Oberlin College
Department of History

History 224: Europe: 1900-1945
Fall 2015
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 AM-12:15 PM

Instructor: Leonard V. Smith
18 Rice Hall, x8950
Office Hours: Mondays, 11-12; Wednesdays, 1:30-4:00; Thursdays, 1:30-3, other times by appointment

This course is an intermediate-level survey examining the cataclysmic changes in European politics, society, and culture in the first half of the twentieth century. It is designed for students with a basic background in European history, meaning a general sense of the main actors and issues. Particular topics to be examined include the fragility, cruelties, and contradictions within European civilization during the “Belle Époque,” the constant tribulations of empire, the calamity of World War I, the flawed peace in 1918 and the failed "return to normalcy" thereafter, capitalism's greatest crisis in the Great Depression, the rise of fascism and the liberal and socialist responses, the Final Solution, and World War II. A broad theme of the course involves thinking about Europe between 1900 and 1945 not as an extension of the United States (or vice versa), but rather as a fascinating and distinct civilization in its own right.

The format of the course will be a mixture of lecture and discussion. Sources include conventional secondary sources, primary documents, poetry, literature, and film. There will be three visits to the Allen Memorial Art Museum, scheduled during class times. Active participation and agile thinking will be required throughout the course.

Readings:

The following books have been ordered for purchased at the Oberlin College Bookstore.

(Note: This book appears no longer to be in print. While there are doubtless thousands of second-hand copies available, a copy has also been made available on Blackboard.)

Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe’s Twentieth Century* (1999)

Joseph Roth, *The Radetzy March* (any edition, originally published 1932)

George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (any edition, originally published 1937)


Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard.

There is no chronologically organized textbook for this course, because students are assumed already to have some familiarity with the basic political narrative. Any reputable general European history textbook can provide any additional background if needed. Please see the instructor if you would like additional guidance in this regard.

**Requirements:**

Several varieties of written work will be required. The First Essay, the 5-page discussion write-up, and the Final Essay will each account for about one-third of the final grade. Final grades for the course may be shaped at the margin by the cumulative performance on the discussion papers, as described below.

I. **First Essay and Final Paper:**

Questions will be distributed one week before these essays are due. Students will be expected to choose among several questions. There is of course no time limit, but a strictly enforced 5-page limit. These are “think piece” essays, rather than research papers. They will draw entirely from material presented in class, and will not require footnotes or a bibliography. The final paper will cover the second half of the course.

II. **Discussion Papers:**

A number of discussion days are noted on the syllabus. On designated days, students will be required to turn in a one-page discussion paper, in which they identify and briefly explain issues in the readings. These papers are for students' benefit. Their purpose is to facilitate discussion and to provide a foundation for a 5-page essay further developing an issue identified by the student (see below). Since their focus is classroom discussion, late papers will not be accepted, for any reason. Discussion papers must be turned in as hard copy. Electronic submissions of discussion papers will not be accepted.

These papers are required, and must be word processed. Chronic failure to turn in discussion papers will be noted, and will have an unfavorable impact on a student's final grade. Each discussion paper will receive a "grade" of √+, √, √-, or 0 (meaning either a derisory effort or failure to turn the paper in at all). The cumulative performance on these papers may be used to shape a student's final grade. For example, if a student's final grade hovers between an A- and a B+ and that student got a √+ on all the discussion papers, the student will receive a final grade of A-. Discussion papers may help push down a final grade in a similar manner. Comments will not be written on the papers themselves, but students are welcome to come talk to me about them if they have concerns or questions.
III. Five-page Paper drawn from One Discussion Paper

Students will be expected to write a "think piece" paper on one of the in-class discussions. They may write about the readings, a film (see below), or one or more of the works of art we have seen at the museum. One logical way to write this paper is to write an expanded version of a discussion paper from the readings, though this is not required. This paper has a strictly enforced 5-page maximum limit, and is subject to the ground rules stated at the end of the syllabus. Neither footnotes nor bibliography is required. This essay is due no later than the day before Thanksgiving. However, students are urged to write this paper shortly after the relevant discussion.

Films:

The class will be viewing and discussing five films: J'Accuse (1937); The Blue Angel (1930); Triumph of the Will (1936); Mrs. Miniver (1940), and Life is Beautiful (1998). Excerpts of the films will be shown in class, and students are encouraged to view the films in their entirety on their own. The films will be available in the Reserve Room throughout the semester. It is possible to write about a film for the 5-page discussion paper.

Schedule of Lectures and Assignments:

Part I: The Belle Époque to 1914: The High Noon of the Bourgeoisie or the Persistence of the Old Regime?

September 1

Introduction: 20th Century Europe in the 21st Century

Readings: Taylor, First World War, Ch. 1

Begin Ghandi, Hind Swaraj (available on Blackboard) and Roth, Radetsky March, in preparation for discussions scheduled below. Start reading early, as discussion papers will be due for both of these readings.

September 3

The Regimes of Europe before the Great War

Readings: Continue Ghandi, Hind Swaraj and Roth, Radetsky March

September 8

Empires: discussion of Hind Swaraj

Readings: Continue Roth, Radetsky March

Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," (Blackboard, 1899), for discussion on September 15 (no discussion paper required)

ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON HIND SWARAJ
September 10  
Society: Race, Class, and Gender in Europe before 1914, discussion of *Radetsky March*

**Readings:** ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON *RADETSKY MARCH*

September 15  
The Tragic Metanarrative: Origins and the *Kriegschiuldrage*

**Readings:** Taylor, *First World War*, Ch. 2-3

See war poems by Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen, as per assignment below. Read for discussion next time (no discussion paper due)

**Part II: Europe’s First Suicide Attempt: The Great War of 1914-1918**

September 17  
"Too Important to be Left to Generals": The Military Front, East and West; discussion of war poetry

**Readings:**

Poems by Rupert Brooke, "1914" and Wilfred Owen, "Strange Meeting" and "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young." (Blackboard)

September 22  
First Museum Visit: The Belle Époque and the Great War

**Readings:** Filippo Tomasso Marrinetti, “Manifesto of Futurism” (1911); “Dada Manifesto,” 14 July 1916, both available on Blackboard

**FIRST ESSAY QUESTIONS HANDED OUT**  
**DUE SEPTEMBER 29**

September 24  
No Class (instructor in Boston on Oberlin business)

September 29  
*Pourvu qu’ils tiennent*: The Home Fronts

**FIRST ESSAY DUE**

October 1  
The Crises of 1917

**Readings:** Taylor, *First World War*, Ch. 4;

Speech by Georges Clemenceau to the National Assembly, 20 November 1917 (Blackboard)

October 6  
1918 and the Flawed Peace
Readings: Taylor, *First World War*, Ch. 5 to end

Lenin Peace Decree, 8 November 1917 (Blackboard)

Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points Speech, 8 January 1918 (Blackboard)

Skim:
Peace Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919, Articles 231-247 and Annexes: Reparations (skim), available on Blackboard

ONE PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON WILSON AND LENIN READINGS

October 8 The Politics of Commemoration; discussion of *J'accuse*

Readings: Begin Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, Ch. 1-5 on November 17

October 13 Second Museum Visit

*Part III: "Normalcy" and Depression, 1919-1939*

October 15 The Regimes: Europe between the Wars

Readings: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, Ch. 1, "The Deserted Temple: Democracy's Rise and Fall"

Begin Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Part I, pp. 5-118

Begin Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, Ch. 3-5,

**Fall Break !!!**

October 27 Empire Between the Wars and the Emperors' New Clothes

Readings: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, Ch. 2, "Empires, Nations, Minorities";

Ghandi "Independence vs. Swaraj," (1928); Debate in the British Parliament on Amritsar massacre, 8 July 1920 (Blackboard)

October 29 Europe's Great Depression; discussion of *The Road to Wigan Pier*

Readings: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, Ch. 4, "The Crisis of Capitalism"; begin Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Forward and Part II, for discussions

ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON

*THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER, PART I*
November 3  Gender and Interwar Europe; discussion of *Blue Angel*

Readings: Mazower, *Dark Continent*, Ch. 3, "Healthy Bodies, Sick Bodies";


November 5  The Rise of Fascism; discussion of *The Anatomy of Fascism*

ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON *THE ANATOMY OF FASCISM*, Ch. 1-5

November 10  Discussion: *Triumph of the Will*

November 12  Enlightenment Europe Remobilizes; Discussion of *The Road to Wigan Pier*

Readings: begin Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*

ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON *THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER, PART II*

*Part IV: World War II: Europe's Second Suicide Attempt*

November 17  The Spanish Civil War

Readings: Speech by Francisco Franco 17 July 1936 (Blackboard)

Peruse exhibit on web of Spanish Civil War posters:

http://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/

Begin Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* for discussion on December 4

November 19  Third Museum Visit

November 24  The Wars Hitler Won; discussion of *Mrs. Miniver*


5-PAGE DISCUSSION WRITE-UP DUE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 4:00 PM
November 26  No Class: Thanksgiving!

December 1   Nazi Occupied Europe

Readings: continue Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*

Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, Ch 6

December 3   The Final Solution; Discussion of *The Drowned and the Saved*; and *Life is Beautiful*

ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON
*THE DROWNED AND THE SAVED*

December 8   The Eclipse of Europe: From Hot War to Cold War

Readings: Mazower, Ch.6, "Blueprints for the Golden Age" and "A Brutal Peace, 1943-49"

December 10  "Old, unhappy, far-off things": When is Europe's Past its Past?

Readings: Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, Ch. 7-8

FINAL PAPER DUE AT THE TIME SCHEDULED FOR THE FINAL EXAM, AS DETERMINED BY THE COLLEGE FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE

Additional Ground Rules:

1. Due dates and page-limit requirements are to be taken most seriously. I am not in the business of persecuting students if a genuine problem exists, but in principle I strongly dislike giving extensions. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours an exam is overdue.

2. Three excuses for requesting extensions will never be acceptable: 1) a self-defined character flaw of procrastination; 2) extracurricular activities, including performances and political activism; 3) work in other classes. Two possible exceptions exist for unacceptable excuse #3. I am prepared to exercise some indulgence concerning students doing Seniors Honors projects or, in the case of Conservatory students, students playing Senior recitals. This is because of the "once in a lifetime" character of these projects.

3. Take-home exams and final essays must be clearly printed (unless electronic submission is required), double-spaced and have 1-inch margins. They must use a font no smaller than the one that appears here (12 point). I reserve the right to return any paper that does not meet these requirements.
4. All written work at Oberlin College is covered by the Honor Code. No graded essay will be read until the Honor Code is signed.

5. All graded written work for the course must be completed in order to pass it. That is to say, a student who receives an A on the first two essays and does not submit the final essay will fail the entire course.

6. No electronic devices may be used in class. This includes computers, tablets, and particularly phones. Exceptions to this rule require written authorization from the Office of Disability Services. On discussion days, you will be required to bring a printed discussion paper, and will not need direct access to the text itself. Hard copies of short Blackboard readings will be made available on relevant days.

8. No permission is granted to upload ANY materials from this course on to a third party website. Such materials are for the use of students in this class only.