

RHODES COLLEGE
FALL 2011
THE AGE OF EXTREMES:
EUROPEAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
HIST 217

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Office: Buckman Hall 211

Office Hours: MW 10:30-12 Noon and by appointment

Class Days: MWF 9:00 AM

Classroom: Palmer Hall 207

Course Description

By focusing on the experiences of ordinary people and significant shifts in their values, we will study how Europe evolved through what one historian has called an “age of extremes” in the twentieth century. Central issues will include the experience and legacies of “total war,” daily life under Nazi rule and in the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, the psychological impact of the Great Depression, and the various ways in which people struggled to redefine themselves as Europe faded from a position of world dominance.

The course is designed to encourage the development of critical thinking, writing, and discussion skills. To do this, we are not going to focus on the “*what*” question—what happened? — which makes for a dull litany of “one thing after another.” Rather our attention will be directed towards the “*so what*” question—*how* and *why* changes occurred and the significance these changes hold for us. Our time will be spent analyzing the past, constructing thoughtful arguments, and debating interpretations, not rote memorization. So time to toss those high school history notes and put away those boring textbooks.

Course Organization

The course meets MWF at 9:00 AM. Most Fridays we will discuss the readings and key ideas covered that week in lecture. You will notice that each week has a corresponding reading assignment. I expect that you will have done the readings before coming to class on Friday. You are urged to contact me at any time with any question or problem concerning any aspect of course.

Course Requirements

Grades in the course will be based on several components: vigorous participation in the discussions; two short papers; two film analyses; and lastly a midterm and a final exam.

Participation (20% of final grade)

The success of the class depends on your active participation, which also happens to make up a big part of your grade. I expect you to come to every class prepared, having done the assigned reading and eager to participate in the discussion. Unexcused absences will negatively impact your final grade.

Two Papers (10% and 15% of final grade)

Paper topics are drawn from the assigned readings and require no additional research. The paper assignments are intended to encourage your close and critical reading of the course readings, as well as to give you practice in developing an effective written argument. The papers must be 1000 words in length and double spaced. In no event should your essay be longer than 1250 words; I look for cogency, not length. Guidelines for the papers will be distributed in class and posted on moodle. The papers are due **Monday, September 26** and **Monday, November 14**.

I will be delighted to discuss your paper with you and to read and comment on your rough draft or outline. Late papers will be penalized. Extensions will be granted only in dire—and documented—emergencies. Requests for extensions must be made in writing at least 24 hours before the due date.

Film Analyses (20% of final grade)

Movies have done much to shape our perceptions of the past. Most people today have seen far more historical information through visual media than they have ever read. During the course of the semester, we will watch and discuss several films in conjunction with our readings. You will write a 700-word analysis of two of the films listed on the syllabus, following the guidelines posted on moodle. The analysis is due on the Friday that we discuss the film.

Exams (15% and 20% of final grade)

The exams will test your mastery of the course material. You will be responsible for all material covered in the lectures, discussions, and assigned readings. The exams will be a combination of identifications, short answers, and essay questions. A review sheet will be available on moodle. The midterm exam will be held on **Monday, Oct 10** and the final exam on **Tuesday, Dec 13**.

The final grade for the class will be established as follows:

Grading Scale:

Participation	20%	A Outstanding
Papers	25%	B Above Average/Very Good
Film Analyses	20%	C Average/Good
Midterm Exam	15%	D Below Average/Poor
Final Exam	20%	F Fail

A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72) and so on. Any number below 60 will be marked as an F

***NOTE:** All assignments must be completed to pass the course. Failure to complete any of the course requirements by **Tuesday, December 13** may result in a final course grade of F.

Required Texts

Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog*

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way for the Gas Ladies and Gentlement*

Slavenka Drakulic, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*

Mehdi Charef, *Tea in the Harem*

All of these titles are on sale at the bookstore and on reserve in the library. You can also find all these books used (read: much cheaper) at online bookstores, including addall.com, alibris.com, amazon.com, and half.com. You are welcome to read these books in any condition, edition, or language.

Course Policies – read these all carefully

Special Needs and Accommodations: I am strongly committed to accommodating students with disabilities, and ask your cooperation in making sure that I am aware of any such accommodation you might need. All accommodation requests are the responsibility of the student. For more information, please contact Student Disability Services (SDS) to alert them of any needs you may have.

Food, Drink, Tobacco: Drink is permitted in my classroom, but food and tobacco products of all kinds are prohibited.

Moodle: All students in the class are automatically registered for this course on moodle. When you log on to moodle and access the site for this course, you will find all course materials, including this syllabus, readings, and guidelines for assignments.

Email: All email correspondence will be sent to your Rhodes email account. It is your responsibility to check this account regularly. Emails are not text messages. When writing me, I expect your emails to be professional.

Cell phones, Blackberries, and other such devices: Please turn them off!

Laptops: The use of laptop computers or other screen-based devices is not permitted during our discussions. If you have a medical reason for needing to use a laptop or other screen-based device, please let me know.

Sleeping in class is not permitted. Those who fall asleep will be subject to a rude awakening.

Honor Code: I believe in the College's standards of academic honesty, and I enforce them vigorously and to the letter. Be aware of those standards, and observe them. Plagiarism and cheating are easy to detect; so are papers pulled off the internet. If I suspect that you have cheated or plagiarized another's work, I will discuss this matter with you. If I am not satisfied, I will report your case to the Honor Council for due process. I always recommend failure for the course when I submit a file. The bottom line is this: do your own work. You are spending your time and money to be here and learn. Don't waste either by plagiarizing or cheating.

A Word on Grading:

Papers will be evaluated on four main criteria: thesis, organization, evidence, and style. In general, a paper that does a very good job in each category is a 'B'. A paper that almost does is a 'B-', and a paper that performs well in each category and goes beyond in one category is a 'B+'. A paper that is satisfactory but weak in one or two categories is a 'C'. A 'D' paper is weak in three or more categories, or omits one criterion completely. Papers without notes crediting sources and location quotations, paraphrases, and allusions will receive, at best, a grade of 'D'. An 'A' range paper performs outstandingly well in each category, and achieves something extraordinary in two or more categories.

Remember that a grade does not reflect process (it does not measure whether you worked hard) and it certainly does not reflect a value judgment about you as a person. A grade constitutes an evaluation of the quality and analytical rigor of the thesis, organization, evidence, and style of a single piece of work.

I will be delighted to discuss your papers with you. Be advised however that grades, once assigned, are not subject to change. I also will not communicate grades over email or the telephone. The most important part of the grading process is not the grade, but the comments you will find on your papers when you pick them up.

I do not give "I" (incomplete) grades. Late work, except in documented cases of bereavement, major injury, or catastrophic illness, will suffer a substantial and progressive reduction in grade. Therefore, please plan ahead and do your work on time.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS
(subject to change)

Week	Day	Date	Lectures, Discussions, Readings, and Papers
WEEK 1	Wed	Aug 24	Introduction
	Fri	Aug 26	Fin de Siècle Europe
WEEK 2	Mon	Aug 29	The Long Fuse
	Wed	Aug 31	The Guns of August
	Fri	Sept 2	The Face of Battle Readings: War poetry (handout)
WEEK 3	Mon	Sept 5	No Class: Labor Day
	Wed	Sept 7	Behind the Lines
	Fri	Sept 9	Discussion: Troglodytes and Trenches Films: <i>The Grand Illusion; Paths of Glory; Joyeux Noël</i> Readings: Remarque (read all)
WEEK 4	Mon	Sept 12	The Days that Shook the World
	Wed	Sept 14	A Revolution Betrayed?
	Fri	Sept 16	Discussion: Russians and their Revolution Film: <i>Burnt by the Sun</i> Readings: Bulgakov (read all) Revolutionary Posters (browse)
WEEK 5	Mon	Sept 19	The Edges of Empires: Ireland and Finland
	Wed	Sept 21	Discussion: The Use and Abuse of History
	Fri	Sept 23	Class Cancelled Film: <i>Wind that Shakes the Barely</i> Readings: Newspaper reviews (moodle)
WEEK 6	Mon	Sept 26	A Carthaginian Peace FIRST PAPER DUE
	Wed	Sept 28	Stability and Insecurity
	Fri	Sept 30	Discussion: What Women Want Readings: Woolf (read all) Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Suffrage and Class Struggle
WEEK 7	Mon	Oct 3	Evil Doctors and Holy Mountains
	Wed	Oct 5	The Politics of Despair
	Fri	Oct 7	Discussion: Civilization and Psychosis Film: Any Weimar film (see list on moodle) Readings: Freud (read all)
WEEK 8	Mon	Oct 10	MIDTERM EXAM
	Wed	Oct 12	The Spanish Cockpit
	Fri	Oct 14	Total War Film: <i>Pan's Labyrinth</i> Readings: Spanish Civil War Posters (browse)

Fall Recess Oct 14-18

WEEK 9	Mon	Oct 17	Fall Break	
	Wed	Oct 19	Circles of Hell	
	Fri	Oct 21	Discussion: The Drowned and the Saved	
			Films: <i>The Pianist; Au Revoir Les Enfants; Divided We Fall</i>	
			Readings: Borowski (read all)	
WEEK 10	Mon	Oct 24	The Zero Hour?	
	Wed	Oct 26	Integration and Repression	
	Fri	Oct 28	Discussion: East-West Relations	
			Film: <i>The Spy Who Came in from the Cold</i>	
WEEK 11	Mon	Oct 31	The End of Empires	
	Wed	Nov 2	The Cold War on the Periphery	
	Fri	Nov 4	Discussion: Violence and Revolution	
			Film: <i>The Battle of Algiers</i>	
			Readings: Franz Fanon, <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> (selections)	
WEEK 12	Mon	Nov 7	The God that Failed: Intellectuals and Communism	
	Wed	Nov 9	Punk Rock Girls	
	Fri	Nov 11	Discussion: Challenging Managed Society	
			Film: <i>Z</i>	
			Readings: Václav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless" (1978)	
WEEK 13	Mon	Nov 14	Stagnation Eurosclerosis	SECOND PAPER DUE
	Wed	Nov 16	Crumbling of the Soviet Empire	
	Fri	Nov 18	Discussion: Surviving Communism	
			Readings: Drakulic (read all)	
WEEK 14	Mon	Nov 21	Discussion: Nostalgia and Memory	
	Wed	Nov 23	Thanksgiving break	
	Fri	Nov 25	Thanksgiving break	
			Film: <i>Good Bye Lenin</i> (2003)	
WEEK 15	Mon	Nov 28	New Nationalism in Europe	
	Wed	Nov 30	Is Europe Democratic?	
	Fri	Dec 2	Discussion: Immigration and Race	
			Films: <i>The Spanish Apartment; No Man's Land</i>	
			Readings: Charef (read all)	
WEEK 16	Mon	Dec 5	Europe at the Crossroads	
	Wed	Dec 7	Review	

FINAL EXAM
Tuesday
December 13
1:00 PM