Twentieth Century World

Svanur Pétursson
svanur.petursson@gmail.com
Office: Conklin Hall 337
Office Hours: Thursdays: 1-2pm

21.510.213.01
Tuesdays/Thursdays 10-11.20am
Smith Hall 244
Fall 2022

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 15%
Primary Source Papers 45% (each worth 15%)
Midterm Exam 20%
Final Exam 20%

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](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu) (Links to an external site.)

**Attendance policy:**

I will be taking attendance early in the semester, but mainly to help me learn your names. However, your participation during discussion is graded throughout the semester, so attendance is expected.

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.
Schedule of Topics and Readings:

**Week 1**
September 6th: Introduction

September 8th: Overview of the Twentieth Century
   Readings: *Twentieth-Century World*: Chapter 1 (skim)

**Week 2**
September 13th: Origins of the Twentieth Century - Imperialism
   Readings: *Twentieth-Century World*: Chapter 2

September 15th: Path to War
   Readings: Hobsbawm: From Peace to War

**Week 3**
September 20th: World War I
   In class Viewing:
   Film: They Shall Not Grow Old

September 22nd: Aftermath of the War: The Russian Revolution
   Readings: Gerwath: Russian Revolutions

**Week 4**
September 27th: When did the War End? An Uneasy Peace
   Readings: Gerwath: Apparent Triumph of Democracy

September 28th: The 1918-1919 Flu Pandemic
PRIMARY SURCE DISCUSSION

**Week 5**
October 4th: The Rise of Fascism
   Readings: Paxton: The Five Stages of Fascism
   Mussolini, “What is Fascism?”
      http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/mussolini-fascism.html

October 6th: Roaring Twenties? The Great Depression
   Readings: Hobsbawm: Into the Economic Abyss

**Week 6**
October 11th: Stalinism as a Different Option
   Readings: Fitzpatrick – Palaces on Monday

October 13th: The Weimar Republic and the Rise of the Nazis
   Readings: Ian Kershaw: “Hitler and the Germans:
Hobsbawm: The Fall of Liberalism

Week 7
October 18th: Path to War – The Munich Conference
Readings: Hobsbawm: Against the Common Enemy

October 20th: Appeasement
PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION

Week 8
October 25th: World War II
Readings: TBD

October 27th: The Holocaust
Readings: TBD

Week 9
November 1st: The Lasting Effects of World War II

November 3rd: The Beginning of the Cold War
Readings: Robbins: Confrontational Coexistence 1953-1965

Week 10

November 10th: The Belgrade Conference
PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION

Week 11
November 15th: Decolonization
The Battle of Algiers (Film excerpt)

November 17th: 1968: A Year of Revolutions
Readings: Robbins: Devious Decade 1965-1975

Week 12
November 22nd: The Global Cold War
Readings: Westad: The Global Cold War

November 24th: THANKSGIVING RECESS

Week 13
November 29th: The Cold War Continues
   Readings: *Twentieth-Century World: Chapter 12*

December 1st: The Precarious 1980s
   Readings: TBD

**Week 14**
December 6th: The Fall of Communism
 PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION

December 8th: End of the Cold War and the World Since 1990
   Readings: Robbins: The End of an Era

**Week 15**
December 13th: FINAL EXAM: Review Session
**Final Exam Review Guide Distributed**

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