

**Kingsborough Community College
of the City University of New York**

SYLLABUS

History 36: Twentieth Century Europe

Prof. Abraham J. Edelheit

INTRODUCTION:

While historians have debated the alleged "shortness" of the twentieth century, in fact the century has been both tumultuous and event-filled. The rise of new ideologies, the creation of new technologies, and an increasing mass political system led to manifest changes in government, economics, and social organization. However, these changes were neither evenly distributed among the European powers nor were their dangers completely appreciated at the time. In particular, eugenic and apocalyptic ideologies took root in Central Europe that led to high minded efforts to completely recast society in a totalitarian mode. As a result, Europe was beset by considerable bloodletting over the course of two world wars and numerous political upheavals. Even after the major bloodletting ceased in 1945, repeated crises wracked a continent that was afflicted by a cold war and experienced new difficulties in finding its place in the new global community.

This course shall survey the key issues and leaders involved in the aforementioned developments in and around the major European countries (England, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia/USSR). Albeit indirectly, developments in America and the Third World will also be examined, especially as they relate to the rise of modern technology, the spread of nationalism, and the process of decolonization. Finally the course will bring students up to date, by analyzing efforts to create a "new order" in the aftermath of the Cold War's end, the rise of a hegemonic America, and the clash of civilizations since September 11, 2001.

Finally, an additional goal of the course is to facilitate development of students' research and writing skills. In particular, the course emphasizes clear and concise writing, purposeful reading, and the development of a critical ability to assess the value of varied documents from a wide range of sources. To this end, the course

requires two exams and a research paper dealing with any specific topic in the domain of the syllabus.

SPECIFIC LEARNING GOALS:

- To make students aware of recurring themes in contemporary European and World history
- To instill in students an appreciation of history through the study of changing social, political, and technological patterns
- To develop an understanding of the origins of the forces that have shaped the modern world
- To develop students' ability to analyze and communicate historical information effectively
- To enable students to recognize differing historical perspectives
- To aid students in obtaining deeper insight into the current global situation as it pertains to them individually and to all Americans collectively
- To expose students to current events happening in the larger world in which we live
- To develop students' confidence in handling issues they previously considered alien
- To develop students' ability to communicate both orally and in writing
- To introduce the students' to the wealth of information available in books, journals, and on the internet.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By taking this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the impact events in Europe since World War I have had on the rest of humanity
- Recognize the diverse political and economic forces that forge modern societies
- Understand the impact of change on daily life, for example through the so-called information revolution
- Understand the impact of industrialization on life in the twentieth century
- Improve their analytical and critical thinking and writing skills

ASSESSMENT:

Assessment strategies for this course include:

- Classroom discussion of major issues presented in reading assignments
- Critical analysis of primary and secondary sources in class
- Debates over conflicting interpretation of historical issues
- A research paper and related projects
- An oral presentation relating to the topics of students' research
- Written examination and quizzes

EVALUATION:

Assessment activities being completed, a student shows success through

- Completion of the research project, showing analytical and organizational skills
- Participation in class discussion of historical or current topics
- Passing scores on examinations and quizzes

CLASS HOURS/CREDITS:

Three (3) weekly class hours over a twelve week semester / Three (3) credits.

METHOD OF TEACHING:

A variety of methods are used, including (but not limited to): lecture, discussion, audio-visual presentations, oral report by students.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments from basic and advanced texts and primary source reader(s). A class presentation on the selected research topic and writing of a research paper. Midterm and final exams, as appropriate. The specific combination of assignments is left to the discretion of the instructor and tailored to the size of the class.

TEXTBOOKS:

Eric D. Brose. *A History of Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Leslie Derfler (ed.). *An Age of Conflict: Readings in Twentieth Century European History* (Harcourt Brace, 1990)

TOPICAL OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

I. Introduction

Brose, ch. 1

II. A World on the Brink, 1900-1914

Brose, ch. 2

Derfler, ch. 1-2

III. The Great War and Its Consequences

Brose, ch. 3

Derfler, ch. 3

IV. The Twenty Years Peace

Brose, ch. 4-5

V. The Rise of Totalitarianism

Derfler, ch. 4-5

VI. World War II

Brose, ch. 6

Derfler, ch. 6-8

VII. Hope Dashed: The First Cold War, 1945-1954

Brose, ch. 7-8

Derfler, ch. 9

VIII. The Abortive Thaw and Renewed Conflict, 1954-1974

- Brose, ch. 9
- Deffler, ch. 10

IX. Detente and the Second Cold War, 1975-1989

- Derfler, ch. 11

X: The Fall of Communism, 1989-1991

- Brose, ch. 10
- Derfler, ch. 13

XI: A New World Order?

- Brose, ch. 11
- Derfler, ch. 12

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY:**I. General and Reference**

- Peter Baehr and Melvin Richter (eds.). *Dictatorship in Theory and Practice*
- Chris Cook and John Stevenson (comps.). *The Routledge Companion to World History since 1914*
- Gordon A. Craig. *Germany 1866-1945*
- Norman Davies. *Europe: A History*
- Elizabeth Devine, et al (eds.). *Thinkers of the Twentieth Century: A Biographical, Bibliographical, and Critical Dictionary*
- Abraham J. Edelheit and Hershel Edelheit (eds.). *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union: A Selected Bibliography of Sources in English*
- Europa Publications. *The Europa World Yearbook*
- Martin Gilbert. *History of the Twentieth Century*. Concise edition.
- Paul L. Horecky (ed.). *Russia and the Soviet Union: A Bibliographic Guide to Western-Language Publications*
- Hugh Seton-Watson. *The Russian Empire, 1801-1917*
- Roland N. Stromberg. *Europe in the Twentieth Century*. Fourth edition.
- A. J. P. Taylor. *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1845-1918*
- James Wilkinson and H. Stuart Hughes. *Contemporary Europe: A History*. Ninth edition.