

History 475  
European Social History, 1914 to Present  
Fall 2004, MWF 11-11:50  
1651 Humanities  
Instructor: R. J. Koshar (rjkoshar@wisc.edu)  
Teaching Assistant: Scott Moranda

**Course Rationale:** The end of the Cold War and further evolution of the European Community have raised the question of how to represent European history in the twentieth century. Was it primarily an age of war, intense political conflict, and genocide? Or was it a century of difficult but nonetheless definite progress on all fronts—rising economic prosperity, the triumph of liberal democracy and human rights, and the defeat of totalitarianism? The social historian can make a valuable contribution to this debate. Social history demands seeing the past not only with respect to the “big events” and actions of the rich and mighty but also with respect to everyday life. The worker, peasant, housewife, shopkeeper, white collar employee, or middle-class entrepreneur must also be studied in the context of a century that brought both unprecedented violence and a degree of economic well-being surpassed only by the United States. How to integrate these multiple stories and experiences into a meaningful narrative? This is the key question of the course, which is designed not only to illuminate a crucial period of contemporary history but also to sharpen students’ writing and critical skills.

**Assignments and Grades:** This is a writing-intensive course, the assignments for which will help you build your analytical and expository skills. You will write almost every week, but most assignments are short. The primary writing assignments are two five-page papers, due on October 8 and November 19. In addition, students will do eight shorter writing assignments, which consist of single-sentence exercises related to course readings. See below for additional information on the writing assignments. The final exam, consisting of two essays, will be on Dec. 20; you will receive a list of possible exam questions later in the semester. The two longer papers and final exam count for 75 percent (25 percent each) of your final grade; the other 25 percent comes from participation in discussion and the shorter writing assignments. You will not be graded on the shorter assignments, but you will receive commentary, and failure to turn them in will lower your participation grade. You should be prepared to discuss weekly readings, lectures, and writing assignments in the discussion sections.

**Required Reading:** The required textbook is Richard Vinen, *A History in Fragments: Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Da Capo Press, 2000), which is available for purchase only at the Underground Textbook Exchange. In addition, there is a course packet with

excerpted readings from primary and secondary sources available for purchase at the Humanities Copy Center. Both the text and packet will also be placed on reserve at College Library. Readings constitute not only background for the lectures but also material for discussion sessions, papers, and exam questions. At the very least, you should have completed all reading assignments by the time your discussion session meets, but it is strongly advised to do the readings before the Monday lecture, since the instructor will refer to the readings frequently in all class meetings.

Course packet readings:

Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 2004), 118-61

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (HarperCollins, 1992), 1-2, 38-77

Emilie Carles, *A Life of Her Own: The Transformation of a Countrywoman in Twentieth-Century France* (Penguin, 1992), 41-63

Dusko Doder, *The Yugoslavs* (Vintage, 1978), 16-41, 94-107

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford, 1999), 89-114

Ernst Jünger, *The Storm of Steel: From the Diary of a German Storm-Troop Officer on the Western Front* (Howard Fertig, 1996), 92-120

Bernard Gwertzman/Michael T. Kaufman, eds., *The Collapse of Communism* (Times Books, 1990), 154-60; 166-84; 187-93

Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Harvard University Press, 1983), 109-30.

Viktor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933-1941* (Random House, 1998), 289-324.

Pieter Lagrou, "The Nationalization of Victimhood: Selective Violence and National Grief in Western Europe, 1940-1960," in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s*, edited by Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (Cambridge, 2003), 243-57

David W. Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada 1919-1939* (Berg, 1998), 95-131

Peter Maass, *Love Thy Neighbor: A Story of War* (Knopf, 1996), 3-35, 248-77

Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Harvard, 2001), 108-38

Sean O'Connell, *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender, and Motoring, 1896-1939* (Manchester University, 1998), 43-76

Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (California, 2000), 168-205

Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* (Penguin, 1973), 146-214

Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (Yale, 1997), 141-67

James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (Yale, 1993), 49-79

### **Course Schedule:**

Topics are approximate.

### **Part 1: Europe before the Catastrophe**

Sept. 3: Course Introduction

Sept. 8-10: European Societies and Economies

Reading: Vinen, 1-42; Kern, 109-30

Sept. 13-17: Mass Culture, Mass Politics

Reading: Roberts, 146-214

### **Part 2: From War to War**

Sept. 20-24: Great War, or Storm of Steel?

Reading: Vinen, 43-60; Jünger, 92-120; Carles, 41-63

Sept. 27-Oct. 1: Civil Wars (Russia, Italy, Germany)

Reading: Vinen, 63-171; Lloyd, 95-131

Oct. 4-8: Modern Times (Consumerism, Cars, Cinema)

Reading: Fitzpatrick, 89-114; O'Connell, 43-76

Oct. 8: Film excerpt: "Berlin: Symphony of a Great City" (1927)

Oct. 11-15: Emergence and development of Nazism

Reading: Vinen, 172-83; Baranowski, 118-61; Klemperer, 289-324

Oct. 18-22: World War II

Reading: Vinen, 184-98; Tanner, 141-67

Oct. 25-29: Genocide

Reading: Vinen, 199-211; Browning, 1-2, 38-77

### **Part 3: Reconstructions, East and West**

Nov. 1-5: Societies in Fragments

Reading: Vinen, 239-98; Naimark, 108-38

Nov. 5: Film excerpt: "The Bicycle Thief" (1948)

Nov. 8-12: Economic and Political Reconstructions

Reading: Vinen, 299-337, 368-81; Poiger, 168-205

Nov. 15-19: "Real Existing Socialism": Society and Economy in the East

Reading: Vinen, 338-81; Doder, 16-41, 94-107

Nov. 22-24: Remembering and Forgetting

Reading: Young, 49-79; Lagrou, 243-57

### **Part 4: After the Wall**

Nov. 29-Dec. 3: Rock Around the Bloc, or the Many Falls of Communism

Reading: Vinen, 385-460, Gwertzman/Kaufman, 154-60; 166-84; 187-93

Dec.6-10: Postwar Europe?

Reading: Vinen, 463-531; Maass, 3-35, 248-77

Dec. 13-15: Conclusion & Review

**Dec. 20: Final Exam: 2:45pm, room tba**

### **Writing Assignments:**

The shorter writing assignments work on various skills, including summarizing and comparing arguments, using primary sources to build an argument, comparing primary sources, and relating an author's argument to his or her evidence or to another piece of evidence. The longer writing assignments test your ability to bring these skills together in a more extended exposition. In these assignments, you should incorporate readings, films, discussion, and lectures, using quotations where suitable, and comparing expert opinion (including my own) where there is disagreement. Outside sources may be used, but they are not required. Short parenthetical insertions will suffice for identifying sources, e.g, (Vinen, p. 399) or (Koshar, lecture, 10/05/04). If students use outside materials, they should attach a separate bibliography listing all sources, including class materials. Students may rewrite **one** of the longer essays, but they are required to submit rewrites no later than one week after the class session in which the original paper was returned, and they must discuss their plans for rewriting with the instructor or teaching assistant. You

will never receive a lower grade for a rewrite, but you are not guaranteed a higher grade if you do one. A rewritten paper should be a substantial reworking based on the instructor's comments; submit both the original paper with annotations and the rewritten paper.

Sept. 13: In one sentence of no more than fifty (50) words, explain what Robert Roberts means when he recalls that World War I “cracked the form of English lower-class life.”

Sept. 20: In one sentence of no more than fifty (50) words, compare the impact World War I had on Emilie Carles and Ernst Jünger.

Sept. 27: In one sentence of no more than fifty (50) words, explain what drew tourists to WWI battlefields in the two decades after the war.

Oct. 8: “The aftermath of the First World War saw the birth of a culture that revolved around machines,” writes Richard Vinen. Write a five-page paper explaining Vinen's point. Is it a convincing statement? Is Vinen's periodization correct? Why or why not?

Oct. 18: In one sentence of no more than fifty (50) words, explain the central difference between the Ustashe and the Partisans in World War II regarding future plans for Croatia.

Oct. 25: In one sentence of no more than fifty (50) words, explain what motivated “ordinary men” to kill, in Christopher Browning's account of the Holocaust.

Nov. 1: In one sentence of no more than fifty (50) words, explain why, as Norman Naimark argues, the case of the expulsion of Germans from Poland after World War II was “both more and less complicated than that of their expulsion from Czechoslovakia.”

Nov. 19: Write a five-page paper comparing the reconstruction of West and East Europe after World War II.

Nov. 22: In one sentence of no more than fifty (50) words, explain what Pieter Lagrou means when he argues that the commemoration of World War II in 1950s Europe “was designed as an answer to the acute need for unity in European society.”

Dec. 6: In one sentence of no more than fifty (50) words, assess Peter Maass' notion of “the wild beast” as it relates to the war in Bosnia.