

Twentieth Century World

Svanur Pétursson

svanur.petursson@gmail.com

Office: Conklin Hall 337

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2.30-3.30 (Zoom)

HIST 213

Tuesdays/Thursdays 1-2.20pm

Hill Hall 204

Fall 2023

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.

Attendance:

Attendance is required and attendance will be taken at the start of every class.

If you plan to claim a religious holiday as an excused absence, you must inform me of this fact within the first two weeks of class.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism is passing off someone else's work as your own and will not be tolerated. Students are expected to write their own original work and to give credit in the form of footnotes (i.e. citations) for any material that is not their own. Plagiarized assignments will be given an automatic "0" with no possibility of a rewrite. Violations will be brought to the immediate attention of the Dean of Students and adjudicated in accordance with the NJIT Honor Code.

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

Week 1

September 5th: Introduction

September 7th: Overview of the Twentieth Century

Readings: *Twentieth-Century World*: Chapter 1 (skim)

Week 2

September 12th: Origins of the Twentieth Century - Imperialism

Readings: *Twentieth-Century World*: Chapter 2

September 14th: Path to War

Readings: Hobsbawm: From Peace to War

Week 3

September 19th: World War I

In class Viewing:

Film: They Shall Not Grow Old

September 21st: Aftermath of the War: The Russian Revolution

Readings: Gerwath: Russian Revolutions

Week 4

September 26th: When did the War End? An Uneasy Peace

Readings: Gerwath: Apparent Triumph of Democracy

September 28th: The 1918-1919 Flu Pandemic

PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION

Week 5

October 3rd: 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 5th: Roaring Twenties? The Great Depression

Readings: Hobsbawm: Into the Economic Abyss

Week 6

October 10th: Stalinism as a Different Option

Readings: Fitzpatrick – Palaces on Monday

October 12th: The Weimar Republic and the Rise of the Nazis

Readings: Ian Kershaw: “Hitler and the Germans:

Hobsbawm: The Fall of Liberalism

Week 7

October 17th: Path to War – The Munich Conference

Readings: Hobsbawm: Against the Common Enemy

October 19th: Appeasement

PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION

Week 8

October 24th: World War II

Readings: TBD

October 26th: The Holocaust

Readings: TBD

Week 9

October 31st: The Lasting Effects of World War II

November 2nd: The Beginning of the Cold War

Readings: Robbins: Confrontational Coexistence 1953-1965

Week 10

November 7th: The Marshall Plan and Economic Recovery

November 9th: The Belgrade Conference

PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION

Week 11

November 14th: Decolonization

The Battle of Algiers (Film excerpt)

November 16th: 1968: A Year of Revolutions

Readings: Robbins: Devious Decade 1965-1975

Week 12

November 21st: The Global Cold War
Readings: Westad: The Global Cold War

November 23th: THANKSGIVING RECESS

Week 13

November 28th: The Cold War Continues
Readings: *Twentieth-Century World*: Chapter 12

November 30th: The Precarious 1980s
Readings: TBD

Week 14

December 5th: The Fall of Communism
PRIMARY SOURCE DISCUSSION

December 7th: End of the Cold War and the World Since 1990
Readings: Robbins: The End of an Era

Week 15

December 12th: FINAL EXAM: Review Session
Final Exam Review Guide Distributed

FINAL Exam: December 19th by 11.30am