

Department: HIST

Course No.: 2402/W [229/W]

Title: Europe in the Twentieth Century

Credits: 3

Contact: Nancy Shoemaker

Content Area: CA 1 Arts and Humanities

WQ: W

Catalog Copy: HIST 229W. Europe in the Twentieth Century. Either semester. Three credits. Open to sophomores or higher. Prerequisite: ENGL 105 or 110 or 111 or 250. Recommended preparation: HIST 101.

Twentieth Century Europe and its world relationships in the era of two world wars, the great depression, and the cold war.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: :

Explain How the Course Meets the Goals of General Education: Lord Acton asserted, "Modern History touches us so nearly, it is so deep a question of life and death, that we are bound to find our own way through it, and to owe our insight to ourselves." Twentieth Century European History provides an opportunity to achieve many of the goals of General Education. Twentieth Century European history is one of the essential tools to understanding our contemporary world. Analyzing the momentous events of Twentieth Century Europe (wars and peacemaking, the Holocaust, the Great Depression, pre-World War I imperialism and post-World War II decolonization, the "welfare state" and its opponents, postwar European economic cooperation, and others) stretches intellectual breadth and versatility. The diversity of historical interpretations expands critical judgment. Confronting the Holocaust, ethnic cleansing,

imperialism, gender prejudices, and other factors all expand moral sensitivity. The rich historical literature of Twentieth Century Europe elucidates such issues as relations between majorities and minorities, the changing roles of women, and religious, social, and cultural differences, and contributes towards comprehending the diversity of human culture and experience. Working towards grasping Twentieth Century European history provides a basis for the ongoing search for understanding.

#### CA1 Criteria:

Arts and Humanities: Twentieth Century Europe was characterized by titanic conflicts. A course in the history of Twentieth Century Europe permits students to learn essential aspects of our times such as the causes of the two world wars and of the Cold War and their aftermaths. Woven into Twentieth Century history is the study of the philosophical and political theories as well as the practice of communist, fascist, liberal democratic, conservative, and authoritarian regimes of various stripes. The century also saw extreme economic alternation from severe economic depression during the 1930s to profound economic prosperity during the decades following World War II. In addition, the course also traces the rise of the “welfare state” and also the counter-attack of its critics during recent decades. The course examines a changing, decolonizing Europe attempting to define a new European identity in a globalizing world.

W Criteria: HIST 229W requires a ten page research paper. The process for completing the research paper follows. First, students will select a topic from a wide variety of suggested subjects. Among potential topics are major causal questions: Why did World War I or World War II or the Cold War occur? Why were they significant or what were their impacts? Why did the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union end? Why did Communism collapse in the Soviet Union? Why did Italian Fascism reach power in Italy in 1922? Why did Hitler reach power in Germany in 1933? Why did the western powers appease Hitler's Germany during the 1930s? Why did many Germans follow Hitler and the Nazis in carrying out the Holocaust? Why did Communism reach power in Russia? Why Stalinism? Why has Europe moved towards greater European unification since 1945? A sample of other possible topics are: some aspects of the history of European women during the Twentieth Century, the Dreyfus Affair, European imperialism and decolonization, the Paris Peace Conference and the Versailles Treaty, the Irish 1916 Easter Revolution and Twentieth Century Ireland, the Great Depression in Europe, the Spanish Civil War, the French defeat of 1940, the Battle of Britain, the Battle of the Soviet Union, aspects of the Holocaust, the European Antifascist resistance movements or individuals, Eastern Europe during the Cold War, the burst of economic prosperity in Europe from 1950-early 1970s, the Welfare State and its opponents, the collapse of Yugoslavia and wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, Picasso's Guernica, The Rites of Spring, Edith Piaf, Josephine Baker, the Pankhursts, Simone de Beauvoir, Mussolini, Lenin, Stalin, Churchill, De Gaulle, Walesa, Havel, Einstein, Margaret Thatcher, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Raoul Wallenberg, Orwell, Camus, Malraux, Yeats, and many others.

The topics are designed to enrich the students' understanding of the course, but also to allow them to choose a topic in an area they want to explore further. After choosing a topic, the next assignment is to

hand in a paragraph containing the question or questions the students are asking, approximately five sentences with their main theses, and a bibliography of books and articles. Considerable attention will be devoted in class to elaborating how to construct good historical questions and historical theses or interpretations. A draft of the paper will be submitted worth ten percent of the course grade.

After the draft is returned with corrections and editing, students are required to discuss the draft in a conference with the professor. Emphasis will be placed on clear organization and writing, of course in the students' own words. In some instances, more than one draft will be necessary. The completed paper with notes and bibliography will receive twenty-five percent of the course grade.

A second book review type of writing assignment will also be included; for example, a review of a book or a synopsis and analysis of a chapter of a book, or a comparison and contrast of two books, or a comparison and contrast of two essays. As examples, students might compare and contrast Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth*, or George Orwell's *1984* and Albert Camus' *The Plague*. Students might write a book review of Nechama Tec, *Dry Tears*, an autobiography of her survival during the Holocaust. Students might synopsise and analyze one of the chapters of David Large, *Between Two Fires*, or compare and contrast at least two of the essays in Joel Blatt, Editor, *The French Defeat of 1940: Reassessments*. The book review type of assignment will be approximately five pages and will be worth fifteen percent of the semester grade. The project will entail a draft, a critique and revision. The assignment expands the depth of understanding of the assigned reading. Discussion of how to write a book review and practice in doing so will be included in the course.

As part of the ten percent of the grade for class participation, paragraphs will be assigned to answer questions relating to the assigned reading. In addition, a mid-term exam (20%) and a final exam (20%) will be composed of identification and essay questions, both of which are different forms of writing. Every written assignment and exam will be critiqued in writing. In order to pass the course, students will have to fulfill two standards. They will have to achieve a passing grade in the entire course (papers and exams combined), and they will have to achieve a passing grade on each of the major writing projects (the research paper and the review assignment).

**Role of Grad Students:** Advanced graduate students in the Ph.D. program who are ABD will serve occasionally as instructors of their own section and will be under the supervision of the teaching advisor on the History Department's Graduate Committee. At some future point, we might offer a large lecture with individual discussion sections taught by graduate teaching assistants, who would then be under the supervision of the faculty member who is instructor of record for the course. Currently, however, the course usually has between 40-50 students enrolled and is taught by either a single faculty member, sometimes with the assistance of a graduate student grader, or an ABD student who is the instructor. Graduate students serving as instructors or teaching assistants will receive training in the Writing Center.