

Dictatorship and Democracy: Europe 1919-1939

History 408 / Fall 2020 / CRN 18884

MWF 2:30 – 3:20 in WALC 2088

In a Europe devastated by four years of war, the aftermath was bound to be a challenge. What followed World War I was, indeed, two decades of permanent crisis – social, political, economic, and even cultural. During that twenty-year time span, the countries of Europe experimented with democracy – and then fell one by one into authoritarian or dictatorial forms of rule. These non-democratic regimes amassed a kind of legitimacy by stirring up the population against perceived enemies, both internal and external. That kind of frenetic mobilization could only end in another world war.

In 2020, we can see the omens of another double collapse. The institutions of democracy are on the defensive even as entropy increases in the international system. History cannot tell us what choices to make in the future; but the historical study of past breakdowns offers cautionary tales. By focusing on the internal dynamics of major European societies – including Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union, France, and Britain – we will consider why democracies appeared so ineffective and dictatorships so powerful in the 1920s and 1930s.

Learning Outcomes

Completing this course will enhance your ability to:

- > read, analyze, and discuss book-length memoirs and historical monographs
- > respond to complex paper assignments & exam questions with clearly written essays
- > define and differentiate among several major ideologies of the 20th Century, including socialism, communism, fascism, and liberalism

Course Requirements

This is a senior-level course, so expectations are high in terms of reading, writing, and participation. You will read five books and write two comparative essays. To encourage continuing participation in class discussions, there will also be occasional reading quizzes and an in-class final exam at semester's end. The course components are weighted as follows:

Participation	10%
Reading quizzes	10%
First and second papers	25% each
Take-home final exam	30%

Course Readings

The following books are required for this course and should be available at Follett's and the University Bookstore. In case you wish to search for these items from an on-line retailer, be sure to make use of the ISBN numbers below to ensure that you wind up with the right edition.

Allen, William Sheridan. *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922-1945*, revised ed. Brattleboro, Vt.: Echo Points Books & Media, 2014. ISBN (paperback): 978-1-62654-872-5.
Please do not purchase the first edition of this book (1965), which is significantly out of date!

Duggan, Christopher. *Fascist Voices: An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN-13 (hardcover): 978-0-199-73078-0. [on-line version available @ PU Libraries]

Large, David Clay. *Between Two Fires: Europe's Path in the 1930s*. New York: Norton, 1991. ISBN-13 (paper): 978-0-393-30757-3.

The Orwell Reader: Fiction, Essays, and Reportage. New York: Harvest Books, 1961. ISBN (paper): 978-0-156-70176-1. [on-line version available through Hathi Trust @ PU Libraries web site, but it's quite cheap to buy]

Scott, John. *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. ISBN (paper): 978-0-253-20536-0.

Course Policies

Attendance. This semester is very much an experiment. In some ways, the relative lack of distractions makes for a uniquely intensive learning environment. So I urge you to attend every class session – unless you are sick. (If you're sick, please stay home, regardless of the nature of the ailment!)

Common courtesy suggests that you should arrive on time. If you must leave early, please inform us ahead of time and then raise your hand at the appropriate time. Class time is not the same thing as a television viewing! Your coming and going may represent a significant distraction.

Please do not use electronic devices during class. No iPhones, iPads, or laptops. Srsly. Otherwise your casual meanderings around the World Wide Web will distract everyone around you. If you want to take notes, use pen/pencil and paper. I would urge you to buy physical copies of the course textbooks so that you can refer to the readings during class discussion.

Academic integrity: The assignments in this course require you to formulate complex thoughts in your own words. Attempts to pass off another's words as your own – be it on an exam or in your written work – will carry harsh penalties. Plagiarized papers will earn a "zero" for the assignment and may lead to further consequences, including notification of the Dean of Students Office. The "University Regulations" handbook contains further information on dishonesty.

Disclaimer: In the event of a major campus emergency (or, you know, a pandemic), the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted, once the course resumes, on the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructor via email or phone.

Contact Information

Prof. William G. Gray (wggray@purdue.edu)
Student Hours (live or virtual) in UNIV 328:
MW 1:00 - 2:15 or by appointment

Discussion and Reading Schedule

Read for class

Aug. 24	Introduction	
Aug. 26	Ending the war	
Aug. 28	Mourning the dead	
Aug. 31	Disorder in postwar Italy	Duggan, preface & 1-26
Sept. 2	Fascism takes hold, 1920-1922	Duggan, 27-54
Sept. 4	Consolidating the dictatorship, 1922-1924	Duggan, 55-86
Sept. 7	The Duce	Duggan, 87-112, 216-248
Sept. 9	Italian fascism in color	
Sept. 11	Fascist society	Duggan, 113-147, 179-215
Sept. 14	Italy's police state	Duggan, 148-178
Sept. 16	Britain in the 1920s: Exhausted empire	
Sept. 18	France in the 1920s: Make Germany Pay!	
Sept. 21	The Weimar Republic	
Sept. 23	Introducing Northeim	Allen, xii-40
Sept. 25	Northeim in the Great Depression	Allen, 42-90
Sept. 28	Political combat in Northeim	Allen, 91-147
Sept. 30	"Coordinating" politics and culture	Allen, 151-200
Oct. 2	A world unraveled, 1929-33	
Oct. 5	Life in the Third Reich	Allen, 201-248
Oct. 7	Long Knives	Large, 101-137
Oct. 9	Evaluating Northeim	Allen, 249-303
Oct. 12	The Nuremberg Laws	
Oct. 14	The Soviet Experiment, 1917-1927 - FIRST PAPER DUE, 11:59 pm -	

Oct. 16	Stalin's Five Year Plan, 1928-1932	
Oct. 19	An American in Magnitogorsk, Part I	Scott, xi-114
Oct. 21	Film: <i>Man with a Movie Camera</i> (1929)	
Oct. 23	The Great Purges	Large, 267-316
Oct. 26	An American in Magnitogorsk, Part II	Scott, 115-263
Oct. 28	Crushing "Red Vienna"	
Oct. 30	The embattled French Republic	Large, 23-58
Nov. 2	Britain's structural crisis	Large, 180-222
Nov. 4	Orwell's Paris	Orwell, 49-85
Nov. 6	Orwell's England	Orwell, 118-164
Nov. 9	Italy's aggression	Large, 101-137
Nov. 11	Fascism and war	Duggan, 249-318
Nov. 13	Popular Fronts	
Nov. 16	The Spanish Civil War	Large, 223-266
Nov. 18	Orwell in Catalonia	Orwell, 165-212
Nov. 20	Appeasement at Munich	Large, 317-363
Nov. 23	How war came - SECOND PAPER DUE -	
Nov. 25-27	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Nov. 30	Wrap-Up Discussion (Zoom)	
Dec. 11	TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE	