

From War to War – Europe during the first half of the 20th Century

15304.0052 – Winter Semester 2018/19

Lecturer: Dr. Johannes Müller, Mon – 10-11:30 – R. 0.01 (Building 326)

European History during the 20th Century has been described as an “Age of Extremes” (Eric Hobsbawm), as a period in which the “Dark Continent” (Mark Mazower) went “to Hell and Back” (Ian Kershaw) and then had to be rebuilt “Out of Ashes” (Konrad Jarausch). This is all the more surprising as the 19th Century seemed to forebode an age of culminating progress, characterised by scientific triumphs, civilizing achievements, accelerated discoveries and technological solutions for all problems and needs of mankind. Yet, the 20th century saw the most barbaric setback Europe had experienced for ages: Two world-wars, slaughter and repression of entire people and populations, excesses of intolerance, hate and violence, dictatorship, tyranny and the spectre of nuclear apocalypse.

Examining the first half of the 20th century is examining how Europe arrived at the edge of self-destruction. It also means to identify the lessons to be learnt by successive generations – as at least in part the second half of the century is reacting to and trying to avoid the errors of the first half.

Historiography has just started to historicize the last century as a whole. Hence, we will also deal with competing interpretations which try to integrate the first half of the century into a comprehensive view of the entire epoch.

Language of Sessions: English

Papers may be written in English, German, French, Italian and Spanish

Oral exams, where applicable, can be given in English, Italian and German.

Written Test, if applicable, in English only.

Students within the **Cologne Global Study Program** are expected to write a **term paper** (an essay of 4-5 pp. on a given subject) and to participate at the end-of-term exam.

All students are expected to write at least once **minutes** and to at least once **present/introduce one of the session subjects**.

All students are part of workgroups, who jointly prepare **weekly “ambassador reports”** on a given country/region during the period treated in the forthcoming session.

Given readings – announced at least one week in advance - **are obligatory for all participants** and may be subject of weekly **quizzes via Ilias** (max. 10 minutes “quickies”).

Recommended Readings

- Conan Fischer: Europe between Democracy and Dictatorship 1900-1945, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, 2010
- Robert Gerwarth: The Vanquished. Why the First World War Failed to End 1917-1923, Penguin, London, 2016
- Eric Hobsbawm: The Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991, M. Joseph, London, 1994
- Julian Jackson (ed.): Europe 1900-1945 (Short Oxford History of Europe), Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, 2002
- Harold James: Europe Reborn. A History 1914-2000, Longman, London, 2003
- Konrad Jarausch: Out of Ashes. A new History of Europe in the Twentieth Century, Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, 2015
- Ian Kershaw: To Hell And Back. Europe 1914-1949, London, Allan-Lane/Penguin, 2015
- Gordon Martel (ed.): A Companion to Europe 1900-1945, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, 2011
- Mark Mazower: Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century, London, Penguin, 1998

Course Overview

1. Introduction – 8.10.
2. Europe at the turn of the century – 15.10.
3. The coming of World War I – 22.10.
4. World War I: A seminal catastrophe ? – 29.10.
5. Revolutions – 5.11.
6. Poisoned peace – 12.11.
7. Democracy/Liberalism – 19.11.
8. Communism – 26.11.
9. Fascism – 3.12.
10. Capitalism: Boom and Depression – 10.12.
11. Rise of National socialism – 17.12.
12. Hitler as a European challenge – 7.1.
13. Total War, Total Destruction – 14.1.
14. Total Liberation, Total Reconstruction – 21.1.
15. The 20th Century in a nutshell: “short/long”, “extreme”, “dark” or “modern” 28.1.

Course Outline

1. – 8.10.

Introduction

- Formalities, Overview
- Europe – Reality, Identity and Legacy of a Continent

2. – 15.10.

Europe at the turn of the century

- A Europe of different speeds? Asynchrony and discontinuity among European States
- Empires and Colonies – European Imperialism

3. – 22.10.

The coming of World War I

- “Renversement des alliances” – European politics before World War I
- July Crisis
- The Generals View: Military strategy and the outbreak of World War I

4. – 29.10.

World War I: A seminal catastrophe ?

- WW I from a bird's eye perspective
- Internal frontlines

5. – 5.11.

Revolutions

- Russian Revolution
- German Revolution
- Austro-Hungarian Revolution
- Hidden Revolutions (social, political, economic, cultural, constitutional)

6. – 12.11.

Poisoned peace

- Versailles Peace Treaty: Victors and Defeated, Winners and Losers
- Wilsons 14 Points
- Redrawing maps and borders: Nationalising Europe
- Establishing a World Peace Order?

7. – 19.11.

Democracy/Liberalism

- Weimar - Paris - London
- The “Völkerbund” and international relations

8. – 26.11.

Communism

- The Russian Experience
- The Hungarian Experience
- Comintern: Internationalising socialist revolution

9. – 3.12.

Fascism

- The Original: Mussolini and Italy
- Authoritarianism and fascist movements as European phenomenon

10. – 10.12.

Capitalism: Boom and Depression

- Economy between the Wars
- The Role of Reparations
- The Great Depression

11. – 17.12.

Rise of National socialism

- A Revisionist Rebellion?
- “Gleichschaltung” (forcible coordination/political homogenization)
- Inclusion and Exclusion according to a “völkisch” ideology

12. – 7.1.

Hitler as an international challenge

- A revisionist agenda in international politics
- Appeasement into war
- Inspiration for and cooperation with neighbouring fascist movement (Italy, Spain, Portugal)

13. – 14.1.

Total War, Total Destruction

- European War – Continental War – Intercontinental War
- Holocaust

14. – 21.1.

Total Liberation, Total Reconstruction

- Freed by occupation: Europe in ashes
- Cooperation, Confrontation, Division

15. – 28.1.

Conclusions

- The 20th Century in a nutshell: “short”, “long”, “extreme” or “modern”?

EXAMS: Week 28.1.-1.2.2019