Twentieth Century World

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Tuesdays/Thursdays 10-11.20am
Office: Conklin Hall 337
Office Hours: Thursdays: 11.45-12.45pm
Spring 2024

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Course Description:
This course introduces students to some of the major, political, economic, cultural, and social developments that have shaped the history of our contemporary world. The course offers an interdisciplinary and comparative view of twentieth century world history. As the history of the world is too broad to do justice to over one semester we will look at a variety of case studies that we will use to illuminate the major events, processes, and developments of the twentieth century; from two world wars and economic troubles to the Cold War and globalization. Throughout the semester we will try to shift the focus of twentieth century history away from a “centrality” of the West and instead focus on topics like imperialism, fascism, communism, anti-imperialism, and the end of the Cold War and how they affected the rest of the world.

Course Objectives:
The students of the course will analyze historical events and movements of the 20th century and assess their subsequent significance. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills to analyze information and develop their writing skills by writing three primary source based papers. Additionally students will learn how to synthesize historical and geographical information acquired through the understanding of maps and primary source information.

In this class, students will regularly practice their writing skills with two take-home exams, and three primary source papers and will have many opportunities to express their ideas in class discussions. In both the written assignments and the class discussions, students will develop their analytical skills by identifying the course readings’ main theses, supporting arguments, evidence, assumptions, and rhetorical strategies.

Course Goals:
Upon completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge of some of the fundamental concepts and theories of historical events and ideas related to the 20th Century World.
- Evaluate global exchanges and perspectives in context of social, political, religious, and intellectual traditions.
- Read, analyze, organize and synthesize, evidence, historical problems, and interpretations connected to the history of the 20th Century World.
Grading:
In-class participation  20%
Primary Source Papers  30% (each worth 15%)
Midterm Exam  25%
Final Exam   25%

Grade scale is as follows:
A:  90 points and higher
B+:  87-89.99
B:  80-86.99
C+:  77-79.99
C:  70-76.99
D:  60-69.99
F:  59.99 and lower

Late papers and exams:
Exams and papers are due on the dates announced in class or indicated below. Unless discussed with me IN ADVANCE, late assignments will have their grades lowered. Excused lateness for the take-home exams will only be granted for students who can document medical or family emergency. Students who feel a personal emergency is sufficiently grave to warrant an excused absence must speak with me the week BEFORE the exam is due.

Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism):
Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. Cheating is both a moral and an ethical offense. It violates both your own integrity and the ethics of group commitment: when you cut corners and cheat, you undermine those students who took the time to work on the assignment honestly. The standard minimum penalties for students who cheat or plagiarize include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”
Resist the urge to cut and paste, either literally or figuratively by using other people’s ideas. If I find that you have used other people’s ideas (ex: Wikipedia, Amazon reviews, book jacket descriptions, etc.), I will not accept the assignment because I will not be able to consider it your own work. You will get a failing grade (0 points) for that assignment and will not be able to make it up.

For further information, please visit the university page on Academic Integrity: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu (Links to an external site.)

**Attendance policy:**
I will be taking attendance throughout the semester as attendance is required. If you have any religious holidays that you plan to observe that will in any way affect your capabilities of completing the assignments on time, please get in touch with me early so we can discuss that and make plans to accommodate that. Any student who missed EIGHT sessions through any combination of excused or unexcused absences will not receive credit for this class.

**Schedule of Topics and Readings:**

**Week 1**
January 16th: Introduction

January 18th: Overview of the Twentieth Century
   Readings: *Twentieth-Century World*: Chapter 1 (skim)

**Week 2**
January 23rd: Origins of the Twentieth Century - Imperialism
   Readings: *Twentieth-Century World*: Chapter 2

January 25th: Path to War
   Readings: Hobsbawm: From Peace to War

**Week 3**
January 30th: World War I
   In class Viewing:
   Film: They Shall Not Grow Old

February 1st: Aftermath of the War: The Russian Revolution
   Readings: Gerwath: Russian Revolutions

**Week 4**
February 6th: When did the War End? An Uneasy Peace
   Readings: Gerwath: Apparent Triumph of Democracy

February 8th: The 1918-1919 Flu Pandemic
PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION

Week 5
February 13th: The Rise of Fascism
  Readings: Paxton: The Five Stages of Fascism
  Mussolini, “What is Fascism?”
  http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/mussolini-fascism.html

February 15th: No Class - Instructor at a conference.

Week 6
February 20th: Roaring Twenties? The Great Depression
  Readings: Hobsbawm: Into the Economic Abyss

February 22nd: Stalinism as a Different Option
  Readings: Fitzpatrick – Palaces on Monday

Week 7
February 27th: The Weimar Republic and the Rise of the Nazis
  Readings: Ian Kershaw: “Hitler and the Germans:
  Hobsbawm: The Fall of Liberalism

February 29th: Path to War – The Munich Conference
  Readings: Hobsbawm: Against the Common Enemy

Week 8
March 7th: Appeasement - The Munich Conference
PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION

March 9th: World War II and The Holocaust
  Readings: TBD

Week 9
SPRING BREAK! Have Fun!

Week 10
March 19th: The Global Effects of World War II

March 21st: The Beginning of the Cold War
  Readings: Robbins: Confrontational Coexistence 1953-1965

Week 11
March 26th: The Start of Decolonization

March 28th: The Belgrade Conference - The Nonaligned Movement
PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION
**Week 12**  
April 2\(^{nd}\): Decolonization  
   The Battle of Algiers (Film excerpt)

April 4\(^{th}\): 1968: A Year of Revolutions  
   Readings: Robbins: Devious Decade 1965-1975

**Week 13**  
April 9\(^{th}\): The Global Cold War  
   Readings: Westad: The Global Cold War

April 11\(^{th}\): The Cold War Continues  
   Readings: *Twentieth-Century World*: Chapter 12

**Week 14**  
April 16\(^{th}\): The Precarious 1980s  

April 18\(^{th}\): The Fall of Communism - The Fall of the Berlin Wall  
   Readings: TBD

**Week 15**  
April 23\(^{rd}\): End of the Cold War and the World Since 1990  
   Readings: Robbins: The End of an Era

April 25\(^{th}\): FINAL EXAM: Review Session  
**Final Exam Review Guide Distributed**

**FINAL Exam:** Exam date to be decided based on final exam schedule