

History 475: European Social History, 1914 to Present
Fall 2012, TR 4-5:15 (1651 Humanities)
Instructor: R. J. Koshar (rjkoshar@wisc.edu)
Office Hours: 4101 Humanities (R 2-3:45 & 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?

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); and to relate this source critically to larger historical narratives and problems.

Assignments and Grading*:

Writing:

Three-credit students will write three essays of no more than six pages each (on assigned topics) and take a cumulative (open book, open note) final exam. The papers are due September 27, October 18, and November 15.

Four-credit students will do the first two six-page essays and the cumulative final, but substitute a paper of roughly twelve pages on a work of “life writing” for the third essay. This paper also requires the use of no less than seven secondary sources. Further information for this assignment (including a supplementary bibliography) will be circulated early in the semester. This paper is due November 29.

All students are urged to familiarize themselves with the rules and guidelines concerning plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism or cheating will be dealt with severely. (University policy on plagiarism is available at:

<http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>).

Discussion:

While I'll include discussion throughout lectures, we will have seven separate lecture periods when we'll discuss primary source reading. Each time, several students will be designated as "lead discussants" and asked to comment on a number of 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 once. 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.

Grading:

The three essays will count for sixty percent of the total grade, discussion twenty percent, and the final exam twenty percent. Percentages are: A=100-93; AB=92-88; B=87-83; BC=82-78; C=77-70; D=69-60.

*Graduate students should see the instructor about assignments and grading.

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:

Sept. 4 Course Introduction

Sept. 6: Prewar European Societies and Economies

Reading: Mazower, ix-xv, 3-40

Sept. 11 Imperialism and European Societies (Guest Lecture: Paul Grant)

Sept. 13 Mass Politics to 1914 (Liberalism, Socialism, Anti-Semitism)

Reading: Mazower, 41-103, start Carles

Sept. 18 Mass Culture and Gender before the War

Sept. 20 Discussion of Emilie Carles

Reading: finish Carles

Sept. 25 Origins of World War I

Sept. 27: World War I as “Experience”

First paper due (all students)

Reading: start Jünger

Oct. 2: European Civil Wars and the Rise of Communism

Oct. 4 Discuss Jünger

Reading: finish Jünger

Oct. 9 Culture and Gender of Modernism

Oct. 11 Film excerpt and discussion of “Berlin: Symphony of a Great City” (1927)

Reading: Mazower, 104-211

Oct. 16 Italian Fascism

Oct. 18: Nazism

Second paper due (all students)

Reading: start Carlo Levi

Oct. 23 World War II

Oct. 25: Discuss Carlo Levi

Reading: finish Levi

Oct. 30 Genocide

Nov. 1 European Society in Wartime and Resistance

Reading: start Primo Levi

Nov. 6 Discussion of Primo Levi

Nov. 8 Post-traumatic European Societies

Reading: finish P. Levi; Mazower, 212-326

Nov. 13 Economic Miracles?

Nov. 15 Political Reconstructions in the Liberal West

Third paper due (3-credit students only)

Reading: start *A Woman in Berlin*

Nov. 20 Discuss *A Woman in Berlin*

Nov. 22-25 Thanksgiving Recess

Reading: finish *A Woman in Berlin*

Nov. 27 “Real Existing Socialism”: Society and Economy in the East

Nov. 29: The West: Lennon, not Lenin

Four-credit papers due

Reading: Giorgio

Dec. 4 Discuss Giorgio

Dec. 6 Collapse of Communism

Reading: Mazower, 327-403

Dec. 11 Neo-Liberal Triumph?

Dec. 13 Discuss Hensel

Reading: Jana Hensel

Dec. 18: Cumulative Final Exam 5:05-7:05pm, Room TBA