

HISTORY 223

MODERN EUROPE

FALL 2006

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OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday & Thursday: 10:00-11:00; 1:45-2:15

And by appointment (see me after class to make an appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will trace the course of European history from the birth of modernity in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, through the French, Industrial, and Romantic revolutions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to the apex of European power and influence at the beginning of the twentieth century. We will then examine the tumultuous four decades after 1914, a period that witnessed the decline and near collapse of European civilization in a series of cataclysmic events: the rise of communist and fascist dictatorships, an economic depression of unprecedented severity and duration, and, most notably, two enormously destructive wars that, before they ran their course, engulfed most of the globe. Finally, we will conclude by looking at the years since 1945 when, in effect, a new Europe—democratic, prosperous, and largely peaceful—was born out of the ashes of World War II.

In addition to looking at the general flow of events, we will pay particular attention to one important thread running through modern European history—namely, the ongoing debate about how to best organize the political community. This debate has given rise to a series of competing political *ideologies*: liberalism, conservatism, socialism, communism, and fascism. We will work to understand not only the cluster of ideas at the center of each of these ideologies, but, no less importantly, how these ideologies affected the course of events.

In our attempt to come to grips with the history of modern Europe, we will employ two kinds of historical tools. First, we will read a standard textbook (Perry) that will provide an overview of political, social, and cultural developments. Like all such *secondary* works, a textbook represents a historian's (in this case, several historians') attempt to construct a narrative account, to offer plausible explanations for why things happened the way they did, and to highlight the most important developments. Second, we will read from a book (Beatty) containing *primary* source material. These are short selections from larger works written not by historians but by historical figures themselves. Since a major theme of the course is the formulation and interaction of various ideologies, the primary source readings will focus on attempts to formulate and explain these ideologies. Be forewarned. These primary source readings tend to be difficult. Their difficulty arises not only from the fact that they were written a long time ago, but by the fact that the arguments they are making are abstract. So read them carefully, be patient, and don't be discouraged if things aren't immediately apparent. We will reconstruct the arguments in class and try to clarify what might, at first blush,

seem obscure.

LEARNING GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

At the successful completion of this course, a student should expect:

- to acquire general knowledge of the political, social, and cultural history of Europe from the Enlightenment to the present
- to learn the difference between secondary and primary sources
- to learn how to interpret primary source material and integrate such interpretations into a larger understanding of history
- to learn how to analyze and synthesize historical material by writing essay examinations

REQUIRED READINGS

Perry, Marvin *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics & Society*, Vol. II: *From the 1660s*. Eighth edition [cited below as Perry]

Beatty, John and Johnson, Oliver *Heritage of Western Civilization*, Vol. II. Ninth edition [cited below as Beatty]

Several readings are on electronic reserve. They can be downloaded from Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance is required, not optional. Only officially certified absences will be accepted. All unexcused absences will affect your grade; beyond three, your grade will be lowered by one letter. Also, as a courtesy to both the instructor and your fellow students, please be on time and turn off all cell phones before class starts.

Examinations. There will be two examinations: a mid-term (September 26) and a final (November 30—the last day of class). Both exams will have the same format: one part short essay, one part long essay.

Informal Writing Exercises. On a regular basis throughout the semester there will be unannounced writing exercises at the beginning of class. They will be short (maximum one page) commentaries on a particular aspect of the day's reading assignment.

These writing exercises are designed to serve three purposes: first, to give you regular practice in written expression; second, to get you mentally pump-primed for the class that will follow; finally, and not least, to keep you on track with your reading. Given the fact that these exercises will be unannounced, you need to have completed the day's reading assignment *before every class*. These short, informal writing exercises may be requested on either the primary source readings or the Perry textbook and will not be "graded" in the ordinary sense. Instead, they will receive one of the

following marks: a check (indicating satisfactory performance); a check plus (indicating a performance which is especially thoughtful, complete, or well-conceived); a check minus (indicating unsatisfactory performance). *A check minus cannot be redone.* It will signal to me that either you have not done the reading or you have not done it carefully enough. Better than average performance on these informal writing exercises will be counted positively in your "discussion grade." More than a few check minuses will begin to affect your grade; *a number of check minuses will, like absences, have serious consequences for your grade.* If you are not in class on a particular day (or if you miss the exercise by coming late), you will receive a check minus.

Participation. Though the number of the students in this course will probably be large, it is not so large as to prohibit *some* discussion. As a matter of pedagogical principle, I try to avoid a strictly lecture format, which, I believe, induces passivity on the part of the student. To avoid this, I try not just to present information but to pose questions. Even if the size of the class precludes *everyone participating all of the time*, I trust that you will at least *think* about the questions that I present. I believe the process of trying to address those questions (rather than simply transcribing everything I say into notes) will help you to better understand the material. This is important because the point of the course is not to memorize names of individual trees but to see the larger forest of historical concerns.

Grading.

Your final grade will be composed of the following elements:

midterm exam: 40%

final exam: 40%

writing exercise grade: 20%

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: August 15-17

15: **Introduction**

17: **The Scientific Revolution**

Perry, chap. 17

Week 2: August 22-24

22: **The Enlightenment**

Perry, chap. 18

24: **Classical Conservatism and Classical Liberalism**

Bishop Bossuet, "Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture," in Beatty

Locke, "Of Civil Government," in Beatty

Week 3: August 29-31

29: The French Revolution I

Perry, chap. 19

31: The French Revolution II

Perry, chap. 20

Burke, "Reflections on the French Revolution," in Beatty

Week 4: September 5-7

5: The Industrial and Romantic Revolutions

Perry, chap. 21

Perry, chap. 22, to p.511

7: From Restoration and Revolution, 1815-48

Perry, chap. 23

Week 5: September 12-14

12: Karl Marx and Socialism

Perry, chap. 22, pp. 511-16; Perry, chap. 24, 568-73

"Child Labor: The Sadler Report," in Beatty,

Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party"(to "Proletarians and Communists"), in Beatty

14: From Classical to Modern Liberalism

Perry, chap. 24, pp. 573-80

Alexis de Tocqueville, "Democracy in America," electronic reserve

John Dewey, "Liberalism and Social Action," in Beatty

Week 6: September 19-21

19: Nationalism

Perry, chap. 25

21: European Imperialism

Perry, chap. 24, pp. 557-68; Perry, chap. 27

William Graham Sumner, "The Challenge of Facts," in Beatty

Week 7: September 26-28

26: MID-TERM EXAM—bring blue book

28: A Counter-Enlightenment? New Currents of Thought

Perry, chap. 28

Nietzsche, "Will to Power," in Beatty

Week 8: October 3-5

3: The Origins of World War I

- Perry, chap. 29, pp. 691-703
5: **The “Great War”**
Perry, chap. 29, pp. 703-16

Week 9: October 10-12

- 10: **FALL BREAK**
12: **The Impact of the Great War**
All Quiet on the Western Front, 63-115; 174-75, electronic reserve

Week 10: October 17-19

- 17: **From Marx to Lenin**
Lenin “What is to Be Done/State and Revolution,” in Beatty
19: **From the Bolshevik Revolution to the Stalinist State**
Perry, chap. 29, pp. 716-25; Perry, chap. 30, pp. 728-40

Week 11: October 24-26

- 24: **Fascism in Italy**
Payne, *History of Fascism*, 80-128, electronic reserve
26: **National Socialism in Germany**
Payne, *History of Fascism*, 147-81, electronic reserve

Week 12: October 31-November 2

- 31: **Nazism, Youth, and Culture I**
Cabaret: film
2: **Nazism, Youth, and Culture II**
Cabaret: discussion

Week 13: November 7-9

- 7: **The Origins of World War II**
Perry, chap. 32, pp. 836-45
9: **World War II and the Holocaust**
Perry, chap. 32, pp. 845-62

Week 14: November 14-16

- 14: **Facing the Abyss: Existentialism**
Perry, chap. 31
Sartre, “Existentialism,” electronic reserve
16: **Existentialism and Feminism**
De Beauvoir, “Second Sex,” electronic reserve

Week 15: November 21-23

21: **Europe After World War II**

Perry, chap. 33

23: **Thanksgiving**

Week 16: November 28-30

28: **The Revolutions of 1989-91 and After**

Perry, chap. 34

30: **Final Exam—bring blue book**