History 303  Modern Europe: The Twentieth Century

MWF 12:00-12:50
McKenzie 129

Course description: Politically, the twentieth century in Europe was a time of dramatic contrasts. In the turbulent first half of the century, Europeans unleashed two horrifyingly lethal wars; struggled with faltering and crisis-prone economies; and engaged in a bitter ideological and political contest as both the Left and the Right careened toward the extremes. In the second half of the century, Europeans had to accept the consequences of these prior failures, giving up a measure of sovereignty to the United States and the Soviet Union in the context of the Cold War, and losing the overseas colonies that were once viewed as the key to greatness. But they also developed lasting institutions for inter-European peace.

Socially and culturally, the twentieth century was a time of unprecedented experimentation and change. Hierarchies of class and gender were weakened. Christianity lost its official role in European states. Immigrants from outside Europe unsettled European national identities. This course surveys these and other developments that have helped to create the Europe of today.

Textbook: The course is structured around the textbook Europe in the Twentieth Century, by Robert O. Paxton and Julie Hessler. The textbook – a major overhaul of an existing book that Paxton originally wrote in the early 1970s -- is scheduled to be published later this year by the textbook publisher Cengage. As one of the authors of this textbook, I am very eager to see how it works in a class, so I have put the chapters on Blackboard as pdf files. In case you are curious, I indicated in the filenames which chapters were written by Paxton (most chapters dealing with the first half of the century) and which ones were written by Hessler (most chapters dealing with the second half of the century). Chapters listed as “Paxton-Hessler” include significant writing by both. Unfortunately, I am unable to include the photo illustrations in the files, so I will try to bring good visuals with me to class.

Other course readings: Other course readings are also posted on Blackboard, though under the separate heading of “Readings.” We will not be reading any book-length works, but we do have a number of primary sources to illustrate or flesh out several of the subjects. Assigned readings should ordinarily be done before the
day's lecture. This is especially the case with regard to primary sources, as we will be discussing them collectively in class.

**Grades:** Grades will be based on the following components:

- **Midterm (20%)** – Monday, May 3 (in class)
- **Final (35%)** – Tuesday, June 8, at 10:15
- Two 750-word on-line exercises (13% each) – due at 1:00 a.m., Saturday, Apr. 24, and Saturday, May 15.
- **Book review (4-5 pages) (19%)** – paper due in class Wednesday, May 26 (or under my office door by the class time – no electronic submission for this assignment).

Failure to take either exam or to submit a book review, or an F on the final, mean an automatic F in the course. In addition, any paper, exercise, or exam that you turn in must be your own writing. Plagiarism from another student or from a published source, cutting and pasting sentences from websites, or using a crib sheet on an exam will result in an automatic F for that assignment and will figure in your grade as a 0. All grades will be posted on Blackboard – please check your posted grade before you throw out the assignment to make sure that we haven’t made a mistake.

**Exercises:** There will be more information on the assignments on Blackboard under “Assignments.” The first exercise will involve analyzing one of several primary sources posted on the class site. You will need to be able to describe the source and explain the author’s major argument, but also to discuss it in terms of the context in which it was written. The second exercise will involve analyzing demographic statistics about a European country of your choice.

**Book review:** This assignment is your opportunity to do some additional reading on a topic that interests you. You may choose a book on any topic in 20th-century European history. The only restrictions are that it must be a secondary source (not a memoir, autobiography, document collection, or the like); that it must be a single-authored book (not a collection of essays by different authors); and that it must be listed in the bibliography to one of the chapters of the textbook. There are no exceptions to this last rule. You will be asked to indicate the author, title, and publication information for the book that you choose, but also which chapter and page of the textbook you found it on. For directions on preparing your review, see the posting under “Assignments.”

**Exams:** Both exams will include factual information and essays. They may have a map section. The final exam will be cumulative. A study sheet for each exam will be posted on Blackboard.

**Late work policy:** On-line exercises will not be accepted late except in cases of serious sickness or catastrophe. The deadline is set for 1:00 a.m. so as to avoid clogging the Blackboard server. My assumption is that most of you will turn the
exercises in well before that deadline. In the interests of avoiding possible infected files, your essay for the exercises must be typed in the box on the assignment page rather than submitted as an attachment. The book review will be accepted up to one week late, but unless you are seriously sick, late submission will result in a penalty of 4 points (out of 100) if you turn it in between Wednesday’s class period and Friday’s class period, and 10 points if you turn it in between Friday and the following Wednesday. I will not accept email submission of the book review.

Class schedule:

Week 1.
Mon., Mar. 29 Introduction
Fri., Apr. 2 The Great War. Reading: ETC, chap. 3.

Week 2.
Mon., Apr. 5 The social and cultural impact of war. Reading: ETC, chap. 4; Sigmund Freud, “Thoughts for the Times on War and Death”; Vera Brittain, excerpt from *Letters of a Lost Generation*; Siegfried Sassoon, “Counter-Attack”
Wed., Apr. 7 The Russian Revolution. Reading: ETC chap. 5; Victor Serge, excerpt from *Memoirs of a Revolutionary.*
Fri., Apr. 9 Postwar discontents: fascism and the flawed peace. Reading: ETC chaps 6-7.

Week 3.
Mon., Apr. 12 Culture and the arts between the wars. Reading: ETC chap. 9
Wed., Apr. 14 Interwar politics and economics: Britain and France. Reading: ETC chap. 8
Fri., Apr. 16 The Great Depression and the rise of Nazism. Reading: ETC chapter 10 (to Soviet section, p. 34).

Week 4.
Mon., Apr. 19 The Soviet Union under Stalin. Reading: ETC chap. 10 - finish.
Wed., Apr. 21 The Spanish Civil War. Reading: ETC chap. 11
Fri., Apr. 23 Nazi rule and German aggression. Reading: ETC chap. 12. **Exercise 1 due at 1:00 a.m., Saturday, Apr. 24.**

Week 5.
Mon., Apr. 26 The Second World War: first stage. Reading: ETC chap. 13
Wed., Apr. 28 The Holocaust. Reading: ETC, chap. 13 – Holocaust section; interviews with Sam Bankhalter and Hinda Kibort
Fri., Apr. 30 Allied victory and the origins of the Cold War. Reading: ETC chap. 14

Week 6.
Mon., May 3 **Midterm exam.** Bring an exam booklet to class.
Wed., May 5 Introduction to the postwar period; reconstruction and the welfare state in the West. Reading: ETC, chap. 15; Beveridge, “New Britain.”

Fri., May 7 Communism in Eastern Europe. Reading: ETC, chap. 16

Week 7.
Mon., May 10 Western Europe and the world: diminished power, decolonization, integration. Reading: ETC, chap. 17.
Fri., May 14 Terrorism and the Western European Left in the 1970s-80s. Reading: ETC chap. 19 – first section; Adriana Faranda interview. Exercise 2 due at 1:00 a.m., Saturday, May 15.

Week 8.
Mon., May 17 Western European politics, continued. Reading: ETC, chap. 19 – finish.
Wed., May 19 Women and feminism. Reading: ETC, chap. 20 – first section; debate on wages for housework by Gisela Bock, Alice Schwarzer, and Claudia von Werlhof
Fri., May 21 Religion and immigration. Reading: ETC, chap. 20 – finish.

Week 9.
Mon., May 24 The arts and intellectual life. Reading: ETC, chap. 21

Week 10.
Mon., May 31 Memorial Day – no class
Fri., June 5 European unification and politics; conclusion. Reading: ETC chap. 23 – finish; chap. 24.

Final exam: 10:15, Tuesday, June 8.