism: Communist Modernity in the East
- 2 Europe's Changing Place in the World: The Demise of Empires and the New Migrants

#### **reading:**

- Jarausch, Chs. 16: "Dictating Communism," and 18: "Disappointing Decolonization"
- Václav Havel, "[The Power of the Powerless" \(1978\), excerpt](#) (download this .pdf file)

- Jane Kramer, “The Invandrare”

## **Week 9: The Transformation of the Postwar Order (May 27, 29)**

**Monday, May 25: Memorial Day, no class**

**1** The Social Contract in Crisis? Western Europe in the 1970s and 1980s

**2** The Making of “1989”: The Collapse of Communism

**reading:**

- Jarausch, Chs. 23: “Postindustrial Transition,” and 25: “Peaceful Revolution”
- Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern*
- Solidarity, “[21 Demands](#)” (1980) (click to read online)
- watch these videos of Margaret Thatcher speeches (click to read on youtube)
  1. [“the lady’s not for turning”](#) (1981)
  2. [exchange about socialism--Thatcher’s final House of Commons debate](#) (1990)

## **IV. Toward Today’s Europe**

### **Week 10: Europe since the Twentieth Century (June 1, 3, 5)**

**1** Uniting, Splitting, Disappointed Hopes: Europe in the 1990s and the Aughts

**2** Challenges for Democracy in Twenty-First Century Europe

**reading:**

Jarausch, Ch. 28: “Prospects for the Twenty-First Century;” and Postscript: “A Chastened Modernity,” pp. 780-88 only

## **FINAL EXAM**

