

This course is designed to provide an introduction to some of the principal problems of European and German history in the modern era, particularly in the twentieth century. The introduction represents more than the transmission of factual knowledge; it is designed as well to present major historiographical issues, to illustrate divergent ways in which historians have attempted to grapple with them, and to trace the contours of some basic historical methodologies. We will be reading (among other things) from social history, economic history, political history, biography, Jewish history, and the history of history. One of the main themes that will occupy us will be the affinities and differences between all these sorts of history, on the one hand, and fiction on the other.

The course will be based on discussions of a set of readings, which will be drawn from books that await your purchase in the university bookstore, although they are available—probably at a better price—elsewhere online. The books that I wish you to acquire are the following:

Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*
David Blackbourne and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History*
Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*
Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*
R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini*
Charles Kindleberger, *The World in Depression*
Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*
Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*
Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*
Robert Moeller, *War Stories*
Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*
Helmut Smith, *The Continuities of German History*

The selections from Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, will be available on Blackboard.

Your responsibilities in the course will include spirited participation in the class discussions, the leading of one of these discussions, the preparation of short (2 pages, double-spaced) reviews of any three (3) of the books (see attached), and a term paper, which will fall due on Wednesday, December 12. The term paper will be an exercise in historiography; it will be based on the principle that the writing of history is itself a historical exercise. Accordingly, in this paper, on which I shall impose a limit of fifteen pages, you will be invited to explore a historical problem at more length than we can devote to it in class. The emphasis in the paper will fall on the historical evolution of historical views about the problem that you have chosen. The range of possible topics is as

broad as the course itself. Papers in the past have covered the Anglo-German naval race before 1914, Wilhelm Pieck, the European Defense Community, neutrality in the Second World War, the Irish Easter Rebellion, and Finland's "Winter War." Forty percent of the final grade will rest on this term paper, ten percent on the short reviews, and fifty percent on oral work in class.

I would like to meet with each of you during the next several weeks to discuss your plans. My office hours this semester will be:

Tuesdays, 4:15 – 5:15
 Wednesdays, 2:00 - 4:00
 and by appointment
 504 ICC
 7-6701
chickerr@georgetown.edu

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code. I will assume that, in registering for this course, you have read the honor code material located at www.georgetown.edu/honor. Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge.

Schedule of Assignments

1. (9 September). Introduction to the Course
2. (16 September). A Story of European History
 Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, pp. pp. 1-198, 225-86, 372-432, 461-99, 558-85.
3. (23 September). German Master Narratives, I
 Blackbourn and Eley, *Peculiarities of German History*
4. (30 September). The First World War
 Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*
5. (7 October). The Russian Revolution
 Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*
6. (14 October). Italian Fascism
 Bosworth, *Mussolini*, 1-286

7. (21 October). The Depression
Kindleberger, *The World in Depression*
 8. (28 October). National Socialism
Evans, *Third Reich in Power*, pp. 2-19, 81-141, 261-91, 351-78, 435-506
 9. (4 November). The Jews
Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*
 10. (11 November). The Holocaust
Browning, *Ordinary Men*
Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, pp. 239-80 (on Blackboard)
 11. (18 November). Reconstruction
Moeller, *War Stories*
 12. (2 December). The New Europe
Judt, *Postwar*, pp. 1-40, 63-99, 226-78, 324-90, 484-504, 585-636, 803-33.
 13. (9 December). German Master Narratives, II
Smith, *The Continuities of German History*
- 11 December: Papers Due

Some Guidelines for Short Reviews

These short essays are “think-pieces.” Their object is to encourage you to think about the narrative structure of the books that we read and the ways in which an author's narrative assumptions structure the book and shape its argument. The basic question in each case will be “what kind of a story is this?” This question in turn suggests a number of others. What is the plot structure of the book? Does it “end well”? Who (or what) are the main characters? Does the author's argument betray a “philosophy of history”—assumptions about the lawfulness, regularity, or motive forces of historical development? What kinds of factors—ideas, moral forces, material conditions, institutions, impulses—govern the actions of the main characters? What does the author's use of metaphors and other tropes betray about the assumptions that underlie the book? And how does the book compare in these respects to other texts that we have read in the class?