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 tribulations of World War I and narrative forms imposed on them, the flawed peace in 1918 and the failed "return to normalcy" thereafter, capitalism's greatest crisis in the Great Depression, the rise of fascism, 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 very 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. Active participation and agile thinking will be required throughout the course.

Readings:

The following books should be purchased at the Oberlin College Bookstore.


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

Joseph Roth, *The Radetsky March* (originally published 1932)

M.K. Ghandi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (originally published 1909)

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


There is no chronologically organized textbook for this course, because students are assumed already to have learned the basic political narrative. However, copies of H. Stuart Hughes, *Contemporary Europe*, and George Lichtheim, *Europe in the Twentieth Century* have been made available on reserve for consultation as students think necessary.

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.

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 on One Discussion

Students will be expected to write a "think piece" paper (as opposed to a research paper) on one of the in-class discussions. They may write about either the readings or about a film (see below). A logical way to write this paper is either to write an expanded version of a discussion paper from the readings. This paper has a strictly enforced 5-page maximum limit, and is subject to the ground rules stated at the end of the syllabus. This essay is due the last day of class.

Students who turn in this paper by December 1 will have their papers returned within a week, and will have the opportunity to do a rewrite. The recorded grade will be that of the rewritten version, which is due the same day as the other papers, the last day of class.

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 6        Introduction: 20th Century Europe in the 21st Century

Readings: Taylor, First World War, Ch. 1; Begin Ghandi, Hind Swaraj and Roth, Radetsky March, in preparation for discussions on September 13 and September 18 (see below)

September 11       The Regimes of Western and Central Europe
Readings: Continue Ghandi, *Hind Swaraj* and Roth, *Radetsky March*

September 13  
Empires; discussion of *Hind Swaraj*

Readings: Continue Roth, *Radetsky March*

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

**ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON HIND SWARAJ**

September 18  
Society: Race, Class, and Gender in Europe before 1914, discussion of *Radetsky March*

Readings: ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON RADETSKY MARCH

Note: Read and be prepared briefly to discuss the “Manifesto of Futurism”(see below) for next time. No discussion paper is due.

September 20  
Culture in the Belle Époque: *Stirb und Werde?*

Readings: Filippo Tomasso Marinetti, “Manifesto of Futurism” (1911), available at:


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

September 25  
The Tragic Metanarrative: Origins and the *Kriegschuldfrage*

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

See war poems assignment below. Read for discussion next time (no discussion paper due)

September 27  
"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." (Handouts)

**FIRST ESSAY QUESTIONS HANDED OUT**

October 2  
No Class: Yom Kippur

October 4  
"*Pourvu qu'ils tiennent":* The Home Fronts

Readings: Dada Manifesto, 14 July 1916, available at:


**FIRST ESSAY DUE ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6**

October 9  
The Crises of 1917
Readings: Taylor, *First World War*, Ch. 4;

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

Note: Discussion paper will be due on the readings for next time (see below)

October 11  
1918 and the Flawed Peace

Readings: Taylor, *First World War*, Ch. 5 to end

Lenin Peace Decree, 8 November 1917 (handout)

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

ONE PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON WILSON AND LENIN READINGS

Skim:

Peace Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919, Articles 231-247 and Annexes: Reparations (skim), available on the World Wide Web at:

www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/versa/versa7.html

Fall Break!!!

October 23  
Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will: The Politics of Commemoration; discussion of *J'accuse*

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

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

October 25  
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, for discussion on November 6

Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, Ch. 3-5, for discussion of Ch.1-5 on November 8

October 30  
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 (handouts)

November 1  
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 discussion on November 15

ONE-PAGE DISCUSSION PAPER DUE ON

*THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER, PART I*
November 6  
Gender and Interwar Europe; discussion of *Blue Angel*

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


[http://www.jstor.org/browse/00028762/di981903?frame=noframe&dpi=3&userID=84a2a1be@oberlin.edu/01cc99334100501e67040&config=jstor](http://www.jstor.org/browse/00028762/di981903?frame=noframe&dpi=3&userID=84a2a1be@oberlin.edu/01cc99334100501e67040&config=jstor)

November 8  
The Rise of Fascism; discussion of *The Anatomy of Fascism*

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

November 13  
Discussion: *Triumph of the Will*

November 15  
Enlightenment Europe Remobilizes; Discussion of *The Road to Wigan Pier*

Readings: begin Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, for discussion on December 8

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

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

November 20  
The Spanish Civil War

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

Peruse collection of Spanish Civil War posters:

[http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/vizindex.html](http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/vizindex.html)

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

November 22  
Day off for good behavior

November 27  
The Wars Hitler Won; discussion of *Mrs. Miniver*


November 29  
Nazi Occupied Europe

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


December 4  
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 6  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 11  "Old, unhappy, far-off things": When is Europe's Past its Past?

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

December 13  Discussion of Final Essay Questions

5-PAGE DISCUSSION WRITE-UP DUE

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

Additional Ground Rules:

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.

Three excuses for requesting extensions will never be acceptable: 1) a self-defined character flaw of procrastination; 2) extracurricular activities, including 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, Senior recitals. This is because of the "once-in-a-lifetime" character of these projects.

Papers must be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins. Papers, including discussion papers, must be word-processed with near letter quality resolution. I will return unread any illegible paper. Papers may not be submitted electronically.

All written work at Oberlin College is covered by the Honor Code. No graded work will be read until the Honor Code is signed.

Students must complete all three papers in order to pass the course. That is to say, a student who receives an A on the exam and final paper but does not submit a write-up discussion paper will fail the entire course.