Tel Aviv University

European Studies Programme

Course

Modern European History: The Evolution of the Idea of Europe

SYLLABUS

Instructor: PD Dr. Angelos Giannakopoulos

Spring Semester 2018
Course Description

The course offers a broad overview of modern European history from the end of the eighteenth century to the aftermath of World War II. This outstanding period of European history will be examined not only by referring to major events, movements and figures. The examination of major historical events provide rather the grounds for the exploration of main intellectual, cultural, social and political traditions of Europe which finally shaped modern European and in general Western societies as well as the majority of societies around the world. In this respect, the course focuses and detailed discusses, for example, to which extend the three basic demands of the French Revolution, i.e. Freedom, Equality, Fraternity, have been realised to date. Single historical events and developments are understood as the evolutionary path which finally led to the complex relationship between society, politics, culture and religion in Europe. However, modern European history is not only a “success story” but a story enmeshed in antagonism, imperialism, war, destruction and mass murder. It also belongs to the priorities of the course to discuss which role can be attached to this negative historical diachronic experience for the establishment of a “new continent” especially after World War II. Text accounts will be accompanied by the presentation of exemplary works of art and literature by the lecturer. During the classes use of powerpoint slides will be made in order to facilitate the student’s understanding of European History. Furthermore, reading materials will be made available to all students via the internet seminar tool.

Course Aims

The course aims to:

• provide a learning environment for all students, free of bias
• provide support by understanding some of the core themes in modern European history
• stimulate analysis of historical events and critical study of the European past of the last two centuries
• develop appreciation of a range of single thematic course elements
• stimulate students’ active involvement, logical argumentation and communicative capacity
• advance the ability of students to work independently on the basis of text accounts and other seminar materials provided
• develop the ability of students to engage effectively in their work by applying scientific oral and writing standards

Course Requirements:

1. Completing basic text readings prior to each class, attending regularly and participating actively during the course are highly required. Attendance and active participation will account for 30% of the overall grading.
2. Besides, there will be 6 homeworks during the semester. The homeworks will account for 30% of the overall grading.
3. A final exam will take place after the end of the course. The final exam will consist in four different essay questions which have to be answered by the students. The final
exam will be a take home and open book exam. The final exam will account for 40% of the overall grading.

Course Planner

Class 1: Course Overview and Introduction. The Foundations of Europe

- Greek philosophy, Judaism, Christianity and the Islamic contributions to medieval Europe
- The shaping of early modern Europe

Literature

4. Lecture: Shaping of Western Europe, by Lynn H. Nelson, Department of History, University of Kansas

Class 2: The French Revolution, Part 1

- A. The story behind:
  1. The scientific view of the world
  2. The age of enlightenment
  3. The age of absolutism and constitutionalism

- B. The French revolution
  1. A short history of the French revolution
  2. The significance of the French Revolution for the European consciousness

Literature

   Chapter 7 - The Scientific View of the World
   Chapter 8 - The Age of the Enlightenment
   Chapter 9 - The French Revolution
Chapter 10 - Napoleonic Europe

Class 3: The French Revolution, Part 2

The significance of the French Revolution for the European consciousness

Literature


Class 4: The Napoleonic Era

The Napoleonic Europe and the European system of powers in the early 19th century

Literature


Class 5: The Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions

- The preconditions of the agricultural and industrial revolutions
- How it began: British economy in the early 19th century
- Industrialisation across Europe
- The origins of capitalism
- Reaction versus progress 1815-1848: Popular protest

Literature

1. First Industrial Revolution, Lecture by Lynn H. Nelson, Department of History, University of Kansas
Class 6: Nation-Building and the Period of Nationalism in Europe

- The consolidation of the European nation states 1830-1871
- Nation and language
- The role of national historiography and literature in shaping a nation
- The invention of the nation: how far are nations a fiction?

Literature

   Chapter 13 - The Consolidation of the Large Nation States

Class 7: European Imperialism and Colonialism

- Europe’s world supremacy
- Geopolitics and colonialism
- Colonialism in the Middle East

Literature

   Chapter 15 - Europe's World Supremacy

Class 8: The Emergence of the Labour Movement and its Demands for Social Justice

- The 2nd Industrial Revolution and its repercussions
- Social Democratic, Labour and Marxist movements
- The rise of mass politics

Literature

   Chapter XIV European Civilization, 1871-1914
2. Second Industrial Revolution, Lecture by Lynn H. Nelson, Department of History, University of Kansas

Class 9: The First World War

- European Empires 1870-1917 and the balance of powers
- A short history of the First World War
- The Paris Peace Conference and the Versailles Treaty 1919
- The economic and social impact of the war

Literature

   Chapter 16 - The First World War
2. First World War, Lecture by Lynn H. Nelson, Department of History, University of Kansas
3. Annika Mombauer: The origins of the First World War. Controversies and consensus, Chapter Introduction, pp. 1-19

Class 10: The Interwar Period, Part 1

- The European search for stability 1920-1939
- The great depression 1929

Literature

   Chapter 18 - Apparent Victory of Democracy
   Chapter 19 - Democracy and Dictatorship

Class 11: The Interwar Period, Part 2

The rise of totalitarianism and dictatorship in Europe: Germany, Italy and Russia

Literature

Class 12: The Second World War and the Cold War, Part 1

- What caused the Second World War?
- A short history of the Second World War
- On the crest of inhumanity: Death Camps and the Holocaust

Literature

1. Lecture Hitler and World War Two, The History Guide, at:
   http://www.historyguide.org/europe/lecture11.html
2. Second World War, Lecture by Lynn H. Nelson, Department of History, University of Kansas

Class 13: The Second World War and the Cold War, Part 2

Europe in ruins: the establishment of a new continent and a global order

Literature

Lecture The Origins of the Cold War, The History Guide, at: