HIST 410/510: MODERN EUROPEAN CULTURAL HISTORY
Prof. Ian F. McNeely – University of Oregon – Fall 2006

CRN: 14392 (for HIST 410), 14407 (for HIST 510)
Meeting times: MW 8:30-9:50 in 221 MCK (plus Fridays in 319 MCK for HIST 510)
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Description

Amidst transatlantic tension surrounding the Iraq War and Europe’s halting steps toward a political union rivalling the United States, it is an appropriate time to ask whether “Europe” has any abiding, distinguishing characteristics marking it off as a culture distinct from our own. Do we in fact share a common cultural history with the Europeans, as members of “Western Civilization?” Do the Europeans themselves share a common cultural history despite their own fragmentation into distinct nations? Why do they sometimes seem to live and think so differently than us today? Where and when did these differences originate? Why and how should we study European history in an age of globalization?

This course spans Europe’s history from the American Revolution to our mutual interdependence today. It is structured around a series of topics marking Europe’s historical divergence from America between roughly 1776 and today. The organization of the course is thematic rather than chronological, but individual units have been sequenced in a way that roughly parallels the narrative of European history.

Requirements

GRADUATE STUDENTS IN HIST 510:
CONSULT WEB FOR ALTERNATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- Journal on class readings
  - Collected once or twice at random, on unannounced date(s) (15-20%)
  - Submitted again on Wed. 11/29 at the last class (30-35%)
- Proposals for additional syllabus topics
  - Two short (3-4 page) proposals, one for each half of the ten-week term, each due one week after the relevant topic is discussed in class, but no later than at the last class meeting (15% each)
  - A longer (6-7 page) exploration of one of these, submitted within a week of the short proposal on which it builds (20%)
Journals

The journal assignment requires you to begin analyzing the readings before class; this in turn will serve to jump-start discussions and help you build up a stock of knowledge as the course progresses. Your journal may take whatever physical (or electronic) format you like, so long as it is expandable, self-contained, and above all, legible. I am a firm believer in the old-fashioned technology of ink pens and simple bound notebooks; handwriting promotes longer-term memory and more careful thought than word processing. It also induces you to use fewer words. Whatever format you choose, you should leave ample space to construct a running index of your observations.

This course is divided into ten weekly themes numbered in bold on the schedule below. Each of these is in turn divided into two daily topics prefaced by calendar dates. Readings for each topic are given in [brackets] and refer to the numbered “Readings” list.

You should compose one journal entry for each week, including week one. Two to four handwritten pages (depending on your penmanship) per week will usually suffice. Each entry should include, in one form or another, all of the following:

• A restatement, in your own words, of the week’s theme and its significance.
• An in-depth explanation of how one of the week’s two topics sheds light on this theme, with close analysis of the relevant readings for that topic.
• Mention of how this topic is relevant to any of the other themes on the syllabus.
• Consideration of the questions: Does the week’s theme really not apply to North America? Are there other, non-European parts of the world where it applies?
• A list of other countries, time periods, and cultural phenomena within modern European history to which this week’s theme could be fruitfully applied.

I will collect each student’s journal once—perhaps twice—during the course of the term (not necessarily all on the same day) and use them to generate “midterm” grades as well as provide general feedback for improvement. Journals will be collected at our last class meeting in lieu of a final exam.

Proposals

For each of the ten weekly themes there are numerous other topics that could have been included on this syllabus. The remaining written exercises invite you to generate two such examples over the course of the term and to explore one of these in greater depth. The aim is to get you to think thematically about European culture.

There are several ways to generate ideas for these assignments: the Barber textbook (#22 below); any other European history texts you may own; online resources like wikipedia.org, amazon.com, and scholar.google.com; and the academic search engines—JSTOR, Historical Abstracts, Project Muse, and Academic Search Premier—listed as “research aids” at the bottom of my homepage.
The two shorter write-ups should (1) describe the evolution of your idea for a new syllabus topic and include both (2) a rationale for its significance and (3) an account of your search process. The longer paper should include (4) appropriate readings and (5) syllabus rubrics at a level of detail suitable for slotting directly into this syllabus, as well as (6) summaries of these readings and (7) a few pages offering possible strategies for running class discussions.

Readings

**Question:** How on earth can I do all this reading? Do I need to read all of this?

**Answer:** First read the course requirements very, very carefully.

Books to purchase: Zamoyski (#6, $16), Arnold (#10, $14), Pamuk (#19, $15), Schneider (#20, $14), McCoy (#21, $15), Barber (#22, $18—recommended only)

3. Maximilien Robespierre’s Speech at the Festival of the Supreme Being
4. Fritz Stern review of Ferguson (see immediately below) in *The New Republic* (Feb. 8, 1999), 34-37

**SCHEDULE, OR:**
**THINGS EUROPE HAS THAT (NORTH) AMERICA DOES NOT**

1. “Feudalism”

(9/25) Introduction: getting beyond “Plato to NATO”
(9/27) America: Europe’s past or Europe’s future? [1]

2. Official Christianity

(10/2) The French Revolution’s attack on the Church [2, 3]
(10/4) Jewish emancipation and the House of Rothschild [4, 5]

3. Ethnic fragmentation

(10/9) Émigré revolutionary patriots [6]
(10/11) Nationalism in East Central Europe [7]

4. Traditions of high culture

(10/16) Female nudity in art: *Olympia* [8, 9]
(10/18) *Culture and Anarchy* [10]
5. Ingrained class distinctions

(10/23) Aristocracy: The Leopard (film)
(10/25) Soccer as working-class culture [11, 12]

6. Defeat in war, loss of empire

(10/30) Spain after 1898 [13]
(11/1) Rump Austria [14]

7. Collectivist welfare states

(11/8) The Swedish new woman [16, 17]

8. A tragic/melancholic sense of history

(11/13) Dachau and the Auschwitz of Night and Fog (film in class) [18]
(11/15) Istanbul in the 1950s [19]

9. Living in close quarters

(11/20) Berlin behind the Wall [20]
(11/22) Terroir, the theory of Old World wine

10. Conclusion: an Atlantic divide?

(11/27) Robert Parker: ambassador or imperialist? [21]
(11/29) Whatever’s in the news [TBA]