

20th Century European History
DIS Spring 2012
EH 3 credit course

Tuesdays and Fridays, 10:05 - 11:25, Vestergade 10-B25

Instructor: Dr.phil. Peter Christensen

Research associate, Dept. of History (UC) 1979-83, senior research associate, Dept. of History (UC) 1983-86, Lecturer, Dept. of History (UC) 1987-89, with DANIDA (the Danish Development Agency) 1990-93. Currently Lecturer at the Dept. of History (UC). With DIS since 1992.

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*** Objectives**

This course aims, first of all, at providing a basic understanding of the specific processes which have shaped contemporary Europe over the last hundred years or so. However, Europe in the 20th century constitutes a subject matter of considerable complexity. Any serious inquiry therefore presupposes that some semblance of order is imposed on it. One way of doing this is by defining some key issues and constitutive assumptions to serve as guidelines for distinguishing between essentials and unessentials. The exposition of any larger historical topic is bound to be shaped ultimately by the choice of such issues and the choice can always be challenged. Thus there is no such thing as the "definitive" history of Europe (or of anything else for that matter).

The organizing key issues of this course are (1) the national issue, i.e. the impact of nationalism, and (2) the social issue, i.e. the wider consequences of the industrialization of Europe. The focus will largely be on Germany as unification and industrialization made her the strongest state in Europe. The traditional balance of power was thoroughly upset and the subsequent history of Europe was to a large extent shaped by the attempts to redress the balance and find some way of containing Germany. The result was two devastating wars and a seemingly permanent division of Germany and the rest of Europe as well. Recently, however, Germany has achieved re-unification and, even before that, has re-emerged as the dominant power in Europe.

DIS Contacts

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Disabilities

Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Sean Green (sgr@dis.dk) to coordinate this. In order to receive accommodations, students should inform the instructor of approved DIS accommodations within the first two weeks of classes.

* Contents

Following an introduction which will provide some basic themes and definitions, the course is organized in four major sections:

1. Industrialization and revolution

The chief topics are the consequences of large-scale industrialization: the formation of the working classes, the rise of socialism and the re-newed European overseas expansion.

2. The impact of nationalism

This section deals with the breaking-up of the multiethnic empires and the unification of Germany, the First World War, the defeat of Germany and the ensuing peace settlements which changed the political map of Europe, but left the "German problem" unsolved. The wider social consequences of the war, including the formation of the Soviet Union will be examined also.

3. The rise of fascism and Germany's bid for mastery in Europe (1929-1945).

This section deals with the spread of totalitarian ideologies, the characteristics of fascism and the origins and course of the Second World War

4. Europe Divided - and Re-United? (1945-2011).

Main themes are the impact of the cold war on Europe, the divergent economic developments in the western and eastern zones, the emergence of the EU and, finally, the re-unification of Germany and Europe following the break-up of the Soviet Union.

* Requirements

- 1 short answer test (1-2 pages)
- a midterm essay (5 pages, on materials covered until midterm) : due Friday, March 2
- a final essay (5 pages, on materials covered during the whole course) : due Friday, May 11
- 1 extensive quizz at the end of the course

Please deliver papers on time (typed or computer printed) : Cf. Writing Papers at DIS.

* Course Evaluation

Short test = 5%

Participation = 20%

Midterm essay = 30%

Final essay = 30%

Quiz = 15%

All coursework must be completed in order to pass this course.

* Readings

a. Textbook

E. Hobsbawm: Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth century 1914-1991 (London 1994). Somewhat dated by now, but offers original insights

b. Binder

J. Joll: Europe Since 1870. 4th ed. Harmondsworth 1990 (Penguin), pp.1-48

"The Impact of Technical and Scientific Advance," in G. Barraclough: An Introduction to Contemporary History pp. 43-64 (Penguin ed. 1970).

Schedule

Fri., Jan. 27: Introduction: What is the 20th century? And what's in this course? (Hobsbawm 1-17)

1. Industrialization and Revolution

Tue., Jan. 31: Numbers! A broad overview of the demographic transition in Europe. (binder : Joll)

Fri., Feb. 3: Modes of production: the industrial revolutions (Hobsbawm 522-557, binder : Barraclough)

Tue. Feb. 7: The social issue: the working classes and the rise of socialism (binder : Joll 26-48)

Tue., Feb. 14: Global consequences: "New Imperialism" (binder : Barraclough).

2. Identities: the impact of nationalism and the Great War (1870-1929)

Fri., Feb. 17 : The rise of Germany and the new power balance (binder : Joll 1-25)

Tue., Feb. 21: The multiethnic empires and the origins of World War 1 (binder : Joll 1-25; Hobsbawm 21-36)

Fri., Feb. 24: Trench warfare. Outline of the course of World War 1 (Hobsbawm 21-53).

Tue., Feb.28: The peace settlements: the new political map of Europe (Hobsbawm 21-53)

Fri., Mar. 2: Radical Europe: the revolutionary upheavals (Hobsbawm 54-84, 372-394)

Tue., Mar. 13: The Soviet Union: model or threat? (Hobsbawm 54-84, 372-394)

3.The rise of fascism and the Second World War in Europe (1929-1945)

Fri., Mar. 16 : The great depression and the rise of fascism (Hobsbawm 85-141).

Tue., Mar. 20: Nazi Germany and the origins of World War 2 (Hobsbawm 142-177)

Fri., Mar. 23: World War 2 in the European perspective (1) (Hobsbawm 36-53).

Tue., Mar. 27: World War 2 in the European perspective (2) (Hobsbawm 36-53).

4. Europe divided - and reunited? (1945-2009)

Fri., Mar. 30: The division of Europe and the beginning of the Cold War (Hobsbawm 225-256)

Fri., Apr. 20: East and West: diverging economies (Hobsbawm 225-256, 399-432)

Tue., Apr. 24: The origins and development of the EU (Hobsbawm 237-286)

Fri., Apr. 27: **1968** : The New Left, Rock & Roll and the pill. Youth culture, changing family structures (Hobsbawm 320-343).

Tue. May. 1 : The social issue solved? The rise of the European welfare state (Hobsbawm 287-319).

Tue., May. 8 : Europe turned upside down: the fall of the Soviet Union and the reunification of Germany (Hobsbawm 461-499).

Fri., May. 3 : New problems and old (1): the re-emerging nationalisms and the Balkan Wars (Hobsbawm 558-585)

Fri., May. 11: New problems (2): Environment, climate change, immigration (Hobsbawm 558-585).