

History 512:529 and Liberal Studies 606:532: Colloquium in Comparative History  
POLITICS AND CULTURE IN AN AGE OF WAR, REVOLUTION, AND DICTATORSHIP

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Subjects and Purposes of the Course

Students who take this course will learn not only how some of the great events of the twentieth century—the two world wars and the Cold War, the Russian Revolution and the Nazi Revolution, and the peaceful revolutions of 1989-1991, among others—occurred but also how they affected contemporary observers, leaving their imprint on a rich record of political culture. Students will also encounter major works by historians, which place these events within interpretive frameworks that will repay close scrutiny and should generate lively discussion. The focus will be on Europe, but attention will also be paid to interactions with and parallels in the United States.

Readings, Requirements, and Grades: Some Basic Information

Students should purchase ten books, all of which are marked below by asterisks. I also highly recommend Felix Gilbert and David Clay Large, *The End of the European Era, 1890 to the Present*, particularly for students who do not have prior background on the history of twentieth-century Europe (or whose familiarity with the period lies in the distant past). Additional materials may be obtained through electronic reserve.

Attendance is important. More than two absences—which would mean that a student had missed more than twenty percent of our time together, for whatever reason, will almost certainly have an adverse impact on a student's grade for the course.

Papers two to three pages in length on seven of the eight works of history assigned in the course (by Winter, Stites, Rodgers, Kershaw, Novick, Berghahn, Ash, and Kenney) and a synthetic paper (based on assigned reading) seven to eight pages in length will be required. Anyone who misses a class owes me a two-three page paper on the reading assigned for that class. A paper in lieu of attendance on one of the works of history whose authors are listed above will count as one of the seven papers required of everyone. Papers on other readings will not count toward the total of seven. For all papers, bear the following points in mind: [1] As for length, when I say "two to three pages," I mean at least two full pages; also, papers should be printed in twelve-point type, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. [2] They should be stapled, and each student's last name should be indicated in the top left corners of first pages. [3] They should be revised and proofread carefully. Large numbers of misspelled words, grammatical errors, and typographical errors will have adverse impacts on my evaluation of their quality. [4] Lengthy quotations and heavy reliance on secondary sources should be avoided. [5] Plagiarism, the act of presenting another person's words or ideas as one's own, **must** be avoided. It is an egregious form of academic dishonesty, which can get people into a lot of trouble. [6] Copies or rough drafts should be kept in case papers are lost.

Each student will be expected to report orally in class on a book selected from the list of suggested readings, which he or she should discuss in relation to the assigned readings.

Here is my policy on grades. I do not assign letter grades for individual pieces of work. I write comments on papers and notes to myself. I also keep track of attendance, and I retain a pretty clear impression of the extent to which you are participating in discussions. If I am worried about your work, I shall let you know. If you want to talk with me about it, I shall be glad to do so. I think that by the end of the term you and I will have a pretty good idea of how well you have been doing.

Contacting Me and My Homepage

I will generally be reachable in my office (Armitage 353) during the hour before the start of class if you wish to see me then. You may make an appointment to see me by email (alees@rutgers.edu). For the syllabus for the course (and information about me), go to my Sakai site.

Topics of Class Meetings, Perspectives, Assignments, and Suggested Readings

January 23

## INTRODUCTION; THE BELLE ÉPOQUE AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

### Perspectives

The First World War marked the end of what historians sometimes refer to as “the long nineteenth century.” Beginning in the summer of 1914, it radically transformed a world that came to be regarded as having experienced a “golden age” during the years that preceded it. If you have time, you would be well advised to read what Felix Gilbert wrote about the prewar period in his classic text, which is informed by his own recollections of having lived in it. In any case, you should be aware of the developments he treats on pp. 95-148, where he discusses the war’s origins and the major events that marked its course. Having acquired that background, you should turn to the writings listed below, which will serve as the basis for the first of two conversations about ways in which the war-time experience was interpreted by participants.

### Required Reading

“World War I—The Human Price”

“German Students’ War Letters”

Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum est”

Siegfried Sassoon, “War Poems”

Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire* (excerpt)

Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (excerpt)

Bertrand Russell, “Some Psychological Difficulties of Pacifism in Wartime”

January 30

## THE FIRST WORLD WAR: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

### Perspectives

The First World War comprised a multitude of events and developments. Although military ones stand out most clearly, not only political, social, and economic ones but also developments in the area of cultural and intellectual life--both during the conflict and thereafter--deserve attention. The war caused a great rupture not only in structures of government and society but also in structures of feeling. Jay Winter’s book is one of many volumes he has written about the war’s cultural impact. Other works suggested here also deal with the war’s impact on European culture.

### Required Reading

\*Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the 20th Century*

### Suggested Reading

Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (Alex: HQ1090.7 G7 B68 1996)

Modris Eksteins, *The Rites of Spring* (quirky but interesting; D523 E37 1989)

Paul M. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (on the war in English literature; PR478.E8F8)

Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (D523 H96 1991)

Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (UB395.G7K5 1998)

Eric J. Leed, *No Man’s Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (D523 L443)

Ariel Roshwald and Richard Stites, eds., *European Culture in the Great War* (D523.E85 1999)

J. M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Culture* (D523 W58 1995)

February 6

## REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA: EVENTS AND SOURCES

### Perspectives

In large measure as a result of war-time defeats, Imperial Russia experienced a breakdown that led in 1917 first to the so-called “March Revolution” and then to the “November Revolution,” in which Bolshevik forces led by Vladimir Lenin seized control of the Russian state. They proceeded thereafter to build a communist dictatorship, with a view to transforming the Russian society they inherited into a Soviet society of the future. The basic outlines of what happened in Russia in 1917 and during the next two decades are presented in Gilbert’s text on pp. 85-94, 133-139, 177-185, 215-224, 304-310. The focus of discussion during the seminar will be on primary sources and a film, a classic work by the great Russian film-maker Sergei Eisenstein, “Ten Days that Shook the World.”

### Required Reading

Vladimir Lenin, *State and Revolution* (excerpts)

Vladimir Lenin, “Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly”

William Rosenberg, ed., *Bolshevik Visions: The First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Russia*  
(excerpts from writings by Nadezhda Krupskaya, Alexandra Kollontai, and A. Vinokurov)

Joseph Stalin, “On the First Five Year Plan” and “On the Draft Constitution”

Andrei A. Zhdanov, “Soviet Literature”

February 13

## REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

### Perspectives

Among the many works on the revolution by historians, Richard Stites’s study of the interplay between ideas, innovations, and ultimate repression stands out for the richness of its treatment of Russia during the revolutionary period (up through the early 1930s) as an arena in which culture was continually being invoked for political and social purposes. Other works suggested here deal with various aspects of the Bolshevik revolution or with life under Joseph Stalin, during and beyond the 1930s.

### Required Reading

\*Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*

### Suggested Reading

Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*  
(DK266.4.B76 2000)

Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (Alex: DK268.S8P535 2012)

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* (Alex: HN523.F57 1999)

Mary Leder, *My Life in Stalinist Russia: An American Woman Looks Back* (Alex: DK268.L4A3 2001)

Elizabeth Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender and Politics in Revolutionary Russia* (HX546.W67 1997)

\_\_\_\_\_. *Performing Justice: Agitation Trials in Early Soviet Russia* (KLA40 P64 W66 2005)

February 20

## LEFTISTS AND REFORMERS OUTSIDE THE SOVIET UNION: EVENTS AND SOURCES

### Perspectives

Revolutionary Russia constituted a powerfully inspirational example for many men and women of leftist persuasions outside Russia, who regarded the Russian communists as the vanguard of a movement that should lead to the triumph of social and economic equality outside as well as inside the Soviet Union. Such sympathy grew under the impact of the Great Depression. A variety of sources illuminates this tendency and rising criticism of capitalism. John Strachey was a writer on the left in Britain. The other

authors assigned here were active in the United States. We consider a journalist, a historian, a novelist, a theologian, and a playwright. (Gilbert's text does not treat the United States. It does, however, deal, on pp. 291-297, with the Spanish Civil War, in which many on the left from our country as well as from other countries participated in the ultimately futile defense of the Spanish Republic.)

#### Required Reading

John Strachey, *The Case for Communism* (excerpts)  
Edmund Wilson, "An Appeal to Progressives"  
Howard Zinn, ed., *New Deal Thought* (excerpts)  
Clifford Odets, "Waiting for Lefty"

February 27

### LEFTISTS AND REFORMERS OUTSIDE THE SOVIET UNION: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

#### Perspectives

An important book by Daniel T. Rodgers treats reformist thought in America under the impact of stimuli that emanated from Europe, treating the New Deal within a transatlantic as well as an American framework. Other works suggested here deal with the United States, with Europe, or (in the case of Engerman's and Hollander's books) with both the United States and Europe.

#### Required Reading

\*Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*, pp. 1-8, 267-508.

#### Suggested Reading

Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism* (PS228 C6 A2)  
Laura Browder, *Rousing the Nation: Radical Culture in Depression America* (PS228 R34 B76 1998)  
Larry Ceplair, *Under the Shadow War: Fascism, Anti-Fascism, and Marxists, 1918-1939* (D727 C43 1987)  
Terry A. Cooney, *Balancing Acts: American Thought and Culture in the 1930's* (E169.1 C765 1995)  
Peter Conn, *The American 1930s: A Literary History* (PS221.C656 2009)  
Morris Dickstein, *Dancing in the Dark: A Cultural History of the Great Depression* (Alex: E806.D57 2009)  
David C. Engerman, *Modernization From the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Alex: HC335.E636 2003)  
Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928-1978* (HM213 H57)  
Judy Kutulas, *The Long War: The Intellectual People's Front and Anti-Stalinism, 1930-1940* (Alex: E169.1.K835 1995)  
Richard Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (E169.1 P42 1973)  
Peter Stansky and William Abrahams, *Journey to the Frontier: Julian Bell and John Crawford--Their Lives and the 1930s* (Englishmen in the Spanish Civil War; (PR6003 E434 Z85 1966a)  
Susan P. Pennybacker, *From Scottsboro to Munich: Race and Political Culture in 1930s Britain*

March 6

### NAZI GERMANY: EVENTS AND SOURCES

#### Perspectives

A third response to interwar chaos--in addition to the communist dictatorship that was established in the Soviet Union and the democratic reformism that prevailed in the United States--was dictatorial fascism. It reached its apogee in Nazi Germany, in the Third Reich that was born in 1933 under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, who got a great deal of mileage from the threat seemingly posed to Germany by the forces of communism. Gilbert is particularly strong on the German scene, which he treats on pp. 192-197, 255-282, 304-311, 318-352. We consider in class both pro- and anti-Nazi sources from the period, among them excerpts from a classic film by Leni Riefenstahl, "The Triumph of the Will."

#### Required Reading

George Mosse, ed., *Nazi Culture* (selections)  
Joachim C. Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich* (selections)

March 13

### NAZI GERMANY: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

#### Perspectives

Like the Russian Revolution, the Nazi Revolution (as Hitler's seizure and elaboration of power is sometimes described) has given rise to a vast amount of historical writing. Again, we focus on a work that emphasizes the interplay between events and ideas. Ian Kershaw, the author of a two-volume biography of Hitler, here examines ideas propagated by the Nazi regime in an effort to inculcate into German citizens an adulatory attitude toward their "leader." Most of the other works suggested here deal with various aspects of Nazi culture--artistic, educational, and scientific. Peukert's book focuses more on social history, but it also deals with science and with popular culture.

#### Required Reading

\*Ian Kershaw, *The "Hitler Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich*

#### Suggested Reading

Jay W. Baird, *To Die for Germany: Heroes in the Nazi Pantheon* (DD243 B35 1990)  
Christa Kamenetsky, *Children's Literature in Hitler's Germany: The Cultural Policy of National Socialism* (PT1021 K35 1984)  
Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (DD256.5 P4613 1987b)  
Robert Proctor, *The Nazi War on Cancer* (RC268 P77 1999)  
Alan Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, and Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Alex: NX550 A1 S75 1993)  
David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933-1945* (PN1995.9 N36 W45 1983)  
Stephen H. Norwood. *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower: Complicity and Conflict on American Campuses* (Alex: LA227.1 N67 2009)

March 27

### THE HOLOCAUST AND ITS LASTING IMPACT: EVENTS AND SOURCES

#### Perspectives

For many people, the word "Nazism" conjures up not only the name of the nation in which Nazis first held power but also the name of a place where they carried out their most horrendous policies: Auschwitz, the geographic center of the effort that was undertaken during the Second World War to exterminate European Jews. Looking at the persecution of the Jews from the standpoint of the persecuted, we focus on a classic memoir by a Holocaust survivor who went on both to become a prolific author and a recipient of a Nobel Peace Prize. We also look at a classic film, "Night and Fog."

#### Required Reading

Karl Dietrich Bracher, "The Murder of the Jews"  
Omer Bartov, *Murder in Our Midst* (excerpts)  
\*Elie Wiesel, *Night*

April 3

## THE HOLOCAUST AND ITS LASTING IMPACT: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

### Perspectives

Instead of reading a book about the Holocaust itself, we turn to one that treats some of the ways in which memories of the Holocaust have functioned in public discourse ever since the death camps were liberated. Peter Novick's study of this theme within the framework of the postwar history of the United States takes the story right into the 1990s. Other works suggested here focus for the most part on the matter of memory, but two work—by Saul Friedlander and by Daniel Goldhagen--deals with the Holocaust itself, the one offering a superb synthesis, the other a highly controversial account of the involvement in it of "ordinary Germans."

### Required Reading

\*Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*

### Suggested Reading

Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (D744.4.B87 1994)  
Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (a very controversial interpretation; D804.3 G648 1996)  
Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (D804.3 L36 1991)  
Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: the Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* (Alex: D804.7.P73L44 2005)  
Hasia Diner, *We Remember With Reverence and Love : American Jews and the Myth of Silence After the Holocaust, 1945-1962* (D804.3 .D58 2009)  
Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* (BX1378 P49 2000)  
James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (Dana: D804.3 Y68 1993)  
Theodore S. Hamerow: *Why We Watched: Europe, America, and the Holocaust* (Alex: D804.3 H355 2008)

April 10

## THE COLD WAR AS AN INTELLECTUAL CONFLICT: EVENTS AND SOURCES

### Perspectives

The Second World War contained the seeds of a Cold War, which began within a year or so after 1945 and persisted, albeit in an attenuated form, for more than four decades thereafter. Like the world wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, this conflict involved not only governmental and military participants and hundreds of millions of ordinary citizens but also writers and intellectuals. We begin with a classic collection of autobiographical statements by men who renounced communism. A famous novel by the Englishman George Orwell similarly depicted the Soviet Union as a threat to the western democracies that could be compared with Nazi Germany. Two political scientists who helped to develop the concept of "totalitarianism" did likewise. Gilbert's text, on pp. 355-72, 382-391, provides essential background on the Soviet Union during the years when the Cold War was at its height.

### Required Reading

\*Richard Crossman, ed., *The God That Failed Six Studies in Communism*  
George Orwell, *1984* (excerpts)

Karl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (excerpts)

April 17

THE COLD WAR AS AN INTELLECTUAL CONFLICT: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Perspectives

A book by a German-born historian who has long taught in the United States uses intellectual biography as a vehicle for charting larger developments on both sides of the Atlantic, focusing on the career of a writer and man of affairs who sought to enhance American influence through philanthropic as well as other means. Other works suggested here focus either on the left or (in the case of Gleason's book) on thinking that helped to provide ammunition for the left's opponents.

Required Reading

\*Volker Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars In Europe: Shepard Stone between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy*

Suggested Reading

Richard M. Fried, *The Russians Are Coming! The Russians Are Coming! : Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America* (E169.12.F736 1998)

Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (D445 G54 1995)

Margot Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America : Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Alex: E169.12.H49 1997)

Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Alex: DC33.7.J84 1992)

William L. O'Neill, *A Better World: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals* (E183.8 S65 O53 1982)

Richard H. Pells, *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age: American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s* (E169.12.P45 1985)

Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Alex: E744.R63 2001)

David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (Alex: DK38.8 E54 2009)

Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (E169.12 W47 1991)

April 24

THE END OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE: EVENTS AND SOURCES

Perspectives

The Cold War came to an end more or less definitively in conjunction with the decline of Soviet influence in eastern Europe and the end of the Soviet Union itself. These developments came to a resounding climax during the pivotal years 1989-1991. Gilbert tells the overall story on pp.404-407, 434-443, 445-447. A book by the British journalist Timothy Garton Ash provides a firsthand account of events in the Soviet "satellites" during the months when they spun out of the Soviet orbit. We shall also look at excerpts from a film made shortly after the opening up of the Berlin Wall (on November 9, 1989).

Required Reading

\*Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*

May 1

THE END OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

### Perspectives

Although the events that occurred in the period 1989-1991 are still too recent to have elicited a body of historical literature that is comparable in its breadth and richness to the literatures that pertain to earlier developments, some works about these events are outstanding. One was written by the historian Charles Maier, a leading scholar in this country of politics and culture in twentieth-century Germany. Other works suggested here deal for the most part with particular areas in which communism collapsed, although the work by Brzezinski (written just before 1989) provides an overview of the entire process that led to the collapse.

### Required Reading

\*Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe, 1989*

### Suggested Reading

Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (HX40 B76 1989)

Robert Darnton, *Berlin Journal* (an eyewitness account by an outstanding historian; DD289 D27 1991)

Konrad Jarausch, *The Rush to German Unity* (DD290.25 J37 1994)

Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (DD289 M34 1997)

David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The End of the Soviet Empire* (DK288.R46 1993)

Gail Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* (DJK50 S75 1993)

1 Authoritarian Regimes and the Domestic Politics of War and Peace. (pp. 14-36).<sup>1</sup> The previous chapters showed that dictatorships vary in the rates at which they initiate conflict, the likelihood that they will be defeated in the conflicts in which they do become involved, and the probability that the leader will be ousted in the wake of defeat. On each of these dimensions, personalist boss and strongman regimes are the most extreme: They initiate the most international conflict, they are the least likely to win, and yet their leaders typically survive even defeat in fully-fledged war.<sup>2</sup> Why are military dictatorships more belligerent than civilian regimes? In this chapter, I turn to two different countries and time periods to shed light on this question. Though war communism lasted during the civil war, the war devastated Russian industry and emptied cities' populations in Moscow and Kiev. The masses of urban workers supporting the Bolshevik revolution employed in major industries diminished, leaving fewer workers remaining on the job. Industrial output fell.<sup>3</sup> Communism is used in an economic and political sense. It means, economically, the ownership by the state of all the means of production and distribution, and, politically, the dictatorship which permits no free elections of competing parties. Elections were held in Russia, but only communist candidates were eligible. In the first period of communism, between 1917 and 1921, complete communism was established. A revolution constitutes a challenge to the established political order and the eventual establishment of a new order radically different from the preceding one. The great revolutions of European history, especially the Glorious (English), French, and Russian revolutions, changed not only the system of government but also the economic system, the social structure, and the cultural values of those societies.<sup>4</sup> Aristotle elaborated on this concept, concluding that if a culture's basic value system is tenuous, the society will be vulnerable to revolution. Any radical alteration in basic values or beliefs provides the ground for a revolutionary upheaval.<sup>5</sup> Much attention was given to finding means of combating revolution and stifling changes in society. Global politics began to be reconfigured along cultural lines.<sup>6</sup> In other words, according to Huntington, identity and culture emerged as the new fault lines in an impending clash of civilizations. What was behind the rise of identity politics? And why did it come into the fore at the end of the Cold War and not earlier?<sup>7</sup> In short, culture wars are about opposite views on such cultural values as individualism, gender, and sexuality. These wars pit traditionalists and conservatives against so-called "progressives" and liberals. They first started in advanced Western countries, especially the United States, and have gradually spread to the rest of the world.