What this class is about

What are the origins of the modern European state? Why did some European states develop democratic institutions by the beginning of the twentieth century while others did not? What explains the rise of social democracy and fascism? How did fascist and communist regimes operate? Why did democracy succeed in Western Europe after the end of the Second World War? What are the origins of the major political parties in Europe? These are some of the big questions we will explore in this course. While we obviously cannot cover all these topics in depth, students will gain an appreciation both for the key developments in European politics over the last several centuries as well as contemporary issues. We will also use Europe as a laboratory to explore theories of political institutions, regime type, nationalism and ethnic identity, and statebuilding. The course also considers the strengths and weaknesses of the social science methodology of comparative historical analysis.

What you will need

The following books are required. All of the books will also be placed on reserve at Tisch. Most of the books will also be available on Trunk.


3) Tony Judt, Postwar (Penguin, 2005)


How this class will work

This class is a mix of lecture and discussion of core readings. The readings I expect you to have completed are listed underneath the topic for that day (so on January 30th, for example, you will have read Garrard and Moore). If there are no readings listed, then I will lecture. But even when there are no specific readings assigned for a day I recommend that you look ahead to the next several class meetings as some texts are rather long. In short, read ahead when possible!

What you will need to do

Read. Read a lot. The readings average about 150 pages a week with significant variation between weeks. A major portion of your grade (see below) is participation, and you cannot participate if you don’t read. It goes without saying that unexcused absences will detract significantly from your participation grade. Illness and bereavement constitute valid excuses for missing class.

This course also requires a fair amount of writing. To help you think about the process of writing, I have assigned William Zinsser’s classic book *On Writing Well*. Every student will need to pass a quiz on this book (graded pass/fail) in order to pass the course.

Participation: 15%
Two Short Papers (5 pages each): 10% for the first and 20% for the second.
Midterm: 20%

Final Research Paper OR Final Take-Home Exam: 35%

You have the option of submitting a research paper (15 pages) or writing a take-home final exam. You can decide what option you are choosing UP TO THE LAST MINUTE, but I will not give extensions for the Research Paper and I suggest you get started on it by the mid-point of the semester at the very latest.

Some Important, Miscellaneous Points

Email is fine for setting up a time to meet outside of office hours, letting me know about an emergency, etc… But it is not a good medium for discussing ideas, asking questions, or turning in a paper. Please do make use of office hours.

I recognize that not all of us look forward to public speaking, and that some of you may dread speaking in front of your classmates. If you fall into this category, I hope that you can use this course as a means of overcoming your fear of public speaking in a friendly, supportive classroom environment. It is an important skill for many professions, and it can be learned. If you are very shy, please let me know and we can discuss strategies for participation.
Plagiarism: Don’t even think about it. It is fairly easy to spot, and the penalties are severe!

If I suspect that any material has been plagiarized I will be forced to initiate a case of academic dishonesty with the office of student affairs.

Class Schedule

September 9: Course Overview and Logistics:

September 14: Feudalism and the Origins of the State

Charles Tilly, “Statemaking as Organized Crime”

Downing, 19-55.

September 16: Comparing Democracy, Dictatorship, and Development across Time and Space

Dahl, Polyarchy, 1-16.

Coppedge, 11-48

September 21: Absolutism and Revolution in France

Downing 56-83, 113-139

September 23: Comparative Historical Analysis

Coppedge, 115-157

Dahl, Polyarchy, 33-47

Military Revolution and Political Change, 56-83 and 157-186

September 28: Theories of British Political Development


September 30: **Industrialization and Capitalism**


October 5: **Democratization or Aristocratic Preservation in Great Britain?**

No reading (First Paper Due)

October 7: **From the Second Empire to the Third Republic**


October 14: **Germany and the Sonderweg Thesis**


Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (Doubleday: 1967), 14-17, 33-64

Sheri Berman, “Modernization in Historical Perspective: The Case of Imperial Germany,” *World Politics* 53, 3 (April 2001): 431-62

October 21: **Theories of Democratization and the First Wave**

Coppedge, 158-192


October 23: **In-Class Midterm**

October 26: **The Political Consequences of WWI**

Payne, 23-79

October 28: **Italian Fascism**  
Payne, 81-146.

November 2: **Collapse of Weimar and Rise of Nazism**  
Payne 147-211  
M. Rainer Lepsius, “From Fragmented Party Democracy to Government by Emergency Decree and National Socialist Takeover: Germany,” in *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, Linz and Stepan, eds. 34-79.

November 4: **WWII and the Holocaust**  
Payne 355-437

November 9: **Reconstructing Western Europe**  
Judt 63-99, 241-277 and 324-359

November 11: **Communism in Eastern Europe: Life in the DDR**  
Judt, 585-633  
Screening of *The Lives of Others*

November 16: **The End of the Golden Age of Capitalism**  

November 18: **Democratic Consolidation through European Integration?**  
Judt, 504-526.  

November 30: **Historical Memory and Democratic Politics**  

December 2: **New Challenges from Right and Left**

Lenka Bustikova, “Revenge of the Radical Right,” *Comparative Political Studies*

David Art, “Rise of the Radical Right: Implications for European Politics” *Brown Journal of World Affairs*

READING on SYRIZA (TBD)

December 7: **Democracy in the European Union**

READING TBD

December 9: **Rethinking the European Past**

Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 195-228

December 19: **Take Home Exam or Final Paper Due**