Cataclysm and Renewal: History of Continental Europe, 1917 to the Present

Tutorial Handbook – Group 4

A young man sitting on top of the Berlin Wall, 1989, Photograph: Raymond Depardon/Magnum (available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/14/history-europe-pictures-neal-ascherson)

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Aims of the Tutorial Course

This tutorial course aims to provide you with a platform for your discussion and analysis of a variety of topics and themes in continental European history, from 1917 to the present. Topics, ranging both chronologically and geographically, have been chosen to be analysed within the broader historical context of modern European history, as the continent moved from 'cataclysm' to 'renewal'.

This tutorial course also aims to allow you to further develop your skills of analysis and engagement through the use of relevant secondary literature and selected primary documents. Mandatory class presentations will also allow you to improve your oral presentation skills.

Format of Tutorials

Tutorials will be held as follows:

- Tutorial 1: Wednesday January 29th
- Tutorial 2: Wednesday February 5th
- Tutorial 3: Wednesday February 12th
- Tutorial 4: Wednesday February 19th

The week beginning February 24th is reading week – no classes.

- Tutorial 5: Wednesday March 5th
- Tutorial 6: Wednesday March 12th

Tutorials for this class will be held:

- Wednesdays at 1pm; Room 3106

Any change of room will be posted on the History Department’s Freshman notice board. If you are unable to attend due to sickness or for any other reason please notify me by email in advance.

Each class will involve:

A. Presentations on the week’s themes.

B. Class discussions on the presentations.

C. Analysis of the set primary source documents and discussion of set secondary reading. I will email around a pack containing set primary source documents a week in advance of each class.
Participation Requirements and Readings

For this tutorial series you are required to read the set secondary reading outlined in this handbook. While you are not expected to read all the material on the bibliography, it is expected that you will have read enough to understand the week’s themes and to be able to contribute competently and constructively in class.

You are also required to read all primary sources allocated for each week’s tutorial and to be prepared to analyse and contextualise them as well as to explain any references within them in the course of the tutorial discussion. Please print off the document pack and bring it with you to class. This document pack will be emailed around a week in advance of each class.

As a general guideline, regular attendance, active class participation and completion of the set written assignments are compulsory for everyone.

Presentations

Each student is required to make one presentation during the semester. The presentation should be no more than 10 minutes long (ideally 7-8 minutes) and will be followed by a discussion. As a general guideline each presentation should contain 3 or 4 key points summarising the theme under discussion and should contain some personal viewpoints and possible discussion questions for the class.

You are free to choose your own presentation topic based on the tutorial summaries that I have provided below and your own interests and inclinations. A good guideline is to set yourself a question and then go and answer it. If you would like to consult with me before choosing your presentation topic or if you would rather that I set you a topic, then don’t hesitate to contact me via email or after class. But do let me know in advance what your topic will be.

Those giving presentations will effectively be ‘leading’ the discussion in each session, so don’t hesitate to move further than the set course bibliography and the suggested reading I have given below. Browse the library shelves in the Berkeley, use jstor to find more relevant items and use material written in the original language of the country concerned if you want and can. If you want more suggestions or advice on reading, then contact me about it.

Tutorial Assignment

As indicated in the main handbook for this course, the tutorial assignment consists of an analysis of historical documents and is the same length as the essay (2,000 words). It should be emailed to me (dowdalaj@tcd.ie) by:

Friday 14th March 2014

One or two documents will be selected from each week’s document pack and you will be required to write a critical commentary on a selection of them. I will provide you with fuller instructions on what
is required later in the course. If you have any questions regarding the tutorial assignment please do not hesitate to contact me.

Contacting the Teaching Assistant

I can be contacted at dowdalaj@tcd.ie

If you have any problems, comments or questions then please contact me either by e-mail or at the time of the tutorials.
Tutorial 1: The Weimar Republic, 1918-1933

Beginning with the German Revolution of 1918 and ending with the Nazi seizure of power, this tutorial focuses on modern Germany’s first democratic experiment. What was the nature of the Revolution in the early years of the Republic, and how did the democratic institutions implemented in its aftermath shape the course of Weimar history? Was the failure of Weimar democracy inevitable? How important is the concept of ‘modernity’, cultural and otherwise, to the analysis of Weimar society? How can the progressive social policies of this early welfare-state and the dynamism of the cultural avant-garde be reconciled with the continued presence of reactionary and authoritarian elements?

Recommended Reading:


Evans, Richard J., The Coming of the Third Reich, (London: Penguin 2004), Ch. 1-4, especially Ch. 2


McEIliggott, Anthony, ed., Weimar Germany, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009), especially the introduction and Ch. 1

Tutorial 2: The Spanish Civil War

While its long-term origins can be traced to the peculiarities of Spanish economic and social development in the 19th Century, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War was recognised by contemporaries as a moment of European crisis, as the competing ideologies of Fascism, Communism, Socialism and Liberal Democracy came head to head. This tutorial will focus on both the domestic and the international dimensions of the conflict, examining its roots in the Spanish Second Republic as well as the subsequent course of the war, emphasising the issues of revolution, international involvement and political violence. Finally, it will examine the memory of the conflict in modern Spain, from the ‘pact of silence’ to recent debates over repression.

Recommended Reading:


Ruiz, Julius, ‘Seventy Years on: Historians and Repression during and after the Spanish Civil War’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 44 No. 3 (July 2009), pp. 449-472

Tutorial 3: Occupied France during the Second World War

The defeat and occupation of France during the Second World War has long been recognised as one of the most divisive and controversial moments in modern French history. This tutorial will focus on the issues of defeat and occupation, collaboration and resistance. We will examine the history of the occupation both from ‘above’ and ‘below’, considering both the repercussions of political collaboration between the Vichy state and the occupying forces and the strategies developed by individuals and local communities to cope with the occupation. Finally, we will also look at the lasting mark left on French national memory since 1944 by the occupation.

Recommended Reading:


Jackson, Julian, France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001)


Paxton, Robert O., Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944, (New York: Columbia University Press 2001); The most important and influential study of the topic – start with this

Tutorial 4: Russia in the 1930s: The Years of Stalinist Terror

This session will focus on Russian society in the years following the Bolshevik consolidation of power, when the party attempted to finish the Revolution and construct the socialist state. In this period clear moral distinctions between good and bad, friend and enemy, existed and terror – ranging from expulsion from the party, to exile, imprisonment and execution – became a feature of everyday life. How did Russian citizens deal with the political repression imposed by a totalitarian regime and the social pressures resulting from wide-scale industrialisation, collectivisation and economic change? What drove the Terror? Was it a coherent and thought out plan implemented by high-up Bolsheviks and, ultimately, Stalin himself? Or was it driven from ‘below’, on the level of the village, drawing on traditions of collective control extending back to the Tsarist autocracy? How did Russian citizens respond to these extraordinary pressures and what was the nature of ‘everyday Stalinism’?

Recommended Reading:


Fitzpatrick, Sheila, ‘How the Mice Buried the Cat: Scenes from the Great Purges of 1937 in the Russian Provinces,’ Russian Review, Vol. 52 No. 3 (Jul 1993)


Getty, J. Arch and Naumov, Oleg V., The Road to Terror. Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939, (New Haven MI: Yale University Press 1999); Very good chronological narrative based on relevant primary material
Tutorial 5: East Germany, 1945-1989: from Dictatorship to Democracy

Focusing on East Germany from the end of the Second World War to the fall of the Berlin Wall, this session will examine the political and social history of one of the most ‘stable’ European communist states. The extent to which spaces for social protest, activism and political engagement existed will be of central importance as we examine how these factors played into the democratic revolution of 1989. Fundamentally, however, the GDR was a police state and the omnipresence of the secret police, the Stasi, cannot be ignored. Another line of analysis should, therefore, centre on the questions of espionage and spying, particularly the phenomenon of informants. How has modern, unified Germany dealt with the heritage and memory of the dictatorship, and what are the wider ramifications of public access to the opened-up Stasi files?

Recommended Reading:


Fulbrook, Mary, The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker, (London: Yale University Press 2005)


Judt, Tony, Post-War: A History of Europe since 1945, (London: Heinemann 2005); The GDR is discussed at various points in this massive book – use the index to navigate your way through.

Tutorial 6: The Breakup of Yugoslavia and the Balkan Wars

The 1990s saw war return to continental Europe for the first time since 1945, as the last European Communist state, Yugoslavia, dissolved. Ethnic cleansing and genocide brought with them disturbing echoes of the past, as conflicts developed in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia in quick succession and, later, in Kosovo. This session will examine the nature of ethnic tensions in the Balkans, and begin by discussing how Tito ‘managed’ them during the existence of the Yugoslav state. Focusing on the Yugoslav wars, and in particular the Bosnian conflict of 1992-5, we will examine the nature of the violence unleashed during the conflict, the consequences of tardy international intervention, as well as the broader consequences of the conflict in the shape of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, accessions to the E.U. of former Yugoslav states, and the fragile social peace currently in place in the Balkans.

Recommended Reading:


