



HISTORY 845: EMPIRE AND NATION IN MODERN CENTRAL EUROPE



Central Europe after Austrian Victory in 1866 (Helmut Walser Smith)

Course Information

Instructor:	Prof. Brandon Bloch (bjbloch@wisc.edu)
Office Hours:	Tues. 1-3 p.m. or by appointment (5118 Humanities or online)
Semester:	Fall 2022
Meeting Time:	Tues. 3:30-5:25 p.m.
Meeting Location:	Humanities 5257
Credits:	3
Prerequisites:	Graduate standing in history or a related humanities or social science discipline

Course Description

The transnational turn in historical writing over the past two decades has transformed the study of modern Central Europe in North America. If the field once focused on German national history, framed around the question of Germany's "special path" to modernity, today's historians of Central Europe are far more likely to emphasize the porousness of national borders, the instability of identities, and the legacies of empire. Recent scholarship has blurred the boundaries of German, Central European, and East European histories, and brought into focus their interactions with the wider world—through commerce, imperialism, colonialism, and migration. But the recent upsurge of populist, xenophobic, and Eurosceptic movements across the region—and not least the ongoing war in Ukraine—makes clear that questions of national sovereignty have hardly disappeared. As the historian Helmut Walser Smith has recently noted, "Despite globalization, we lived in a world where precisely mapped countries occupy more than 95 percent of the inhabited surface of the earth, and roughly 97 percent of the world's people will die in the nation of their birth."

This graduate-level seminar takes stock of the impact of transnational and global approaches to Central European historiography, while asking what role studies of nationalism and the nation (should) continue to play. The course defines "Central Europe" broadly to encompass German-speaking Europe as well as the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its successor states. The course will also address the region's interactions with the world beyond Europe. We will focus on the period since 1850. However, graduate students specializing other regions and periods, including students in adjacent departments, are welcome to enroll. There is wide flexibility in selecting a topic and format for the final paper. The seminar will be enriched by bringing together participants with diverse areas of expertise and methodological approaches.

In addition to introducing graduate students to major recent works of Central European historiography, many of them based on the authors' dissertations, this course places significant emphasis on building professional skills. A portion of each meeting will be devoted to discussion of professional development and workshopping relevant documents. The assignments, including a publishable book review and a final paper related to a potential master's thesis or dissertation topic, are designed to produce tangible benefits for your graduate career.

Please note: Graduate students planning to do a preliminary exam field with me in modern German and/or Central European history during the next three years (through Spring 2025) are expected to enroll in this course. I will be available to schedule additional independent studies as necessary, but this course will serve as the foundation for the exam field.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Explain major trends in modern German and Central European historiography over the past two decades, with particular attention to questions of nations, empires, borderlands, and mobility
- Develop an empathetic approach to historiographic analysis that asks what a book or article contributes and how an author builds their argument
- Define your academic identity through professional documents, personal reflection, and an online presence
- Identify key primary and secondary sources in your field available in the UW-Madison Libraries and (if applicable) in archives abroad
- Write a publishable book review
- Produce a final paper that advances your graduate career by exploring primary sources and/or secondary literatures relevant to a potential master's thesis or dissertation topic

Course Requirements

1. Seminar Participation

Attendance and active participation in seminar discussions are crucial to the success of the course. Please do your best to attend every week, and let me know in advance if you will be absent. We will aim to foster a classroom environment based on generosity and constructive engagement, toward both one another and the works under discussion. We will have a conversation about discussion norms during the first class.

2. Academic Professionalization Assignments

An important goal of this course, beyond introducing you to recent debates in the field of Central European History, is to help you develop your professional identity as a scholar. While I recognize the importance of preparing graduate students for a wide range of careers, the skills of an academic professional are foundational to the work you will do in graduate school. Moreover, building professional skills early in graduate school is critical for success in both academic and non-academic careers.

With this in mind, there are brief assignments due most weeks designed to help you place yourself in your subfield, and to prepare you for entering the academic world beyond UW-Madison.

The individual assignments are as follows (see the course schedule below for due dates):

- Academic CV
- Academic Vision Statement: In about 1,000 words, describe the core questions that motivate your research, what you hope to contribute in your prospective master's thesis and/or dissertation (fine if this is preliminary!) and your long-term goals for graduate school and beyond. You can see this as a less formal version of an academic research statement (Kelsky, *The Professor Is In*, pp. 179-184), with an emphasis on questions and goals rather than conclusions and accomplishments.
- List of conferences and fellowships in your field with submission deadlines
- Bibliography of key primary sources in your field held in the UW-Madison Libraries or online (1-2 pp.)
- If applicable: list of key archives in your field, including location, opening hours, availability of finding aids, and policies on reproducing documents
- Statement of research interests for the website of your department or program

3. Two Book Reviews

Book reviews are an essential tool of academic communication, and also a great way to start publishing as an early-career scholar. We will discuss conventions for academic book reviews during the first weeks of class. You will then be asked to write two book reviews (approx. 1,000-1,200 words each):

- Review of one of the books read for weeks 4, 5, or 6, due the week the book is discussed in class
- Choose a recent book in your field (published in the past three years) and write a review for publication on a relevant H-Net site (e.g. H-German, H-Habsburg, H-Holocaust, H-Nationalism, H-Poland, H-Transnational German Studies, etc.). The book review is due in class on Oct. 25. After peer reviewing your draft in class, I would encourage you to revise and submit it to the H-Net site.

4. Final Paper

A final paper will be due TBD during finals week. A one-page proposal is due on Nov. 1. Your final paper can take a variety of possible formats; you are encouraged to choose a format in consultation with me and your primary adviser that will best serve your academic goals. You are encouraged to use the final paper as an opportunity to explore primary sources and/or secondary literatures relevant to a potential master's thesis or dissertation topic. You may choose to draw on the class readings, but this is not expected or required. The only requirements are that the paper relates in some way to modern (Central) Europe, broadly defined, and that it is at least 12 pages (double-spaced) excluding bibliography, regardless of format.

Possibilities for the final paper include:

- Research paper (may be a chapter or section of a master's thesis or dissertation)
- Historiographic review essay (discuss at least 4 books in an emergent subfield)
- Conference paper and abstract (ideally to be submitted to an upcoming conference)
- Dissertation prospectus (including project description, literature review, methodology, provisional chapter outline, research plan, and preliminary bibliography)
- Grant application (including abstract, project description, literature review, methodology, research schedule, budget, and one-page bibliography)

Please bring an outline or partial draft of your final paper to class for peer review on Dec. 6. During the final class meeting (Dec. 13), you will be asked to give a ten-minute talk on your final paper, as if presenting at an academic conference.

Grading

My expectation is that the seminar will provide graduate students with the tools to complete the assignments at a level meriting an A. I will provide feedback on all assignments; if you do not receive a grade, then you are on track to earn an A. I am happy to have a conversation about strategies for success in the course, and in graduate school more broadly. If it becomes necessary to assign grades on individual assignments, then the course grade will be determined as follows: 25% seminar participation, 15% academic professionalization assignments, 20% book reviews, and 40% final paper.

Credit Hours

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (45 hours per credit, or 9 hours per week). This includes regularly scheduled meeting times, reading, writing, individual consultations with the instructor, and other work as described in the syllabus. Since the seminar meets for **2 hours of direct instruction per week**, you should plan to allot an average of 7 hours per week outside of class for course-related activities.

Attendance and Late Work

Please make every effort to attend all seminar meetings, since discussions and peer workshops will be crucial to achieving the learning outcomes of the course. However, if you need to miss a class, please let me know in advance and we can arrange an alternative time to meet.

The same goes for late work: please make every effort to complete the assignments on time, since part of each seminar meeting will be devoted to a discussion of the work you've submitted. However, I understand that graduate school is an extremely busy time with many competing obligations. If you need to turn in an assignment after the due date, I will still provide feedback.

The one hard-and-fast rule is that I am not able to accept any written work for this course after Thursday, Dec. 22, the official last day of the semester. Taking a grade of Incomplete is not to your benefit, since it will stall your progress in the graduate program and could hinder your applications for internal and external fellowships. Therefore, I ask that you please submit your final paper, and all other assignments for this course, by the end of this semester. Incompletes will only be granted in circumstances of a personal or family emergency.

Academic Integrity

Proper citation is crucial to the practice of history. Please let me know if you have any questions about citing sources. Citations are not required in the academic professionalization assignments, and we will discuss how to cite sources in a book review. It goes without saying that the consequences for plagiarism in graduate school are serious.

Accessibility

I am committed to ensuring that all students receive equal access to the course materials and equitable opportunities to achieve the course learning goals. If you experience or anticipate any challenges related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. I am happy to explore a range of options for removing barriers to your learning. All communications regarding accessibility will remain confidential.

Additional Resources

The UW-Madison Graduate School and the History Department make available a wide range of resources to foster the success and wellbeing of graduate students. It's a good idea to familiarize (or re-familiarize) yourself with the following:

UW-Madison Graduate School Resources

<https://grad.wisc.edu/current-students/>

Links to a wide range of resources for academic and professional development; reporting hostile and intimidating behavior; graduate school policies; wellness; and student life.

DiscoverPD

<https://grad.wisc.edu/professional-development/>

Professional development resources for UW-Madison master's and doctoral students, including events calendar of Professional Development Programming on campus.

University Writing Center

<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

Individual consultations and workshops on academic writing, as well as Graduate Writing Groups (<https://writing.wisc.edu/writinggroups/>) to foster accountability and community.

McBurney Disability Resource Center

<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>

Contact the McBurney Center if you have or think you may have a disability to discuss a range of possible accommodations.

History Department Graduate Program Handbook

<http://www.history.wisc.edu/our-graduate-program/current-students/graduate-program-handbook/>

Course Schedule

Readings and assignments are due by the beginning of class, unless otherwise indicated. Most of the readings are available on Canvas (#) or online through the UW-Madison Libraries (*). Books that are not available online can be obtained through the library system or interlibrary loan. There is no need to spend money on this course (though I would highly recommend the \$14 investment in Karen Kelsky's *The Professor Is In*). Guidelines for all assignments will be posted on Canvas. With the exception of weeks 2, 3, and 6, the books are based on the authors' dissertations. I have not indicated page numbers for the assigned books, but graduate school involves learning to read efficiently for argument, intervention, and evidence. We will discuss reading strategies during the first weeks of class.

Week 1 (Sept. 13): Introduction

Karen Kelsky, *The Professor Is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your PhD into a Job* (2015), especially pp. 52-60, 93-132

*Jessica McCrory Calarco, *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum* (2020)

Larry McEnery, "The Craft of Writing Effectively" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtlzMaLkCaM>) and as a bonus, "Writing Beyond the Academy" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFwVf5a3pZM>)

[While these sources are not technically required, they define my approach to graduate teaching, and I would not recommend going through graduate school without them!]

Week 2 (Sept. 20): The Nation in German History

#James Sheehan, "What is German History? Reflections on the Role of the Nation in German History and Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* 53 (1981): 1-23

*David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (1984), introduction

*Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (1990), chs. 1-3

#Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century* (2008), introduction, chs. 1-2

Assignment: CV

Week 3 (Sept. 27) Empire and Nation in Habsburg Central Europe

Rosh Hashanah: Class will meet asynchronously or be rescheduled

#John W. Boyer, "Some Reflections on the Problem of Austria, Germany, and Mitteleuropa," *Central European History* 22 (1989): 301-15

*Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (2016), introduction, chs. 5-8

Assignment: Draft of Academic Vision Statement

Week 4 (Oct. 4): Imperial Germany/German Imperialism

*David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany* (2011)

#Adam Blackler, "From Boondoggle to Settlement Colony: Hendrik Witbooi and the Evolution of Germany's Imperial Project in Southwest Africa," *Central European History* 50 (2017): 449-470

Assignment: List of conferences and fellowships in your field with submission deadlines

Week 5 (Oct. 11): National Indifference

Brendan Karch, *Nation and Loyalty in a German-Polish Borderland: Upper Silesia, 1848-1960* (2018)

#Tara Zahra, "Imagined Non-Communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69 (2010): 93-119

Assignment: Bibliography of key primary sources in your field held in the UW-Madison Libraries or online

Week 6 (Oct. 18): War and Postwar

Dominique Reill, *The Fiume Crisis: Life in the Wake of the Habsburg Empire* (2020)

#Erin Hochman, "Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Eine Republik: Großdeutsch Nationalism and Democratic Politics in the Weimar and First Austrian Republics," *German History* 32 (2014): 29-52

Assignment: List of key archives in your field, including location, opening hours, availability of finding aids, and policies on reproducing documents (for graduate students who will conduct archival research)

Book review of one of the books assigned in weeks 4-6 due by Oct. 17

Week 7 (Oct. 25): Book Review Workshop

Read a book in your field that has appeared during the past three years and write a book review formatted for publication in H-Net

Assignment: H-Net Book Review

Week 8 (Nov. 1): Interwar Borderlands

Guest Speaker: Prof. Kathryn Ciancia

*Kathryn Ciancia, *On Civilization's Edge: A Polish Borderland in the Interwar World* (2020)

Assignment: One-page proposal for final project, including one-sentence research question

Optional: Revised H-Net Book Review, in preparation for submission

Week 9 (Nov. 8): Beyond Totalitarianism

*Stefan Link, *Forging Global Fordism: Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and the Contest over the Industrial Order* (2020)

#Mark Roseman, "Racial Discourse, Nazi Violence, and the Limits of the Racial State Model," in *Beyond the Racial State: Rethinking Nazi Germany*, eds. Devin Pendas, Mark Roseman, and Richard Wetzell (2017), pp. 31-57

Week 10 (Nov. 15): Transnational and Local in Holocaust History

*Anna Hájková, *The Last Ghetto: An Everyday History of Theresienstadt* (2020)

#Roberta Pergher et al., "The Holocaust: A Colonial Genocide? A scholars' forum," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 27 (2013): 40-73

Assignment: Up-to-date statement of research interests for publication on the website of your department or program

Optional: Draft of professional website

Week 11 (Nov. 22): Cold War Borderlands and Internationalism

*Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain* (2011)

#Eagle Glassheim, "Unsettled Landscapes: Czech and German Conceptions of Social and Ecological Decline in the Postwar Czechoslovak Borderlands," *Journal of Contemporary History* 50 (2015): 318-336

Assignment: Revised Academic Vision Statement

Week 12 (Nov. 29): Race after Hitler

Lauren Stokes, *Fear of the Family: Guest Workers and Family Migration in the Federal Republic of Germany* (2022)

Week 13 (Dec. 6): How to Publish

Brandon Bloch, "'The Limits of Human Jurisdiction': Protestantism, War Crimes Trials, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany," *Journal of Modern History* 93 (2021): 363-400, including drafts and manuscript reviews

Assignment: Outline or partial draft of final paper for in-class peer review

Week 14 (Dec. 13): Presentations on Final Papers

Assignment: Ten-minute "conference talk" on your final paper

Final Paper due TBD during finals week