

History 100: Europe under the Great Dictators
Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00-2:20
Fall 2017

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Mears 316 (X3107)

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Office hours: MW, 2:00-3:00
Tues/Thurs. 2:30-
3:30, or by appt.

Course description

Like all sections of History 100: The Introduction to Historical Inquiry, this class has two main goals: to provide an introduction to the discipline of history (discussing how historians interpret the past and how history differs from other academic disciplines) and then to illustrate how the historical craft works through the in-depth study of a specific historical topic. The class will therefore work on two different levels, helping students understand both a series of historical events and the methods used by scholars to analyze and interpret those events.

In particular, this class will focus on the social and political history of two of the most infamous dictatorships in history—Hitler’s Germany and Stalin’s USSR. It will examine how each dictatorship arose, how each leader sought to control and reshape his country’s society, and how citizens lived their everyday lives in the face of social upheaval and mass terror. It will also delve into a series of more particular themes from Soviet and Nazi history, including the personality cults of Hitler and Stalin, the role of the secret police in each country, the origins of the USSR’s Great Purges of the 1930s, and the developments that led to the Holocaust. Overall, this class will have two main goals: to look at the functioning of each regime in all its complexity (comparing historians’ interpretation of Hitler and Stalin to the popular, common-sense view of each dictatorship) and to compare and contrast Nazi Germany and Stalin’s USSR. Were these two regimes similar in their motivations and their methodology, or were they fundamentally different in how they interacted with the societies they sought to control?

Course readings

The following books are on reserve at Burling Library and are available for purchase at the Grinnell College Bookstore:

John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times*

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Robert Moeller, ed., *The Nazi State and German Society: A Brief History with Documents*

Other readings (marked “[Pioneerweb]” below) will be available on the course’s Blackboard site.

Learning Goals

This course has three broad objectives: to help students to understand the way historians analyze the past, to enable students to express their ideas more effectively, and to help them understand the similarities and differences between the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships. More specifically:

Historical Analysis Goals

By the end of the course, students will have refined their ability to:

- interpret a primary source (historical document) by analyzing its structure, audience, goals, and biases;
- identify and critique the argument of a secondary source (a book or article by a present-day historian), while situating that source within a larger historical debate or literature.
- evaluate and synthesize the ideas in a body of historical writings;
- explain the manner in which historical analysis of the past often differs from analyses by other types of scholars.

Writing and Discussion Goals

By the end of the semester, students will have improved their ability to:

- craft a clear, specific, and nuanced thesis statement in response to a historical question;
- construct a well-organized, evidence-rich, and cohesive paper in defense of a central argument.
- present their ideas orally in class, using evidence to support their ideas or to add nuance to the larger discussion.

European History Goals

By the end of the semester, students who have completed this course will be able to:

- compare and contrast the rise of the Nazis and the Bolsheviks and the ways that these two regimes sought to transform their societies;
- compare and contrast the ways that Hitler and Stalin ruled their respective countries and exercised political power.

Keep these goals in mind throughout the semester. Class discussions will be based on the analysis of primary sources and secondary sources; writing assignments will be graded based on your ability to develop a nuanced thesis and to defend that thesis in a well-organized paper.

Assignments and grading

Your grade in this class will be based on the following requirements. Note that you must hand in every written assignment in order to pass the class, and that if your grades improve steadily over the course of the semester, I will take that into consideration in deciding your final grade:

Film analysis (10%). A 2-page analysis of the film *A Midwife's Tale*, due on Monday, September 4, at 10 PM by email. A revised version of this paper will then be due on Friday, September 15.

Document analysis (15%). A 3-page analysis of Hitler's writings, due at 5:00 PM on Friday, October 6, by email.

Oral history analysis (20%). A 5-page analysis of the oral history interviews of the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System (available online), which looks at life under Stalin; this paper will be due at 5:00 PM on Sunday, November 5.

Annotated bibliography with introduction (30%). Your final assignment of the semester will be to write a research guide to a topic that interests you from Stalinist or Nazi history, consisting of a 3-page overview of your topic and a 6-to-8 page list of sources pertaining to that topic (presented in proper bibliographic formatting, with an annotation analyzing each source.) You will need to submit a brief proposal and a draft of your bibliography; you will also have a few short exercises to complete in the weeks ahead of the due date. The final version will be due at 5:00 PM on Thursday, December 14.

Class participation (25%). The most important requirement for this course is active and informed participation in classroom discussions: since this is not primarily a lecture course, the course's success depends on the involvement of all its members. In general, I'll be looking for evidence that you've done the reading, that you're thinking about the themes and issues covered by the class, and that you're making a good-faith effort to improve the classroom experience for everyone enrolled in the course. Remember that there are many ways to make a useful contribution:

- answering one of my questions or bringing up a detail from the readings;
- finding evidence for your ideas (or a classmate's) by directly quoting a course text or pointing to a specific detail (with a reference) from the reading;
- making connections between the day's readings and earlier discussions;
- responding directly to your classmates;
- synthesizing comments made by your classmates (or the professor);
- asking informed questions of the class, the professor, or both;
- making comments that not only summarize the reading, but analyze it.

Over the course of the semester, I'll encourage everyone to participate in different ways, both to recall details, anecdotes, and ideas from the readings and to analyze our course materials in light of the themes of the course and the results of our discussions. Keep in mind that you should always bring the day's reading with you to class (along with any notes you've taken) and that the best classroom participants will make remarks that are firmly grounded in the readings.

I do not have an ironclad rule about how often each student needs to speak in class: you should generally average at least 2 or 3 comments or questions per class period, but I understand that some of you will always be more reserved than others and that everyone has days when they are less likely to participate. My main advice, then, is that you come speak to me if you're concerned

about your level of participation or want advice on how to get more involved in class, and that you remember that the thoughtfulness of your classroom comments is more important than the frequency with which you speak. I will also try to provide written feedback on your participation each time I hand back a paper.

A final note: Remember that class participation depends on attendance. I'll be keeping track of attendance throughout the semester; if you miss class once or twice, that won't affect your performance in the class, but if you have more than two unexcused absences, your participation grade will go down. If you have four or more unexcused absences, I reserve the right to give you a participation grade of F or zero, which would have a significant effect on your total grade. In the event that you do miss class, you should always check in with a classmate about what you missed, and you should talk to me as necessary about the class session in question.

Extension policy

Each student in the class can have one (and only one) 48-hour extension on a writing assignment over the course of the semester. To claim this extension, send me a brief email asking for extra time before the assignment's deadline. I will grant this extension automatically, so there is no need for you to explain why you need more time. Keep in mind, however, that once you've been given an extension on an assignment, I will not give you an extension on another except in the case of a documented emergency. Note, too, that you can have one extension of up to 48 hours; you cannot break your extension into two 24-hour extensions, for example. In the absence of an extension, late assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade per day.

Paper revision policy

This class is a writing-intensive course designed not only to teach students about history, but to help them develop their writing skills. Over the course of the semester, then, you will have two opportunities to revise a paper that you've already handed in and to resubmit it for re-grading. Every student in the class will be required to hand in a revised version of the first assignment (the film review due on September 4); after fall break, students will have the option to hand in a revised version of one of their next two papers (the document analysis or the oral history analysis). If you choose to exercise this option, your final grade for the assignment will be the average of your original grade and the grade for your revised paper. (In other words, if you earn a B- on the first version of a paper and a B+ on the rewrite, you'll earn a final grade of B.)

I require two things of students who want to resubmit a paper:

- First, come speak to me early on in the revision process to discuss how you plan to respond to my feedback on the first version of your paper. (Please come to this meeting with a tentative plan for your revisions and a marked-up version of your original paper.
- Second, if I suggested in my comments on the first version of your paper that you go to the Writing Lab, please do so before handing in your revised paper.

Office hours

I will hold drop-in office hours in Mears 316 throughout the semester, from 2:00 to 3:00 on

Mondays and Wednesdays and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 to 3:30. There is no need for an appointment during these times; you are of course welcome to email me to arrange another time to meet if these hours do not work for you. I encourage students to drop by my office frequently, and I'm always happy to talk to you either about the class itself or about other issues related to history or your Grinnell education.

Academic accommodations

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation to the Coordinator for Student Disability Resources, John Hirschman, located on the 3rd floor of the Rosenfield Center and discuss your needs with him. Students should then notify me within the first few days of classes so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course and coordinate your accommodations.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

Unit One: The Craft of History

Thursday, August 24: Course Introduction

Tuesday, August 29: What is History?

Reading: John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 1–79

Assignment: email me 3 important quotations from Arnold that you feel capture his approach to history (deadline: Monday at 10 PM)

Thursday, August 31: Was the Past a Foreign Country?

Reading: Robert Darnton, “Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue St. Severin” [Pioneerweb]
Arnold, pp. 80-109

Monday, September 4: **film analysis is due at 10 PM by email**

Tuesday, September 5: A Midwife’s Tale

Viewing: watch the film *A Midwife’s Tale*, available through streaming at the following URL: <https://grinnell.kanopystreaming.com/video/american-experience-midwife-s-tale> (do this early enough to have time to write your paper!)

Reading: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
<http://dohistory.org> (as needed); Arnold, pp. 110-125

Unit Two: Marxism, The Russian Revolution, and Stalin’s Rise

Thursday, September 7: Communism Defined

Reading: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, parts I and II

introduction by John Toews, pp. 1-22, 50-53

Tuesday, September 12: Revolution!

Reading: Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, part III
Frederick Engels, draft of a Communist confession of faith (pp. 99-104)
“Marx and the Lessons of Revolution II” (pp. 146-149)
Frederick Engels, “Speech at Karl Marx’s Funeral” (pp. 164-165)
introduction by Toews, pp. 53-59

Thursday, September 14: Red October

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 1-67

Friday, September 15: **revised film analysis is due by email**

Tuesday, September 19: Stalin and His Revolution

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 120-172

Unit Three: The Rise of the Nazis

Thursday, September 21: Hitler and his Ideology

Reading: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Adolf Hitler, “On the Use of Mass Meetings” (*Mein Kampf*) [Moeller, 38-40]
Adolf Hitler’s manifesto [Moeller, 42-45]
Albert Speer, “On Joining the Nazi Movement” [Moeller, 45-47]

Tuesday, September 26: Hitler and the Nazis: An Overview

Reading: Adolf Hitler, “On His Hopes for Germany in 1914” [Moeller, 29-31]
Magnus Hirschfeld, “Sexual Catastrophes” [Moeller, 31-33]
Elsa Herrmann, “This is the New Woman” [Moeller, 33-35]
Adolf Hitler, “Anti-Semitic Speech” [Moeller, 35-38]
Elsbeth Zander, “Tasks Facing the German Woman” [Moeller, 40-42]
Skim: introduction to Moeller (pp. 1-26)

Thursday, September 28: The Rise of the Nazis

Reading: Richard Bessel, *Nazism and War*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Unit Four: Dictatorships at Work

Tuesday, October 3: How did Stalin’s Dictatorship Work?

Reading: Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: In the Court of the Red Tsar*, excerpts
[Pioneerweb]
Oleg Khlevniuk, “Stalin as Dictator” [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, October 5: How did Hitler’s Dictatorship Work?

Reading: Ian Kershaw, “Working Toward the Führer” [Pioneerweb]
Jeremy Noakes, “Hitler and the Nazi state: leadership, hierarchy, and power”
[Pioneerweb]

Friday, October 6: **document analysis is due by 5:00 PM**

Tuesday, October 10: Stalin’s Personality Cult

Reading: documents on the cult (5 pages) [Pioneerweb]
Sarah Davies, “Stalin and the making of the leader cult in the 1930s”
[Pioneerweb]
Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, October 12: Hitler’s Personality Cult

Reading: Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Friday, October 13: **brief bibliography proposal is due by noon (by email)**

FALL BREAK: OCTOBER 16 TO OCTOBER 22

Unit Five: Everyday Life under Stalin

Tuesday, October 24: Life under Stalin

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 1-66

Thursday, October 26: The Transformation of Everyday Society in the 1930s

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 67-114
begin looking at the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System
David Brandenberger’s guide to the Harvard Project [Pioneerweb]

Tuesday, October 31: Political Disputes and Family Problems in Stalin’s USSR

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 115-163
Assignment: **email me three more sources for your bibliography (by Monday at 10)**

- Thursday, November 2: Summing up Stalinist Everyday Life
- Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 164-190, 218-229
- Sunday, November 5: **oral history analysis is due at 5:00 (by email)**
- Unit Six: Nazi and Stalinist Terror**
- Tuesday, November 7: Everyday Life and Resistance in Nazi Germany
- Reading: Moeller documents on everyday life, resistance, and the Holocaust
(pp. 53–56, 61–77, 84-85, 88-95, 160-173) [Pioneerweb]
- Thursday, November 9: **NO CLASS**
- Tuesday, November 14: The Order Police in Poland
- Reading: Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*, pp. 1-77
- Thursday, November 16: Police Officers and the Holocaust
- Reading: Browning, pp. 78-158
- Sunday, November 19: **send me at least 15 good sources for your bibliography, along with one annotation and a paragraph with a tentative thesis**
- Tuesday, November 21: Ordinary Men?
- Reading: Browning, pp. 159-224
- Tuesday, November 28: The Purges
- Reading: Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, pp. 282–289 [Pioneerweb]
Weinberg and Bernstein, *Revolutionary Russia*, ch. 8 [Pioneerweb]
Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 190-217
- Thursday, November 30: The Nature of the GULAG
- Reading: Steven Barnes, *Death and Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of Soviet Society*, pp. 1-78 [Pioneerweb]
- Saturday, December 3: **email me a complete list of sources for your bibliography project, with 5 annotations and a paragraph on your thesis**
- Tuesday, December 5: A Woman in the GULAG

Reading: Olga Adamova-Sliozberg, “My Journey,” excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, December 7: Experiences of the Holocaust

Reading: Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, December 14: final version of annotated bibliography is due by email at 5:00