



Survey of Western Civilization Since 1500AD
Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
HIST 1433 Section 201
Fall 2025

Contact Information

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Course Description

Some scholars and journalists suggest that the French Revolution was the event that brought Europe kicking and screaming into the “modern” period. It is true that this revolution challenged autocratic, aristocratic rule, sparked the birth and development of modern nationalism, and allowed for “enlightened” thought to influence mass politics and society. However, the development of the modern state and statecraft preceded this event by approximately two centuries. We will explore the history of the modern state and statecraft in this course and see how changing political, diplomatic, and economic processes shaped Europe from the Reformation in 1517 to the recent expansion of the European Union into Eastern and Central Europe and the Balkans in 2004/2007.

Some of the more important questions we'll analyze include how and why the centralized state emerged and how concepts from the Enlightenment shaped its forms and structures. Why did nationalists strive to create nation-states to the detriment of multiethnic empires? Why was imperialism so important to European states? Were WWI, WWII, and the Holocaust products of modernity and enlightened thought, or were they deviations? Were communism and socialism movements to benefit the masses or used merely to dupe them into revolutionary activity? What is the role of the EU and its predecessors?

The course itself examines almost five centuries of history primarily through the lenses of imperialism and nationalism, two processes that significantly shaped Europe and the world and sparked much conflict. Furthermore, since history examines human change over time, we will focus much of our discussion on European revolutions and how they shaped the modern world. Beyond presenting a narrative of events, this course is meant to stimulate discussion of historical issues, while challenging preconceived notions or prejudices in an environment of respect for those with differing perspectives. It will also give you a better understanding of the historian's craft by making you interpret history through the analysis of primary documents. You will develop and sharpen your analytical and writing skills through these exercises.

Student Participation

Students will be held personally responsible for their own education. I am a harsh taskmaster and do not accept excuses that tend to be pervasive in today's society. You are adults, and with age comes responsibility for your own actions or lack thereof. Active student participation in learning (which includes careful reading of ALL assignments, classroom engagement, attentive note taking, and participation in discussions), the maintenance of a weekly study schedule, the completion of ALL

assignments in a timely manner, adequate preparation for exams, and, when necessary, individual post-exam consultation with the instructor, are essential to meeting the learning outcomes of the course. However, if you turn in all assignments, pass your exams, and participate in discussions, you are not guaranteed a “good grade”. A is a designation for superior work, and B for good work. If your work ethic, written work, and test taking efforts are merely satisfactory, you will EARN a C. The bare minimum earns a D.

Textbooks

- 1) R. R. Palmer, et al., *A History of the Modern World*, 10th edition, 2007. 9780073106922
- 2) Merry Wiesner, et al., *Discovering the Western Past: A Look at the Evidence*, Vol. 2, 6th edition. 0618766111
- 3) Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, 1993. It is your responsibility to start reading Browning and be ready to discuss the entire book by the time we get to the class on the Shoah in April.

Academic Integrity, Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given) is forbidden and will be dealt with in the harshest of terms possible according to MSU Texas policy. Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

Notice: Understand the following – it applies to all assignments, including drafts of papers. If you, in any instance, “cut and paste” from any internet source without citing that source (plagiarism) or use unapproved internet sources, you will fail the course, including if you cheat in any way on a **draft**. Plagiarism of any kind will result in the same penalty. Ignorance of this policy and the university's policy on academic dishonesty is NOT an excuse. Be warned, this includes, but is NOT LIMITED to, use of an **AI program** for any reason; plagiarism of any form; having someone else do any of the work (research or writing), etc. Depending on the severity of the offense, the professor reserves the right to employ any or all university sanctioned disciplinary actions, of which I will pursue prosecution to its furthest extent. I will drop you from the course and report the incident to the Student Affairs and any other office as per the university's policy.

Grading

In the past, I've used a number of different assignments to evaluate student learning and retention. However, this semester I am employing assignments and evaluation as my mentors evaluated me as an undergraduate, which held me accountable for my own performance.

Assignments	Percentage of grade
Exams (3) 20% each	60%
Analytical book review of Browning	20%
Active participation and attendance (includes debates, pop-quizzes, and in-class assignments)	20%

Final Grade	Percentage
A	90% plus
B	80 – 89.9%
C	70 – 79.9%
D	60 – 69.9%
F	Less than 60%

There will be three essay/short answer exams taken in class that include the writing of an essay you will bring with you. The essay will be on a chapter in the Wiesner book and a final during the scheduled time in exam week. They are a combination of short answer and essays of various lengths. There is also an analytical component in the form of essays you will construct using the historical issues presented in the Wiesner primary document book. We will go over the exercises and assignments in class. You will bring an essay of approximately 600 words that analyzes **three or more separate documents** from a single Wiesner chapter to be turned in with your exam. **I WILL NOT** accept the essays after the exam. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the final product with you on that day. Electronic submissions will NOT be accepted.

The book review may be a new exercise to some in the class. This is **NOT a book report**. Reviews are critiques of books in which the reviewer briefly describes the main thesis and the points the author uses to prove the argument. Once this is done, the reviewer critiques the book (is the argument believable, well researched, persuasive, well written). Does the author fulfill his or her stated or implied purpose? Is the argument subtle or ham-fisted? I will provide a “how to” sheet with a barebones description of how to do a short academic review. I suggest you use review essays from an academic journal (such as the *American Historical Review*) to get a feel for what they are meant to do. Now you might be asking yourself, “why do I have to do this? I don’t intend to be a professional historian [or] I won’t ever take another course in this department.” Every academic field requires such critical exercises; furthermore, you may take a position after college in which the boss wants you to critique something in writing. This review will give you practice doing a formal critique. We will spend class time talking about and practicing analytical writing and the book review itself.

The book you will review is the Browning book on the Holocaust—*Ordinary Men*. I suggest you read the book carefully in the first half of the semester to avoid the end of term flood of assignments. Early work is encouraged. The review will be due, without exception, on **November 18th at 4pm**. No late work will be accepted. It should be approximately 900 words.

Discussion is an essential part of the course; therefore, all students are expected to attend class and participate actively. Learning requires active engagement from each student. To ensure that you have read the assignments, a **summary** of NON-TEXTBOOK readings (mostly articles and the Wiesner assignments) will be due at the beginning of each class in which those particular works are discussed. Intellectual engagement with the material can occur only if class members are present. Poor attendance will affect your grade in two ways:

1) If you are absent, you will not earn any points for discussion or participation on that day, hence you lower your discussion/participation grade.

2) **More than three (3) unexcused absences in the regular lecture will result in a letter grade reduction for the course.** Each absence thereafter will again lower the final grade one letter. Seven unexcused absences will result in an automatic 'F' for the course. The instructor has the sole right to determine the validity of any excuses for absence. In general, only medical problems severe enough to require a doctor's care, pre-approved college events, or emergencies qualify as legitimate excuses (proof must be provided).

If you can't commit, there's no reason to take the course.

The course schedule is divided into daily topics. The readings for that day must be completed before that day's discussion.

Extra Credit

I do NOT offer extra credit. DON'T ASK.

Make Up Work/Tests

I will only allow make up work if there is a legitimate excuse for missing a scheduled exam. I have the sole discretion in determining whether or not an absence is excused. University functions approved by the administration will be excused **WITH documentation**. Other reasons must be documented in some acceptable form or fashion (proof) must be presented.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

I use MSU's D2L program to post documents or give assignments. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication between student and professor. In the first week, I will post the syllabus and the terms for the course. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor. I will put a few required readings on D2L (see schedule below) during the semester.

Online Computer Requirements

It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. *Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.* Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!

Institutional and COVID Policies

In general, the class policies concerning COVID are those implemented by MSU Texas and are subject to change as university policy changes. Please check university policies throughout the semester. Below are listed some of the things you should be aware of.

- 1) This is a face-to-face course. I will NOT be livestreaming the course unless a student tests positive or must go into quarantine due to exposure by an infected individual. It is the student's responsibility to inform me, in writing (email is fine), of the situation. I will implement livestreaming within two class sessions to accommodate the sick or quarantined students.
- 2) Due to the policies on social distancing and attendance, seating charts and seat assignments will be used in this course. Each student must sit in a desk or chair with an affixed sticker allowing seating. That desk or chair cannot be moved for any reason and attendance will be taken by seating chart. Once you select a desk, you must sit in that desk and that desk alone throughout the semester.

- 3) Due to the possibility of a campus shut-down, the students are responsible for owning or having access to the necessary equipment and software to continue this course via distance learning. Below are the MINIMUM requirements as determined by the university.

HARDWARE:

PC Desktops and laptops (Use Windows' Operating System and PC Info to find your hardware information if you are unsure)

- a) Intel Core (i3, i5, i7) processors; 4th generation or newer
- b) 4 GB of RAM, 8 GB of RAM is highly recommended
- c) 256 GB SSD Storage
- d) Dual Band spectrum (2.4 GHz and 5 GHz) with 802.11ac or 802.11n

Mac desktops and laptops (Use Apple's About this Mac feature to find your hardware information)

- a) Intel Core (i3, i5, i7) processors; 4th generation or newer
- b) 4 GB of RAM, 8 GB of RAM is highly recommended
- c) 256 GB SSD Storage
- d) Dual Band spectrum (2.4 GHz and 5 GHz) with 802.11ac or 802.11n

PLEASE NOTE!!!: **Chromebooks are not recommended, as they will not work with D2L. You have been warned now, so do NOT expect me to make accommodations if distance learning is implemented during the semester.**

SOFTWARE:

Minimum Software requirements

Operating Systems:

- a) Windows 10 (1709)
- b) macOS 10.13 (High Sierra)

Web browsers:

- a) Internet Explorer 11 (Windows)
- b) Microsoft Edge
- c) Safari
- d) Firefox
- e) Chrome

Conferencing Software:

- a) Microsoft Teams
- b) Zoom Web Conferencing
- c) Skype for Business
- d) Web X

Other supported hardware and software options are located at <https://msutexas.edu/it/assets/files/basic-software-and-hardware-list.pdf>

- 4) If absence due to COVID infection or exposure occurs, it must be documented by the university. If you cannot make office hours, call during posted times only for immediate concerns. Otherwise, email or call to make a face-to-face or electronic meeting.
- 5) All documents relating to the course will be available on D2L. Check regularly.

Instructor Class Policies

Conduct: All students are expected to act as responsible adults. Any disruptions or distractions will be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Below you will find general guidelines covering certain actions and/or behaviors that are to be avoided. As a general rule any behavior that disrupts the administration of this class will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from the time spent in class, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request that the offending student leave the classroom. Furthermore, the professor reserves the right to deduct points from the student's

semester total or remove the student from the course. **Arriving late is considered a distraction.** If arriving more than five (5) minutes late – DO NOT enter the classroom.

Electronic Devices, Texting, and Phones: The use of tape recorders, iPods, mp3s, or any other recording device in class is **prohibited**. It is imperative that you turn off phones, all other communication devices, and electronic equipment before entering the classroom. The use of a telephone or texting device for any reason is prohibited. *On the first offense the student will be penalized 20 points on her or his participation score for the week. The second offense will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom. The professor reserves the right to expel and administratively withdraw a student from the class upon the third offense.*

Laptops, Tablets, etc.: You must obtain permission from the professor to use laptops, tablets, and phones (or any other device capable of accessing the internet) in the classroom. Recent scholarship suggests that laptops and tablets are **major distractions** to fellow students and in general do not enhance learning and/or the classroom experience. Furthermore, there will be no surfing, texting, emailing, etc. in the classroom, unless I specifically ask the students to do so.

E-mail: Note that e-mail correspondence is the most effective and convenient way in which to communicate with me outside the classroom. The professor/student relationship is professional by nature and, accordingly, your e-mail correspondence should be constructed professionally. Again, **DO NOT send me messages via D2L; only use my regular email for correspondence.**

Attendance and your grade: This course is structured so that it is to the student's advantage to attend class regularly. From past experience, students who choose not to attend on a regular basis are not successful. I allow three, and only three unexcused absences. After that, each unexcused absence will result in a penalty to your participation grade. If you have a total of nine unexcused absences, you will not be able to pass the course.

Withdrawals (Course Drop): The professor is NOT responsible for student withdrawals. The student is responsible for meeting all academic deadlines including withdrawal deadlines.

Services for Students with Disabilities: In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to Student Disability Office.

Grade Appeal Process: Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University Undergraduate Catalog

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule

Week 1—Background to Developing the Modern Continental State

Aug. 26—Introduction—Why study modern European history? and the Decline of the Medieval World and Discovery of the New
Reading: Palmer, 73-120

Aug. 28—Wars of Religion/Power and the Westphalian state
Reading: Palmer, 121-169

Week 2—Foundations of the Modern State and International Relations

Sept. 2—France and the Emergence of Absolutism

Reading: Palmer, 169-188

Sept. 4—Staging Absolutism in France

Wiesner, Chapter 2

Week 3—Eastern and Central Europe: Empire and War

Sept. 9—The Holy Roman Empire, Poland, Austria-Hungary, the Ottomans, Russia

Reading: Palmer, 189-224

Sept. 11—Trade, Empire, War

Reading: Palmer, 265-96, 311-29, 338-42

Tentative date for first debate on imperialism

Week 4—Revolutions in Thought, Paradigm Shifts, Political Revolution

Sept. 16—The Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment

Reading: Palmer, 225-55, 297-311, 342-8

Sept. 18—The French Revolution and Napoleon

Reading: Palmer, 349-431

Wiesner, Chapter 5

Week 5—Reactionary Europe: Conservatism Triumphant?

Sept. 23—**EXAM 1**

BRING A BLUE BOOK AND YOUR WIESNER ESSAY!!!

Sept. 25—The Congress System, Reactionary Europe

Reading: Palmer, 457-72, 476-80

Week 6—Industrialization, Urbanization, and Ideology of the 19th Century

Sept. 30—The First and Second Industrial Revolutions

Reading: Palmer, 433-443, 574-84

R. M. Hartwell, "Was There an Industrial Revolution?" *Social Science History*
14 (1990), 567-576

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0145-5532%28199024%2914%3A4%3C567%3AWTAIR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F>

Oct. 2— Ideology and Even More Revolution

Reading: Palmer, 443-57, 480-512, 601-2, 604-8

Week 7—Labor, the Revolutions of 1848, and the Unification of Italy

Oct. 7— Old and New Labor (Wiesner workshop)

Reading: Wiesner, Chapter 7

Oct. 9— Nationalism Challenges Congress Europe—1848 and Italy

Reading: Palmer, 483-502, 512-25

Week 8—The Triumph of Nationalism and the Upset Balance of Power

Oct. 14—The Unification of Germany and the Spread of National Awareness

Reading: Palmer, 525-44, 562-65, 584-90, 595-600

Anthony D. Smith, "Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism," *International Affairs* (1996), 445-458

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-5850%28199607%2972%3A3%3C445%3ACCATTP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-O>

Oct. 16—Imperialism at Home and Abroad

Reading: Palmer, 629-39, 643-75

Week 9—**The Birth of Total War**

Oct. 21—The Alliance System and Public Opinion

Reading: Palmer, 677-87

Wiesner, Chapter 9

Oct. 23—War and Unjust Peace

Reading: Palmer, 687-718

Wiesner, Chapter 11

Week 10—**The Interwar Era**

Oct. 28—**EXAM 2**

BRING A BLUE BOOK AND YOUR WIESNER ESSAY!!!

Oct. 30—The 1920s

Reading: Palmer, 719-49, 763-73, 785-93

Week 11—**Political Ideologies and the Emergence of Totalitarianism**

Nov. 4—European Thought and the USSR

Readings: Palmer, 609-28, 749-62

Nov. 6—Fascism: The "Other Socialism" and Totalitarianism

Reading: Palmer, 795, 808-25

Wiesner, Chapter 12

Week 12—**The Second Descent into Total War**

April 9—The Origins of World War II and the Nazi Victories

Reading: Palmer, 827-45

April 11—Allied Victory and the Holocaust

Reading: Palmer 845-59

Robert Melson, "Paradigms of Genocide: The Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, and Contemporary Mass Destructions," *Annals of the*

American Academy of Political and Social Science 548, The Holocaust: Remembering for the Future (1996), 156-168

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-7162%28199611%29548%3C156%3APOGTHT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B>

Have the Browning book completed by this date!!!

Week 13—**The Bipolar World Develops and Empires Fall**

Nov. 11—The Cold War to 1964

Readings: Palmer, 859-884, 902-7

Nov. 13—Discussion on writing a book review

Week 14—**The Third World in the Cold War**

Nov. 18—Decolonization

Reading: Palmer, 915-41

BOOK REVIEW DUE BY 4PM

Nov. 20—Africa and the Middle East

Reading: Palmer, 945-94

Tentative date for second debate on decolonization and neoimperialism

Week 15—**The Collapse of Communism, the Birth of the EU, Lingering Nationalism**

Dec. 2— The Fall of Soviet communism

Reading: Palmer 995-1066

Dec. 4— Western Europe, the EU, and Lingering Nationalism

Reading: Wiesner, Chapter 14

Final Exam during Finals' Week at the scheduled time and day. Bring a blue book.