



Europe in the Long Twentieth Century
Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
HIST 4433/5433
Fall 2023

Contact Information

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Course Description

This course is designed to provide the student with an understanding of the history and development of European society, politics, and diplomacy during the long 20th century. It covers the Congress of Berlin in 1878, World War I, the interwar years, the rise of the dictators, World War II, the post-World War II era (Cold War), the fall of communism, and the growth of the European Union. It analyzes the evolution of Europe by looking at the social, political, and intellectual movements of the long 20th century, as well as the diplomatic and military consequences these movements sparked. European affairs during this period are filled with controversy, and some of the events we examine will force us to confront fundamental questions of human nature and morality.

Unfortunately, a one-semester course cannot hope to give adequate attention to every significant aspect of this dense and complex history, even assuming we could agree on what was 'significant'. Therefore, I will not present you with a chronological survey of 20th-century European history. Instead of building a single grand narrative running from roughly 1871 to the present, we will be looking at history from a number of vantage-points and through a number of themes from different perspectives.

Objectives

The course objectives are simple and clear. First, the student will be expected to learn a general timeline of European history in the 20th century, focusing on major events and personalities (this doesn't mean memorization of dates, but instead a general knowledge of what things happened before others and how these events influenced those that followed). A solid knowledge of facts is essential before more complex historical problems can be explored and analyzed. Much of this will be the student's responsibility since the lectures and discussion will deal mostly with themes or events of great importance during the timeframe in question. It is hoped that at the completion of the course, the students should be able to:

- 1) discuss the historical and international consequences of the twentieth century's two world wars;
- 2) identify the overt and underlying forces in twentieth-century European culture, society, politics, and science and technology that led to the decline of multinational empires, the decline of imperialism, European wars and the rise and fall of totalitarianism, the Cold War and the collapse of communism;
- 3) discuss the transformation of the bourgeoisie, the urban working classes, and the rural population over the course of the century; and
- 4) understand the experiment of "uniting Europe" and the visions of this project from a number of different perspectives, including the Euroskepticism associated with this process.

Student Participation

Students will be held 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, even 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) Felix Gilbert and David C. Large, *The End of the European Era: 1890 to the Present*, ISBN: 9780393930405
- 2) Leslie Derfler and Patricia Kollander, eds., *An Age of Conflict*, ISBN: 9780155063587

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). 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. 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 assignment in question, including if you cheat in any way on a **draft** you turn in. 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.

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 (undergraduate students)	Percentage of grade
Exams (2) 20% each. Take home, essay exams	40%
Analytical book review. Student selects a book which must be approved by instructor no later than September 11 at 5pm. Final review due Oct. 25. [approximately 1200 words]	20%
Active participation and attendance (includes pop-quizzes, summaries, and in-class assignments)	20%
Final research paper on topic approved by professor BEFORE September 18 at 5pm. Draft due Nov. 15. Final paper due Dec. 6. [between 3600 and 4500 words]	20%

Assignments (graduate students)	Percentage of grade
Exams (2) 20% each. Take home, essay exams	40%
Analytical, comparative book review. Students select two books, which must be approved by instructor no later than September 11 at 5pm. Final review due Oct.	20%

Assignments (graduate students)	Percentage of grade
25. [approximately 1500-1800 words]	
Active participation and attendance (includes pop-quizzes, summaries, and in-class assignments)	20%
Final research paper on topic approved by professor BEFORE September 18 at 5pm. Draft due Nov. 15. Final paper due Dec. 6 at beginning of the class. [between 4000 and 4800 words]	20%

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

Two essay exams will be distributed one week before their due dates. They are meant to be exercises in not only assessing your knowledge and understanding of the topics presented in class and in the readings, but also in research and argument construction. You will craft answers to the questions and use your notes and research to answer fully and accurately. You may use the readings, lecture, discussion notes, and research from CREDIBLE sources to answer these questions as long as those sources are cited. Internet resources NOT from an academic resource or website are suspect and should be avoided as are supposedly “academic” works from **polemicists** like Howard Zinn and other sloppy historians.

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 his or her 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.

The book you will review will be one chosen by the student and approved by the professor no later than September 5 at 5pm. I suggest you select a book on the topic of your research paper for the course. This way you are doing work that is directly relevant to your research project. No late work will be accepted.

The research paper will be one on a topic of interest to you. You must select a topic and have it approved no later than September 12 at 5pm.

Some possible paper topic suggestions:

Discuss the effects of World War I on only one of the following:

- 1) the European aristocracy
- 2) liberal democracy in eastern Europe
- 3) liberal democracy in Germany
- 4) liberal democracy in Italy
- 5) class relations in England
- 6) relations between the Russia and the rest of Europe
- 7) relations between France and the rest of Europe
- 8) the peoples of the Balkans

Discuss the effects of World War II on only one of the following:

- 1) Eastern Europe
- 2) Germany
- 3) The future Cold War
- 4) De-colonization

Select a topic of major importance in 20th century Europe. Select four of the major historical works dealing with this topic and compare and contrast the authors’ main points, suggesting which works are stronger and which are weaker in argument (historiographic essay).

Whatever topic you suggest, from the above list or one of your own, I advise you to start very, very early in the semester. I am draconian when it comes to due dates and tend not to be sympathetic toward excuses (I used them all as an undergrad and got burned more often than not). Early work is encouraged. Please use the Writing Center on campus if you fear your written skills are not up to par. Also, it is recommended you meet with me to discuss your topic and your rough outline. I need to know your argument and which points you will highlight to prove your point. Don’t be shy with me. I am approachable and informal and was once an undergrad myself.

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 the readings 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 credit 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 assignment. I have the sole discretion in determining whether or not an absence is excused. University functions approved by the administration counts. 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— Introduction to 20th Century Europe

Aug 28: Introduction to the course

Aug 30: Europe in the late 19th Century

Reading: Gilbert and Large, Chapter 1 (hereafter referred to as “text”); and
Derfler and Kollander, Chapter 1 (hereafter referred to as “Conflict”)

Your reading assignments will be on D2L for this first week.

Week 2— Imperialism and the Alliance System: Running towards War

Sept 4: Labor Day, no class

Sept 6: Politics and Society to 1914

Reading: Text, Chapter 2

Week 3—The First World War: Modernity and Industrialized Murder

Sept 11: The Origins of the First World War

Reading: Conflict, Chapter 2

You MUST have approval for book(s) for review by 5pm today.

Sept 13: World War I in Europe

Reading: Text, Chapter 3

Conflict, Chapter 3

Week 4— The Unjust Peace and Stabilizing Europe

Sept 18: Versailles and the Paris peace treaties

Reading: Text, Chapter 4

You MUST have your research paper topic approved by 5pm.

Sept 20: Stabilizing Europe and Destabilizing Russia

Reading: Text, Chapter 5

Conflict, Chapter 4

Week 5— Collapse of the European Economies and the Rise of Nazism

Sept 25: The Great Depression

Reading: Text, 229-243

Hans Raupach, "The Impact of the Great Depression on Eastern Europe,"
Journal of Contemporary History 4 (4) (1969), 75-86. JSTOR

Sept 27: The Rise of the Nazi Party

Reading: Text, 243-271

Conflict, Chapter 5

Week 6— The 1930s and the "Inevitable" Road to War

Oct 2: The 1930s and Appeasement

Reading: Text, 272-285

Conflict, Chapter 6

Oct 4: The Spanish Civil War and the Soviet Union

Reading: Text, 285-305

John McCannon, "Soviet Intervention in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39:
A Reexamination," *Russian History* 22 (2) (1995), 154-180.**Week 7**— World War II: Europe's Demise

Oct 9: The World at War ... Again

Reading: Text, Chapter 8

Conflict, Chapter 7

Exam 1 to be handed out at beginning of class

Oct 11: The Holocaust and Atrocities

Reading: Conflict, Chapter 8

Robert Melson, "Paradigms of Genocide: The Holocaust, the Armenian
Genocide, and Contemporary Mass Destructions," *The Annals of
the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (548)
(1996), 156-168.**Week 8**— The Struggle of Ideologies and the Beginning of the Bloc System

Oct 16: From Cooperation to Conflict

Reading: Text, Chapter 9

Exam 1 DUE at beginning of class

Oct 18: Cold War in the Early Years

Reading: Conflict 9

Stephen Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,"
International Security 9 (4) (1985), 3-43.

Week 9— The 1950s: Crises, the Spread of the Cold War, Decolonization

Oct 23: European Economic Recovery and Stagnation in Eastern Europe

Reading: Text, Chapter 10

Oct 25: Decolonization and the End of Empires

Reading: Conflict, Chapter 10

Review due! Thursday at beginning of class

Week 10— Full Economic Recovery and de-Stalinization in the USSR and Eastern Europe

Oct 30: Europe in the Early and Modern 1960s

Reading: Text, 407-427

Peter Alt and Max Schneider, "West Germany's 'Economic Miracle',"
Science and Society 26 (1) (1962), 46-57

Nov 1: The de-Stalinization of the USSR and Eastern Europe

Reading: Text, 427-436

H. Gordon Skilling, "Background to the Study of Opposition in
Communist Eastern Europe," *Government and Opposition* 3 (3)
(1968), 294-324

Week 11— Years of Disillusionment and the Challenge to Authority: 1967-73

Nov 6: The Youth in ("Unthinking") Revolt

Reading: Text, Chapter 12

Nov 8: The Eastern European Revolts: 1968

Reading: Jeremi Suri, "The Promise and Failure of 'Developed Socialism': The
Soviet 'Thaw' and the Crucible of the Prague Spring, 1964-1972,"
Contemporary European History 15 (2) (2006), 133-158.

Week 12— 1970s Stagflation and the renewed search for European Unity

Nov 13: Détente and Economic Stagnation

Reading: Text, Chapter 13

Nov 15: The 1980s and Building of the European Union

Reading: Text, Chapter 14

Conflict, Chapter 11

Polished draft of final paper due at beginning of class.

Week 13— The Collapse of Communism and Reemergence of Political Nationalism

Nov 20: The Inevitable Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and USSR

Reading: Text, Chapter 15

Conflict, 12

Week 14— Collapse, Part II and the EU

Nov 27: What does Eastern Europe now mean?

Reading: Alan Dingsdale, “Redefining ‘Eastern Europe’: A New Regional

Geography of post-Socialist Europe?” *Geography* 84 (3) (1999), 204-221.

Nov 29: The Final Decade: Europe in the 1990s

Reading: Text, Chapter 16

Exam 2 to be distributed**Week 15**—Balkan wars and Persistence of Nationalism

Dec 4: The Fall of Yugoslavia and the Triumph of Nationalism

Reading: Conflict, Chapter 13

Dec 6: TBA

Final Paper due at beginning of class

Final Exam is due during Finals’ Week.

Graduate addendum

For the graduate students enrolled in the course: you are responsible for all the above assignments, including the take home exams. Below are the additional assignments you must meet to successfully complete this course.

As for the book review: This will be a comparative book review in which you select 2 books and do a comparative analysis of the two. You will evaluate which of the two books is a better historical work. To compare apples to apples, you should pick two books that cover roughly the same topic in 20th century history. You may also make this a historiographic comparison in which the authors’ arguments, styles of writing, sources, etc. are compared/contrasted. The word limit on this exercise is between 1500 and 1800 words.

As for the final research paper: I am expecting graduate level research and writing on this paper. The word limit on this exercise is between 4500 and 5400 words. As with the undergraduates, you will meet with me on book review selections and on the topic of your paper. I expect regular verbal reports on your research and writing progress throughout the semester.