

HISTORY 120: EUROPE AND THE MODERN WORLD, 1815 TO THE PRESENT



A contemporary depiction of Giuseppe Garibaldi's entry into Naples, September 7, 1860

Course Information

Instructor:	Prof. Brandon Bloch (bjbloch@wisc.edu)
Office Hours:	Tues. 1-3 p.m. or by appointment (5118 Humanities or online)
TA:	Ludwig Decke (decke@wisc.edu)
TA Office Hours:	TBD
Semester:	Spring 2023
Lecture:	Tues./Thurs. 9:30-10:45 a.m. (1121 Humanities)
Sections:	Thurs. 3:30-4:20 p.m. (2121 Humanities) Thurs. 4:35-5:25 p.m. (2631 Humanities) Fri. 8:50-9:40 a.m. (2101 Humanities) Fri. 9:55-10:45 a.m. (2101 Humanities)

Modality:	In-person
Credits:	4 (section registration is required)
Requisites:	None
Course Designations:	Breadth – Either Humanities or Social Science Level – Elementary L&S Credit – Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S Honors optional (contact Prof. Bloch for more details on honors credit)

Course Description

This course surveys a vast subject: the transformation of Europe, from the aftermaths of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars to today’s European Union. We will explore Europe’s evolution across the dramatic nineteenth and twentieth centuries along a range of axes—political and economic as well as social, cultural, and intellectual. This period is key to understanding the emergence of our contemporary world. It saw the explosive growth of capitalism; centralization of modern nation-states; rise of mass politics; recasting of gender and the family; proliferation of industrial warfare; and emergence of ideologies such as liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, socialism, communism, and fascism. Europe was deeply intertwined with the wider world throughout our period: first through colonialism and imperialism, and since the post-1945 era of decolonization, through ongoing ties with its former colonies. This course is necessarily also a world history.

The aim of the course is not, primarily, to teach you the “facts” of European history, though you will be introduced to key people, places, and events. Instead, we will focus on core themes to draw connections across time and space. Three sets of questions will guide us:

War and Revolution

Why was modern European history so violent? What are the drivers of war and revolution, and how did Europeans seek—sometimes successfully, often not—to avoid them? Was war more a cause, or a result, of Europe’s social, political, and economic transformations? Can we draw parallels between the violence practiced by European states in the colonial world and on the European continent?

The Nation-State and National Identities

How did Europe end up with 44 independent countries—more than any other continent proportional to its size? What is the relationship between the state (a political entity that exercises sovereign control over a territory) and the nation (a community that supposedly shares a common language, history, and culture)? When and why did

Europeans identify themselves as members of nations? What were, or are, the alternatives to the nation-state?

Colonialism, Imperialism, and their Aftermaths

Why did European states seek to conquer and rule vast territories in Asia and Africa? What was the impact of imperialism on European domestic politics? How did colonial entanglements shape Europeans' ideas about race, nationhood, and modernity? How did metropolitan Europeans come to terms—or fail to come to terms—with Europe's colonial past following post-1945 decolonization?

Learning Goals

This course is designed as an introduction to college-level history, and does not assume any prior background. (History majors are, of course, also welcome!) The premise is that history is not a static collection of facts, but an evolving process of debate and interpretation. Lectures and assignments are structured to introduce you to the skills of historical analysis: reading critically; interpreting primary sources; evaluating competing arguments; and presenting your own ideas in lucid and compelling prose. Writing assignments build in complexity over the semester, and lectures and sections will devote time to practicing the skills you will need to succeed in these assignments. The purpose of the course is as much to introduce you to central themes of modern European history as to help you become a better reader, writer, listener, communicator, and thinker.

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

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources, and demonstrate close reading strategies for both
- Apply evidence from primary sources to evaluate competing historical interpretations
- Interpret the contexts of primary sources based on prior knowledge and in-text clues
- Articulate a concise thesis statement
- Defend a historical argument using primary sources in clear and compelling prose
- Assess the significance of war and revolution, nationalism and the nation-state, and colonialism and imperialism as forces of change in modern European history

Course Books

Béla Zombory-Moldován, *The Burning of the World: A Memoir of 1914* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2014). ISBN: 9781590178096.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003). ISBN: 9780141439471.

These books are available for purchase at the University Book Store or online. Copies will also be placed on reserve at College Library in Helen C. White Hall.

Course Requirements

*Further details on all assignments, including expectations, guidelines, and rubrics, will be available on Canvas.

1. Top Hat (15%)

We will use the online platform Top Hat to facilitate an interactive classroom during the lectures. Your Top Hat grade will be based largely on polling and discussion questions in lecture. In addition, you will be asked to contribute four one-paragraph discussion posts in weeks 2, 3, 8, and 9. Each post is due by the beginning of section and should address that week's reading. Reading questions will be distributed in advance.

In-class Top Hat questions will be graded complete/incomplete and will serve as a record of your attendance at lecture. You will be permitted three excused absences from lecture, for any reason. If you need to miss lecture more than three times due to religious observance, illness, or personal or family emergency, please let Prof. Bloch know.

2. Section Participation (15%)

Your attendance and active participation are expected at weekly section meetings. You will have a pass to miss one section meeting, for any reason. Beyond that, please inform your TA in advance if you need to miss section due to illness, religious observance, or personal or family emergency. Unexcused absences will lower your section participation grade.

Keep in mind that the quality of your contributions to section discussions is as important as the quantity. Asking a well-informed question also counts as participation. We

recognize that participation may come more easily to some than others. If you would like to discuss strategies for speaking in class, feel free to set up a meeting with Prof. Bloch or your TA.

3. Two Primary Source Essays (10% and 25%)

The culminating writing assignments are two essays on primary sources. The first essay (approx. 3 double-spaced pages) will be based on artworks from mid nineteenth-century France housed at the Chazen Museum of Art, which you will view in section on Feb. 16-17. This essay is due on Mon. Feb. 27 at 5 p.m. The second essay (5-6 double-spaced pages) will be on an autobiography or memoir of your choice relating to the experience of war in the first half of Europe's twentieth century. It is due on Mon. April 24 at 5 p.m. For the second essay, you will be given a list of books from which to choose. (You may also choose a different book with the permission of your TA). An introductory paragraph and outline are due in section on April 13-14. We will discuss expectations for both essays in class.

4. In-Class Midterm Exam (15%)

A 75-minute midterm exam will be held in class on Tues. March 7. It will cover material from the first eleven lectures (through Tues. Feb. 28). The exam will include one primary source analysis and one essay. You may use one page of notes, which you will be asked to turn in with your exam.

5. Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will be held on Sunday, May 7 from 10:05 a.m.-12:05 p.m. The exam will include two primary source analyses and one essay. You may use one page of notes, which you will be asked to turn in with your exam.

Grading:

A: 93-100

AB: 88-92

B: 83-87

BC: 78-82

C: 70-77

D: 60-69

F: Below 60

Credit Hours:

The credit standard for this 4-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 180 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (45 hours per credit, or 12 hours per week). This includes regularly scheduled meeting times, reading, writing, group work, individual consultations with the instructors, and other student work as described in the syllabus. Since lecture and section meetings count for 4 hours of direct instruction per week, you should plan to allot an average of 8 hours per week outside of class for course-related activities.

Late Work:

If you are unable to meet an assignment deadline, please let your TA know as soon as possible and we can work out a plan for you to get caught up. We understand that life is unpredictable, and that you may require an extension due to illness, religious observance, or personal or family emergency. In cases of unexcused late work, we reserve the right to apply a deduction to late assignments out of fairness to other members of the class. Typically this deduction will be 3 points (out of 100) per day late.

Please note that we are not able to accept any written work for this course after Friday, May 12, the last day of the exam period. Incomplete grades can only be granted to students who are unable to complete the final exam due to "illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond their control." For the university policy, see: <https://registrar.wisc.edu/incompletes/>.

Academic Integrity

The exchange of ideas is at the core of academic inquiry, and you are encouraged to discuss the course material with your classmates. However, all work that you submit for a grade should reflect your own thinking and writing, and adhere to proper citation practices in the discipline of history. Passing off another person's words or ideas as your own is not only unfair to your peers; it is also theft of the original author's work, shutting out their voice from the academic conversation.

In my experience, violations of academic integrity tend to have two causes: either a) lack of awareness about citation standards, or b) procrastination, followed by panic. The course is designed to mitigate against both of these factors. We will discuss how to cite your sources for each assignment; if you're unsure about a particular case, don't hesitate to ask your TA. I have also implemented scaffolding in the assignment structure, with preliminary assignments guiding you through the steps of each essay. If you are worried about not finishing an assignment as a deadline approaches, please email Prof. Bloch or your TA! We can always work out solutions to

help improve your organization, and it's much better to accept a late penalty (or turn in less than perfect work) than to cheat. If you plagiarize (and be assured that we will catch it—it's really not difficult), then we have to deal with the case as a disciplinary infraction rather than a learning opportunity. Serious academic misconduct must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

Technology

Please come prepared to lectures and sections with a laptop or other device that will allow you to access the Internet. We will incorporate technology into class discussions, including polling questions, online discussion boards, and shared google docs. Of course, I ask that you refrain from email or social media during class and use laptops for course purposes only. If you face challenges accessing the technology necessary to succeed in this course, please reach out to Prof. Bloch or your TA as soon as possible.

Accessibility

We are 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 Prof. Bloch or your TA know as soon as possible. We are happy to explore a range of options for removing barriers to your learning. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may also wish to work with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>) to discuss accessibility in this and other courses, including possibilities for official accommodations. All communications regarding accessibility will remain confidential.

A Note on Sources

The course raises sensitive issues surrounding war, violence, racism, nationalism, and imperialism. It is crucial that we remain respectful of one another's viewpoints in class discussions. If you disagree with a classmate (and debate and disagreement are encouraged!), then be sure to direct your comments at the idea, not the person. It is often helpful to summarize a peer's idea before disagreeing, to ensure you have really understood it. Each section will develop a "group agreement" at the beginning of the semester, outlining shared discussion norms and expectations for the classroom community. Please do not hesitate to meet with Prof. Bloch or your TA if you have concerns about any aspect of the course content.

Additional Resources

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

University Writing Center

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

Individual consultations, workshops, and online guides on all aspects of academic writing.

History Lab

<http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>

A resource center for undergraduates in history courses staffed by experienced graduate students, who are available to assist you with writing history papers. You can sign up online for an individual consultation at any stage of the writing process.

Greater University Tutoring Services

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

Study skills support and peer tutoring across academic subjects.

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.

Mental Health Services

<https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>

Resources on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

UW-Madison is committed to fostering a safe learning environment and offers a variety of resources for students impacted by sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. The Dean of Students Office has compiled a comprehensive guide to resources on and off campus, including both confidential resources and options for reporting: <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/report-an-issue/sexual-assault-dating-and-domestic-violence/>.

Course Schedule

Readings and assignments are due by the beginning of section, unless otherwise indicated.

Guidelines and rubrics for all assignments will be posted on Canvas. All readings, except for the course books, will also be available on Canvas. See the “Modules” tab for week-by-week links.

Week 1: Introduction

Tues. Jan. 24: Course Introduction: What is Modern Europe?

Thurs. Jan. 26: Legacies of the Enlightenment and French Revolution

Reading

- National Assembly, “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen” (1789)
- Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Women” (1791)
- Begin reading *Frankenstein*

Week 2: Revolution and Reaction

Tues. Jan. 31: The Industrial Revolution

Thurs. Feb. 2: Ideologies of the Restoration Era: Conservatism, Liberalism, Nationalism

Reading:

- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818), all

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #1

Week 3: Socialism and/or Nationalism

Tues. Feb. 7: 1848 Revolutions and the Origins of Socialism

Thurs. Feb. 9: The Paradoxes of Liberal Nationalism: German and Italian Unification

Reading:

- Camillo di Cavour, “Letter to King Victor Emmanuel” (1858) [*due Feb. 9 in lecture*]
- Rudolf von Ihering, “Two Letters” (1866) [*due Feb. 9 in lecture*]
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” (1848)

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #2

Week 4: Liberalism and its Limits

Tues. Feb. 14: Gender, Class, and French Republicanism

Thurs. Feb. 16: Cities and Social Reform

**Sections on Feb. 16-17 meet in Chazen Museum of Art*

Reading:

- Céleste Mogador, *Memoirs of a Courtesan in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (1852), selections [due Feb. 16 in lecture]

Week 5: The “New Imperialism”

Tues. Feb. 21: Birth of the “New Imperialism”: Geopolitics, Economics, Culture

Thurs. Feb. 23: Race, Imperialism, and Colonial Genocides

Reading:

- King Leopold II, “Speech at the First Meeting of the Belgian Committee of the International Association for the Exploration and Civilization of Central Africa” (1876)
- Tippu Tip, “Autobiography”
- Nicolas Afolembe, “Oral History Regarding Conditions in the Equateur District, ca. 1895-1908”

Assignment:

- Bring thesis statement for Essay #1 to section [no submission]
- Essay #1 due Mon. Feb. 27 at 5 p.m.

Week 6: Fin-de-Siècle Ideologies

Tues. Feb. 28: New Nationalisms in East-Central Europe: Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism, Zionism

Thurs. March 2: Midterm Review

**No reading this week; review for the midterm exam*

Week 7: The Coming of the First World War

Tues. March 7: Midterm Exam

Thurs. March 9: The Coming of the First World War

Reading:

- Bertha von Suttner, “Lay Down Your Arms” (1889)
- H. G. Wells, “The War in the Air” (1908)

SPRING BREAK

Week 8: The Great War and its Afterlives

Tues. March 21: The Great War: Trench Warfare, Occupations, and the Home Front

Thurs. March 23: Making a Postwar Order at Home and Abroad

Reading:

- Béla Zombory-Moldován, *The Burning of the World: A Memoir of 1914*, selections

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #3

Week 9: Interwar Politics and Culture

Tues. March 28: Interwar Culture and the “New Woman”

Thurs. March 30: The Depression and the Unmaking of Democracy

Reading:

- FILM: Josef von Sternberg, dir., “The Blue Angel” (1930)

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #4
- Book selection for Essay #2 due in section, and begin reading

Week 10: Fascism, Nazism, and the Second World War

Tues. April 4: New Internationalisms and the Coming of the Second World War

Thurs. April 6: The Nazi Empire: Collaboration, Puppet States, and Resistance

Reading:

- Benito Mussolini, “The Achievements of the Fascist Revolution” (1929)
- Louise Solmitz, Diary Entries on Hitler’s Seizure of Power (1933)

Assignment:

- Read book for Essay #2

Week 11: Total War and Reconstruction

Tues. April 11: Holocaust and Genocide in East and West

Thurs. April 13: Origins of the Cold War: Rechristianization vs. Stalinization?

Reading:

- Gisella Perl, *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz* (1948), selections

Assignment:

- Intro paragraph and outline of Essay #2

Week 12: Imperial Reckonings

Tues. April 18: Decolonization and Colonial Legacies

Thurs. April 20: 1968 and the (Re)Birth of Human Rights

Reading:

- National Liberation Front, “Proclamation” (1954)
- François Mitterrand, “Speech in Response to FLN Actions” (1954)

Assignment:

- Essay #2 due Mon. April 24 at 5 p.m.

Week 13: A New European Order

Tues. April 25: Immigration and the New Right

Thurs. April 27: The Rise of Neoliberalism and the Fall of Communism

Reading:

- Pap Kouma, *I Was an Elephant Salesman: Adventures Between Dakar, Paris, and Milan* (1990), selections

Week 14: Contemporary Legacies

Tues. May 2: Review for Final

Thurs. May 4: Conclusions: Challenges for Europe Today

Final Exam: Sunday, May 7, 10:05 a.m.-12:05 p.m.