

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:	Wed. 1-3 p.m. or by appointment (Humanities 5118 or online)
Teaching Assistants:	TBD
TA Office Hours:	TBD
Semester:	Fall 2023
Lecture:	Mon./Wed./Fri. 9:55-10:45 a.m. (Science Hall 180)
Sections:	Wed. 3:30-4:20 p.m. (Humanities 2221) [FIG section] Wed. 4:35-5:25 p.m. (Humanities 2111) Wed. 5:40-6:30 p.m. (Humanities 2631) Thurs. 8:50-9:40 a.m. (Humanities 2125)

	Thurs. 9:55-10:45 a.m. (Humanities 2125)
	Thurs. 11:00-11:50 a.m. (Vilas Hall 4004) [FIG section]
	Thurs. 12:05-12:55 p.m. (Humanities 2211)
	Thurs. 1:20-2:10 p.m. (Humanities 2631) [FIG section]
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)
Website:	TBD

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 Outcomes

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. Zombory-Moldován is available as an e-book through the library catalog, but only three copies can be accessed at a time. The books are also 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 (10%)

We will use the online platform Top Hat to facilitate a more interactive classroom during the lectures. Your Top Hat grade will be based primarily on in-class polling and discussion questions during lectures. In addition, you will be asked to contribute one-paragraph discussion posts on the course readings (approximately 150 words each) during weeks 2, 3, 4, and 9. Each post is due by the beginning of section, and should address that week's readings. Reading questions will be distributed in advance.

In-class Top Hat questions and discussion posts 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. For the lectures held online (Sept. 25, Oct. 6, and Nov. 22), you will be expected to participate in asynchronous Top Hat exercises to receive credit for attendance. If you need to miss lecture more than three times due to illness, religious observance, or personal or family emergency, please let Prof. Bloch know.

2. Section Participation (20%)

Your attendance and active participation are expected at weekly section meetings. You will have a free 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. Participation in peer reviews during section meetings will also count toward this portion of your grade.

Please keep in mind that the quality of your contributions to section discussions is as important as the quantity, and that 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.

Section participation will be evaluated holistically at the end of the semester; we are certainly not grading each individual comment you make in class! You will receive a provisional participation grade midway through the semester, which you will have the opportunity to improve during the second half. A high score in this area will reflect consistent preparation to discuss the readings; engagement with the tools of primary source analysis introduced in class; and respectful, constructive interaction with your peers. Each section will collectively develop a list of group discussion norms at the beginning of the semester, and adherence to these norms will also count toward your section participation grade.

3. Two Primary Source Essays (35%)

The culminating writing assignments are two essays on primary sources. For the first essay (3-4 double-spaced pages), you will respond to a prompt addressing the course readings from either Week 3 or Week 4. The essay is due on Wed. Oct. 11 at 9:30 a.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 Wed. Dec. 6 at 9:30 a.m. For the second essay, you will be given a list of books from which to choose, though you may also choose a different book with the permission of Prof. Bloch or your TA. There are preliminary assignments due in section one week before each essay: a draft thesis statement and outline (Essay #1), and a draft introductory paragraph and outline (Essay #2). The first essay counts for 10% of

your course grade; the second essay counts for 20%; and the preliminary assignments count for 5%.

4. Midterm Exam (15%)

A take-home midterm exam will be distributed at the end of lecture on Mon. Oct. 23. The exam is due on Fri. Oct. 27 at 9:30 a.m. It will cover material from the first seven weeks of lecture (through Wed. Oct. 18). The exam will include one primary source analysis and one essay. You may use course readings, notes, and lecture slides to complete the exam, but you are not permitted to discuss the exam with your classmates.

5. Final Exam (20%)

A take-home final exam will be distributed on Fri. Dec. 15 at 9 a.m. and is due on Thurs. Dec. 21 at 5 p.m. The exam will include one primary source analysis and one essay. The primary source analysis will cover material since the midterm, and the essay will ask you to draw connections across both halves of the course. You may use course readings, notes, and lecture slides to complete the exam, but you are not permitted to discuss the exam with your classmates.

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 Prof. Bloch or your TA know as soon as possible and we can work out a plan for you to get caught up. We understand that life can be 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 Thursday, Dec. 21, 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 should adhere to proper citation practices in the discipline of history. In addition, collaboration with your classmates on the take-home midterm and final exams is not permitted. Submitting a paper created by ChatGPT or other AI software counts as plagiarism and will be handled accordingly. 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. I have also implemented scaffolding in the assignment structure, with intermediate assignments due before 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 to lecture with a laptop or smartphone in order to participate in the Top Hat exercises. Laptops are permitted (but not required) in section for taking notes and referencing readings. Of course, we ask that you refrain from checking email or social media during class. You are certainly permitted to do additional research on the course topics online; however, be aware that online sources are not necessarily reliable, and any outside sources used in your assignments (not expected or required) need to be cited. Information generated by AI tools such as ChatGPT should be treated with caution, and you should not turn in assignments written by artificial intelligence (see the note on Academic Integrity above). If you face challenges accessing the technology necessary to succeed in this course, please reach out to Prof. Bloch 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 know as soon as possible. I am happy to explore a range of options for removing barriers to your learning. If you have a disability, or think you might 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, productive 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 discussion posts are due by the beginning of section; the essays and take-home midterm exam are due at 9:30 a.m., before the start of lecture. Guidelines and rubrics for all assignments will be posted on Canvas. All readings, except for those in the course books, will be available on Canvas. See the “Modules” tab for week-by-week links.

Week 1: Introduction

Wed. Sept. 6: Course Introduction: What is Modern Europe?

Fri. Sept. 8: Legacies of the Enlightenment and French Revolution

**First section meetings on Sept. 6-7*

Week 2: Revolutionary Europe

Mon. Sept. 11: Europe under Napoleon

Wed. Sept. 13: The Industrial Revolution (I): Why Britain?

Fri. Sept. 15: The Industrial Revolution (II): Political and Cultural Responses to Industrialization

Reading: [13 pp.]

- National Assembly, “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen” (1789)
- Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Women” (1791)
- “Testimony Gathered by Ashley’s Mines Commission” (1842)
- Begin reading *Frankenstein* (due next week)

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #1 due in section

Week 3: The Limits of Restoration

Mon. Sept. 18: Conservatism and Liberalism in the Restoration Era

Wed. Sept. 20: The Origins of Nationalism

Feb. Sept. 22: Revolutions of 1848

Reading:

- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, pp. 15-225

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #2 due in section

Week 4: Making Nation-States

Mon. Sept. 25: Nationalism and Republicanism after 1848: Italian Unification

**Yom Kippur: lecture online & asynchronous*

Wed. Sept. 27: The Paradoxes of Liberal Nationalism: German Unification

Fri. Sept. 29: How to Write a History Essay

Reading: [24 pp.]

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” (1848), excerpt
- Giuseppe Mazzini, “From a Revolutionary Alliance to the United States of Europe” (1850)

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #3 due in section

Week 5: The Age of Capital

Mon. Oct. 2: Gender, Class, and the French Third Republic

Wed. Oct. 4: The Second Industrial Revolution

Fri. Oct. 6: Cities and the “Social Question” [*lecture online & asynchronous*]

Reading: [12 pp.]

- Josephine Butler, “The Contagious Diseases Acts” (1871)
- Clara Zetkin, “Women’s Work and the Organization of Trade Unions” (1894)

Assignment:

- Draft thesis statement and outline for Essay #1 due in section

Week 6: Race and Imperialism

Mon. Oct. 9: Racial Ideologies and “Scientific” Racism

Wed. Oct. 11: The New Imperialism: Geopolitics, Economics, Culture

Fri. Oct. 13: Colonial Genocides

Reading: [10 pp.]

- David Livingstone, “Lecture at the University of Cambridge” (1857)
- 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)
- Nicholas Afolembe, “Oral History regarding Conditions in the Equateur District, ca. 1885-1908”

Assignment:

- Essay #1 due Wed. Oct. 11 at 9:30 a.m.

Week 7: Fin-de-Siècles Ideologies

Mon. Oct. 16: New Nationalisms in East-Central Europe

Wed. Oct. 18: Zionism, Antisemitism, and the “Jewish Question”

Fri. Oct. 20: The Coming of the First World War

Reading: [12 pp.]

- Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (1896), excerpt

Week 8: Midterm Exam & The Great War

Mon. Oct. 23: Review for Midterm

Wed. Oct. 25: No Lecture: work on midterm exam

Fri. Oct. 27: The Great War: Trench Warfare, Occupations, and the Home Front

**Take-home midterm exam distributed at the end of lecture on Mon. Oct. 23; due Fri. Oct. 27 at 9:30 a.m.*

**No sections this week*

Week 9: Interwar Politics and Culture

Mon. Oct. 30: Making a Postwar Order at Home and Abroad

Wed. Nov. 1: Interwar Culture and the “New Woman”

Fri. Nov. 3: The Rise of Fascism and Nazism

Reading:

- Béla Zombory-Moldován, *The Burning of the World: A Memoir of 1914*, pp. 5-103

Assignment:

- Top Hat discussion post #4 due in section

Week 10: Crises of Democracy

Mon. Nov. 6: The Depression and the Unmaking of Democracy

Wed. Nov. 8: Race, Politics, and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany

Fri. Nov. 10: New Internationalisms and the Coming of the Second World War

Reading: [7 pp.]

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

Assignment:

- Book selection for Essay #2 due in section, and begin reading

Week 11: Total War and Genocide

Mon. Nov. 13: World War II in Europe: From Poland to Stalingrad

Wed. Nov. 15: The Nazi Empire: Collaboration, Puppet States, and Resistance

Fri. Nov. 17: Holocaust and Genocide in East and West

Reading: [12 pp.]

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

Week 12: Divided Europe

Mon. Nov. 20: Origins of the Cold War

Wed. Nov. 22: Everyday Life in Communist Societies [*lecture online & asynchronous*]

Fri. Nov. 24: *Thanksgiving Break*

**No sections this week: Thanksgiving Break*

Week 13: Imperial Reckonings

Mon. Nov. 27: Decolonization and Colonial Legacies

Wed. Nov. 29: “Revolutions” of 1968?

Fri. Dec. 1: The (Re)Birth of Human Rights

Reading: [13 pp.]

- National Liberation Front, “Proclamation” (1954)
- François Mitterrand, “Speech in Response to FLN Actions” (1954)
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), excerpt

Assignment:

- Draft introduction and outline for Essay #2 due in section

Week 14: A New European Order

Mon. Dec. 4: From Social Democracy to Neoliberalism

Wed. Dec. 6: Immigration and the New Right

Fri. Dec. 8: The Fall of Communism

Assignment:

- Essay #2 due Wed. Dec. 6 at 9:30 a.m.

**Last section meetings on Dec. 6-7*

Week 15: Contemporary Legacies

Mon. Dec. 11: Conclusions: Challenges for Europe Today

Wed. Dec. 13: Review for Final Exam

**Take-home final exam distributed on Fri. Dec. 15 at 9 a.m.; due Thurs. Dec. 21 at 5 p.m.*