

Spring 2020: History 706 Jones
W 3:30-6:20 MHRA 1214

Colloquium in European History from 1789

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| Instructor: Jeff Jones | jwjones@uncg.edu |
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| Office Hours: M 11:00-12:30; W 1:00-2; Th 2-3:30; and by appointment | |

Course Description

The American Heritage Dictionary defines “colloquium” as “an academic seminar on a broad field of study, usually led by a different lecturer at each meeting.” This graduate-level “Colloquium in European History from 1789” holds true to that definition by having students as well as the Instructor facilitate discussions of some of the most important works representing the major historiographical trends, issues, and problems in modern European history from the French Revolution through World War II. The class is divided into four three-week Units—the French Revolution; War, Class and Nationalism; Human Rights; and World War II—and arranged around weekly discussions of texts covering a wide range of topics and methodological approaches; classes will be led either by the Instructor or by teams of students who facilitate discussion by formulating questions germane to that week’s text. Our primary tasks will be to identify authors’ arguments, methodologies, and source bases, as well as to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their works.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify some of the key issues of debate in the broad historiography of modern Europe.
- Evaluate and synthesize scholarly arguments on a specific topic in modern European history by writing a historiographical essay.
- Critically appraise varying historical arguments and formulate their own interpretations.
- Critically read and distinguish between different methodologies and “read between the lines” of differing points of view.
- Participate in a respectful and thoughtful manner in discussions of a variety of topics.

Course Activities

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| • Participation | 30% |
| • 3 Book Reviews (2-3 pages/500-750 words; 12-point font; double-spaced) | 10% each |
| • Oral Presentation | 10% |
| • Historiographical Essay (12-15 pages; 12-point font; double-spaced) | 30% |

OPTIONAL TEXT (suggested for those with relatively minimal knowledge of modern European history):

- David S. Mason, *A Concise History of Modern Europe: Liberty, Equality, Solidarity*, 4th edition (Rowman Little Publishers, 2018; ISBN: 9781538113271), [available \(2011 edition\) as an eBook through the UNCG Jackson Library](#).

Teaching Strategy

At the first meeting we will divide the class into groups and divide some of the readings among the groups. **Every student in the class is responsible for reading all the assigned readings for every week.** Group members for a designated class will lead that week's discussion. Each member of the designated group should write a review of the book for the week that they lead discussion (see below for details). Students outside of the designated group for a given week should come prepared to discuss the main aspects of the book for that week, i.e. the author's thesis, sources, methodology, and where the book belongs within the broader historiography on the subject. Finally, each student will write a historiographical essay (see below for details) dealing with some aspect of modern European history and give an oral presentation (see below for details) of their findings at our last class meeting.

Participation and Attendance

In a discussion-based seminar of this nature class participation is crucial. The 30% participation grade will be based on in-class participation, with an emphasis on the *quality* of input rather than the quantity of input. Attendance is obviously important in a small seminar based on discussion, especially since the class only meets once a week, meaning that one absence is the equivalent of a missed week of classes. Students are strongly urged to attend every class, but in the case they must miss a class, they should either let the Instructor know beforehand and/or provide documentation afterward explaining the reason for their absence. Multiple absences will impact a student's participation grade very negatively.

Book Reviews

Each student will write three book reviews, worth 10% each of the course grade, corresponding to the titles of their group's designated weeks. This is the one activity that individuals within the group should do on their own; group members are free to proofread and comment on each others' reviews, but the final product should be the work of each individual group member, rather than a collective effort. Students should feel free to consult published reviews with the clear understanding that their review shall be their own work. The book reviews should be concise (500-750 words/2-3 pages; 12-point font; double-spaced) and should convey the author's argument and methodology clearly, as well as describe the source base(s) on which the work is based. Most importantly, the reviews should assess the strengths and weaknesses of the work under review.

Historiographical Essay

Students will write a historiographical essay, worth 30% of the overall course grade, identifying the major works, trends, and issues of any topic of the student's interest relevant to modern European history. The essay (12-15 pages/3000-3750 words; 12-point font; double-spaced), **due Friday, May 1 by 5:00 PM**, should convey the major themes covered in the works examined as well as differences between varying treatments of similar topics. For each work discussed in the essay students should consider the following questions: What is the author's thesis? What sources/evidence does the author rely on? Where does the book fit with historiographical trends in the field? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book, i.e. how convincing is the author's interpretation and the book's overall argument? Finally, a strong essay will relate the works examined to each other in a clear and logical manner.

Oral Presentation

During our final class, **Wednesday, April 29, 3:30-6:30**, students will present the findings of their historiographical essays to the class as a whole in 5-7 minute presentations (with 3-5 additional minutes for questions), worth 10% of the overall course grade. The oral presentation should succinctly summarize the key arguments and debates identified in the student's historiographical essay, including the most important authors and titles, as well as the main contending schools of thought among leading historians. Students are encouraged to consult the University Speaking Center for assistance in this endeavor. Power Point presentations are encouraged but not required for the oral presentations.

Course Schedule

INTRODUCTION

January 15: John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford University Press, 2002; ISBN: 9780195171570), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#); led by the Instructor

UNIT 1: FRENCH REVOLUTION

January 22: Leora Auslander, *Cultural Revolutions: Everyday Life and Politics in Britain, North America and France* (University of California Press, 2009; ISBN: 9780520259218); led by Group 1

January 29: Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (University of California Press, 1993; ISBN: 9780520082700), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#); led by Group 2

February 6: Rafe Blaufarb, *The Great Demarcation: The French Revolution and the Invention of Modern Property* (Oxford University Press, 2016; ISBN: 9780199778799), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#); led by Group 3

UNIT 2: WAR, CLASS and NATIONALISM

February 13: *Objects of War: The Material Culture of Conflict and Displacement*, edited by Leora Auslander and Tara Zahra (Cornell University Press, 2018; ISBN: 9781501720079), (Chapters 4 and 10 OPTIONAL), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#); led by Instructor

February 20: Excerpts from E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Preface, and Chapters 6, 9-12 (pp. 8-11, 144-161, 207-350), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#) (NOTE: pagination is based on the eBook version); Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, *The Future of Class in History*, Introduction (pp. 1-18); and Jeffrey W. Jones, *Everyday Life and the "Reconstruction" of Soviet Russia During and After the Great Patriotic War, 1943-1948*, Introduction (pp. 1-15) (NOTE: both of these readings are available on Canvas under "Files"); led by the Instructor

February 27: Excerpts from Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Introduction and Chapters 2-3, 5-6, and 8-9 (pp. 1-46, 67-112, 141-162), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#); Alison Frank, "The Petroleum

War of 1910: Standard Oil, Austria, and the Limits of the Multinational Corporation,” *American Historical Review* 114, no. 1 (2009): 16-41; Andrew Sartori, “The British Empire and Its Liberal Mission,” *Journal of Modern History* 78 (2006): 623-642 (NOTE: both of these articles are available on Canvas under “Files”); led by the Instructor

UNIT 3: HUMAN RIGHTS

March 11: Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008; ISBN: 9780393331998), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#); led by Group 1

March 18: James Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Yale University Press, 2018; ISBN: 9780300217247), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#); led by Group 2

March 25: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford University Press, 1999; ISBN: 9780195050011), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#); led by Group 3

UNIT 4: WORLD WAR II

April 8: Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community of Jedwabne* (Princeton University Press, 2001; ISBN: 9780142002407), [available as an eBook through UNCG Library](#); led by Group 1

April 15: Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Harvard University Press, 2009; ISBN: 9780674034655); led by Group 2

April 22: Alexis Peri, *The War Within: Diaries From the Siege of Leningrad* (Harvard University Press, 2017; ISBN: 9780674971554); led by Group 3

April 29, 3:30-6:30: ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Historiographical Essays due Friday, May 1 by 5:00 PM