

Modern European History

Instructor: Lucas A. Sprouse, MAHR

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Term: Spring 2022

Credits: 6

Instruction: English, including lecture and seminar (90+90)

Lessons: Mondays and Wednesdays: 14:40-16:10

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 16:10-16:40 or by appointment

Course Description

Modern European History will focus mainly on mid-twentieth century European history (1945-1989). As no event occurs in a microcosm, this course will also cover wider developments during this time period. In addition, students will study the effects of these events on developments up to the present day. Students will also examine primary and secondary historical sources, explore key themes, and be expected to master the chronology of events.

This course will focus on Europe as a whole, while emphasizing regional variations as well as exceptions to generally regarded rules of homogeneity. Students will be asked to consider the perspective and motivations of various actors (individuals, groups, nations, or alliances) and to assess the value of different historical sources and approaches to writing history.

The aim of this course is to give students a deeper understanding of this region's history and provide some historical context for the contemporary political and philosophical writings that they may be asked to study in other courses at BISLA.

In addition to lectures, seminars, and discussions, students' written and oral communication skills will be developed through essays and presentations. Along with increased historical understanding, students will cultivate better critical thinking and analytical skills that can be applied in a range of academic and practical settings.

General Course Outline and Themes

Overview, Definitions, and the End of WWII
Europe in 1945: The Aftermath of WWII
The Cold War: The Beginnings of a Global Conflict
Communism: In Theory and in Practice
Resistance and Repression
The Role of Nationalism
Europe's Economic Transformation
Non-Communist Europe
History and Historiography
Hope and Despair in Central Europe
Human Rights
Reforms in the West and East
The Collapse of Communism
Post-1989 Europe
Europe Today

Required Readings:

Main Text: Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*. (Vintage, 2010)

Primary Sources: Primary sources will be supplied throughout the semester

Supplementary Sources:

- Hosking, Geoffrey. *The Reith Lectures: The Rediscovery of Politics*. (Radio broadcast; 1988; BBC)
- Kundera, Milan. (trans. White, Edmund). *The Tragedy of Central Europe*. (Essay, New York Review of Books, 26 April 1984)
- Lowe, Keith. *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II*. (Penguin, 2013)
- Ther, Philipp. (trans. Hughes-Kreutzmuller, Charlotte). *Europe Since 1989: A History*. (Princeton University Press, 2016)

Evaluation Criteria

25% Seminar Paper and Presentation

25% Active Participation, based on preparatory reading

20% Examinations

15% Seminar Leader

15% Reflection Papers

Seminar Paper and Presentation: Each student will choose an aspect of one of the main movements/themes that interests them. They will thoroughly research the topic and write an individual, analysis-based seminar paper of at least 2,000 words on their approved topic. As well as writing the paper, each student will present their research and lead a class discussion on the subject matter.

Active Participation: It is absolutely necessary to come to class and participate on a regular basis. Participation includes attendance, reading preparation, and active discussion during seminars. You are allowed four unexcused absences, after which your grade will significantly decrease.

Examinations: There will be two examinations in this course, a midterm and a final examination. Both examinations are weighted equally. Each examination will cover the material since the previous one; the final examination will, therefore, not be comprehensive. Examinations will be based upon information from lectures, class discussions, primary source readings, the required readings, and any presentations given.

Seminar Leader: Each student will lead a seminar discussion over a particular chapter from the required reading. Along with preparing questions to encourage class discussion, seminar leaders are expected to add something for the class to engage with. This may include an on-topic video clip, a primary source, a short secondary source, and/or an activity.

Reflection Papers: 500-750 word reflections on the previous themes/movements discussed, an in-depth analysis of something we discussed or read that interested you, or a topic connected to your seminar paper. In all of these, quality trumps quantity. You should briefly describe the theme/movement/topic and explain their impact to world history. Critical analysis is key.

Course Evaluation

A – excellent: 100-93%

B – very good: 92-84%

C – good: 83-74%

D – satisfactory: 73-63%

E – sufficient: 62-51%

Fx – fail: 50-0%.