

# The Making of the Contemporary World, 1900-2000

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*Alessandro Iandolo – New Economic School, Moscow*

## Course description

This is an introductory undergraduate-level course on contemporary history, aimed at non-specialist students of history. It is a wide-ranging comparative course that explores important themes, concepts and theories relevant for the study of the 20th century. The course will examine theories of imperialism as well as the emergence of nation states, as empires collapsed. It will also turn to the challenge to liberal democracy posed by totalitarian regimes, which first emerged in interwar Europe. This will be followed by a discussion of genocide, the emergence of total warfare and the challenges of post-war reconstruction. Finally, the course examines the place of the nation-state in an era of global capitalism, as well as broader issues of minority rights and migration.

The course presupposes a basic knowledge of contemporary history and familiarity with contemporary politics, as well as proficiency in English, which is the language of instruction.

## Aims

Students are expected to attain a broad understanding of the critical developments in contemporary history since the turn of the century, and of the main historical and theoretical debates about them. Students will analyse key themes such as war and peace, democracy and totalitarianism, the rise of fascism, the collapse of communism in Europe, globalisation. By the end of the course, students will be expected to be able to identify the nature and scope of the issues raised concerning contemporary history; summarise and appraise the relative merits and demerits of alternative views and interpretations about contemporary political, social, and cultural history; present, accurately, succinctly and lucidly, and in written or oral form their arguments in accordance with appropriate scholarly conventions in assessed essays and unseen examinations.

## Teaching methodology

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminars. Lectures will cover the core of the course, exposing students to the main events of the period and their principal historiographical interpretations. During seminars students will focus on some specific issues to be discussed in class through primary and secondary sources, questions, and short presentations. **Active** participation in **both** lectures and seminars is an essential requirement for the course. All students on the course are expected to engage in discussion about the topic of the lecture or seminar, and to be ready to answer questions about it.

## Assessment

A written examination at the end of the course counts for 40% of the total grade. The exam will be composed of a first section with several compulsory short questions, and a second section with essay-type longer questions, of which you are required to choose at least two. If a student fails the final exam, he/she will be required to sit a new exam, with different questions.

Coursework counts for 30% of the total grade. Students are required to write two 2,000-word (excluding footnotes and bibliography) essays answering two questions chosen from a list that will be released at the start of the course (each essay counts for 15% of the final grade). If a student fails one of the essays, he/she will be required to submit a new essay on a new topic.

The remaining 30% of the grade for the course is calculated by taking into account each student's contribution to class discussion (15%) as well as the student's performance in at least one short oral presentation on a topic of his/her choice during one of the seminars (15%). If a student obtains a fail grade for his/her presentation, he/she will be required to submit a written essay on the presentation topic.

## Core readings

The key textbooks for the course are:

- M. Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 1999)
- E. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1995)

## Course structure and reading list

The course is divided in 10 lectures that closely follow the chronology of the twentieth century. Moreover, there are 10 thematic seminars, during which student explore more in detail one broad topic. There are also 10 special seminars, in which students deliver short presentations answering specific questions related to one or more topics.

For each topic there is a set of 'core reading', which MUST be done before each seminar. The 'further reading' broaden and deepen the discussion of specific issues and themes. Students should familiarise themselves with several of them before each seminar, and they are expected to cite them in essays and presentations. *Relying on the basic readings alone will not be enough to pass the course.*

## Lectures

1. *Introductory session*
2. Democracy's Rise and Fall
3. Empires, nations, minorities
4. Race and gender between the wars
5. The crisis of Capitalism
6. War and genocide
7. Peace and reconstruction
8. Communism and Cold War
9. The rise of the welfare state
10. The crisis of the welfare state
11. The end of Communism and the rise of globalisation
12. *Revision session*

## Seminars

### 1. Modern History and Historiography

#### *Core reading*

R. Kosselleck Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time (2004), chapter 1

#### *Further reading*

M. Fullbrook, Historical Theory (2002)

## 2. The State

### *Core reading*

M. Van Creveld, Rise and Decline of the State (1999), chapter 4  
J. Herz, 'Rise and Demise of the Territorial State', World Politics, 9:4 (July, 1957), 473-493

### *Further Reading*

D. Held, Political Theory and the Modern State (1989)  
J. A. Hall, ed., States in History (1986)  
**P. Kennedy, Rise and Decline of the Great Powers (1987)**  
M. Van Creveld, Rise and Decline of the State (1999)  
C. Nagengast, 'Violence, Terror and the Crisis of the State', Annual Review of Anthropology 23 (1994), 109-136 [E]  
A. M. Alonso, 'The Politics of Space, Time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism and Ethnicity', Annual Review of Anthropology 23, (1994), 379-405  
**S. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations', Foreign Affairs 72 (1993)**

## 3. Empires and Imperialism

### *Core reading*

W. J. Mommsen, Theories of Imperialism (1983), ch. 1  
John Darwin, After Tamerlane: the Global History of Empire Since 1405, 6-27, 298-364, and optional 368-423.  
Philippa Levine, The British Empire, chapters 8 and 9, 'Being Ruled,' and 'Gender and Sexuality'.

### *Further reading*

Alice Conklin, A Mission to Civilize: the Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930 (2000).  
D. K. Fieldhouse, Economics and Empire 1830-1914 (1984).  
Daniel Headrick, Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850-1940 (1990).  
Francine Hirsch, Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union (2005).  
M. Kuitenbrouwer, The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism: Colonies and Foreign Policy 1870-1902 (1991).  
**Dominic Leiven, Empire: the Russian Empire and Its Rivals (2002).**  
**Phillipa Levine, The British Empire – Sunrise to Sunset (2007).**  
Sloan Mahone and Megan Vaughan, eds Psychiatry and Empire (2007)  
Roy MacLeod and Milton Lewis, eds., Disease, Medicine, and Empire: Perspectives on Western Medicine and the Experience of European Expansion (1989).  
Wolfgang Mommsen, Imperial Germany, 1867-1918: Politics, Culture, and Society in an Authoritarian State (1995).  
**Andrew Porter, European Imperialism, 1860-1914 (1996) [contains detailed bibliography of secondary sources]**  
Woodruff Smith, The German Colonial Empire (1978).

George Steinmetz, The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa (2007).  
Ann Laura Stoler, Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule (2002).  
Helen Tilley with Robert Gordon, eds., Ordering Africa: European Imperialism, Anthropology, and the Politics of Knowledge (2007).

#### 4. Nationalism and Nation-making

##### *Core reading*

Suisheng Zhao, A Nation-State by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism, chapter 2 ("The Origins of Chinese Nationalism", pp. 37-78). [If you have time, the introductory section (pp. 1-36) is also strongly recommended.]  
A. D. Smith, 'The origins of nations' in V. P. Pecora (ed.), Nations and Identities (2001)  
E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (eds), The Invention of Tradition (1983), ch. 7

##### *Further reading*

E. Gentile, The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy (1996), introduction  
E. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism since 1780 (1990)  
L. Greenfeld, Nationalism (1992)  
A. Smith, The Ethnic Origin of Nations (1987)  
A. Hastings, The Construction of Nationhood (1997)  
S. Woolf (ed.), Nationalism in Europe. 1815 to the present. A reader (1996)  
B. Anderson, Imagined Communities (1991)  
E. Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (1983)  
R. Caplan & J. Feffer (eds), Europe's New Nationalism (1996)  
Hobsbawm & Ranger (eds), The Invention of Tradition (1983)  
E. Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen (1976)  
L. Colley, Britons (1992)  
A. Karakasidou, Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood (1997)  
C. Jelavich, South Slav Nationalisms (1990)  
B. Voglis, 'In search of a convenient past. Nationalism, violence and historical writing in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40 (2005), 381-388  
Z. Sternhell, 'Paul Deroulede and the Origins of Modern French Nationalism', *Journal of Contemporary History* 6 (1971), 46-70 (E)  
G. Bernardini, 'The origins and development of racial anti-semitism in Fascist Italy', *Journal of Modern History*, 49 (Sept. 1977), 431-453 (E)  
J. Breuilly (ed.), The state of Germany (1992)  
Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories (1993)  
Partha Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse? (1986)  
Prasenjit Duara, Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China (1995)

Prasenjit Duara, Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern (2003)  
John Fitzgerald, Awakening China: Politics, Culture and Class in the Nationalist Revolution (1996)  
Jonathan Unger ed., Chinese Nationalism

## 5. War

### *Core reading*

E. Hobsbawm, Age of Extremes (1994), chapter 1  
A. Beevor, Stalingrad (1999), chapter 10

### *Further reading*

J. Bourke, An Intimate History of Killing (1999)  
M. Van Creveld, The Transformation of War (1991)  
M. Van Creveld, The Art of War: War and Military Thought (2000)  
M. Van Creveld, 'Thoughts on Military History', Journal of Contemporary History 18 (1983), pp. 549-566 [E]  
A. Beevor, Stalingrad (1998)  
A. Beevor, Berlin. The Downfall 1945 (2003)  
J. Winter, Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European Cultural History (1998)  
J. Winter et al. (eds), The Great War and the Twentieth Century (2001)  
J. Winter, The Great War in History (2005)  
R. Chickering & S. Förster (eds), Great War, Total War? Combat and Mobilisation on the Western Front, 1914-1918 (2000)  
A. Kramer, Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War (2007)  
O. Bartov, The Eastern Front, 1941-45. German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare (1985)  
G. Weinberg, A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II (1995)  
J. Keegan, A History of Warfare (2004)

## 6. Genocide

### *Core Reading*

M. Levene, 'Why is the Twentieth Century the Century of Genocide?', Journal of World History 11/2 (2000) (E)  
D. Stone, 'The Historiography of Genocide: Beyond "Uniqueness" and Ethnic Competition', Rethinking History 8 (2004), Nr. 1, pp. 127-42 (E) (also in his History, Memory and Mass Atrocity: Essays on the Holocaust and Genocide (2006), 236-52)  
D. Bloxham, 'Modernity and Genocide', European History Quarterly, 38 (2008), 294-311.

### *Further Reading*

E. Weitz, Century of Genocide. Utopias of race and Nation (2003)

M. Mann, The Dark Side of Democracy. Explaining Ethnic Cleansing (2005)  
 N. Naimark, Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe (2001)  
 M. Levene, Genocide in the Age of the Nation State (2005), vols. 1 & 2  
 R. Gellately & B. Kiernan (eds), The Spectre of Genocide : Mass Murder in Historical Perspective (2003)  
 P. Mack. & O. Bartov. (eds), In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the 20th Century (2001)  
 M. Levene & P. Roberts, The Massacre in History (1999)  
 M. Midlarsky, The Killing Trap. Genocide in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (2005)  
 C. Browning, The Path to Genocide. Essays on Launching the Final Solution (1992)  
 D. Bloxham, The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians (2005)  
 M. Mazower, 'Violence and the State in the Twentieth century', The American Historical Review 107 (2002), Nr. 4  
 P. Novick, The Holocaust and Collective Memory (2000)

## 7. Reconstruction

### *Core Reading*

C. S. Maier, 'The two postwar eras and the conditions for stability in twentieth-century Western Europe', The American Historical Review, Vol.86, No.2, April 1981, 327-352  
 A. J. Williams, "'Reconstruction" before the Marshall Plan', Review of International Studies, July 2005, Vol.31, No.3, 541-558 [E]

### *Further Reading*

S. A. Schuker & C. Kindleberger, 'The two postwar eras: comments', The American Historical Review, Vol.86, No.2, April 1981, 353-362  
 M. Mazower, Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century (1998)  
 A. J. Williams, Failed imagination? The Anglo-American new world order from Wilson to Bush (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2007)  
 P. Clavin, 'Two Postwar Eras in Comparison: the Lessons of History Applied?', in Clavin, The Great Depression in Europe, 1929-1939 (2000)  
 C. Levy & M. Roseman (eds), Three Postwar Eras in Comparison: Western Europe, 1918-1945-1989 (2002)  
 C. S. Maier (ed), The Cold War in Europe: Era of a Divided Continent (3rd ed. 1996)  
 A. Milward, The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-1951 (new ed. 2003)  
 S. Parish, 'The Marshall Plan, Soviet-American relations and the division of Europe', in N. Naimark and L. Gibianskii (eds), The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944-1949 (1997), pp.267-290  
 M. M. Narinskii, 'The Soviet Union and the Marshall Plan', in: A. Varsari and E. Calandri (eds), The Failure of Peace in Europe, 1943-1948 (2002)  
 A. Milward, The European Rescue of the Nation-State (new ed. 2000)

Special issue of Journal of Cold War Studies on "The Marshall Plan and the Origins of the Cold War Reassessed", Winter 2005, Vol.7, No.1

## 8. Minorities and migration

### *Core reading*

- A. McKeown, 'Global Migration 1846-1940', Journal of World History, 15, 2 (2004), (E, via [historycooperative.org](http://historycooperative.org))
- C. Joppke, 'Immigration Challenges the Nation State' in C. Joppke ed, Challenges to the Nation State: Immigration in Western Europe and the United States (1998) [E]

### *Further reading*

- B. Anderson, 'Majorities and Minorities', in Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, the World (1998)
- S. Castles & M. Miller, Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World (2003), introduction & chapter one
- S. Benhabib, The Rights of Others. Aliens, Residents and Citizens (2004)
- S. Bose, A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in an Age of Global Empire, chapter 3.
- J. Clifford, 'Diasporas', Cultural Anthropology 9 (1994), pp. 303-38 (E)
- R. Cohen (ed.), Cambridge Survey of World Migration (1995)
- R. Cohen, Global Diasporas: An Introduction (1997)
- D. Eltis (ed.), Coerced and Free Migration: Global Perspectives (2002)
- P. Gatrell, A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during the First World War (1999)
- E. Ho, 'Empire Through Diasporic Eyes: A View From the Other Boat', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 46, 2 (2004), pp. 210-46
- J. & L. Lucassen (eds), Migration, Migration History, History (1999)
- L. Lucassen, The Immigrant Threat: The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850 (2005)
- M. Marrus, The Unwanted: European Refugees from the First World War through the Cold War (1985)
- L.P. Moch, Moving European: Migration in Western Europe since 1650 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2003)
- S. Sassen, Guests and Aliens (1999), chapter 5
- C. Skran, Refugees in Inter-War Europe: The Emergence of a Regime (1995)
- T.Y. Tan & G. Kudaisya, The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia (2001), Chapters 5-6
- UNHCR, State of the World's Refugees (2006), available at: [www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/template?page=publ&src=static/sowr2006/toceng.htm](http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/template?page=publ&src=static/sowr2006/toceng.htm)

## 9. Communism and its fall

### *Core reading*



S. Cohen, 'Discussion: Was the Soviet System reformable?', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 63, No.3, 2004, pp. 459-554 (E). See also the six responses to Cohen, also on

#### *Further reading*

A. Brown, Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective (2007)

M. Malia, The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia (1996)

V. Sebestyen, Revolution 1989: The Fall of the Soviet Empire (2009)

R. Crampton, Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century (1994)

R. Dahrendorf, Reflections on the Revolution in Europe (1990)

T. Garton Ash, We the People (1990)

M. Sandle, A Short History of Soviet Socialism (2005)

S. Kotkin, Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse 1970-2000 (2001)

A. Brown, The Rise and Fall of Communism (2009)

A. Yurchak, Everything was Forever Until it Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation (2005)

## 10. Globalisation

#### *Core reading*

C. A. Bayly, "'Archaic" and "Modern" Globalization in the Eurasian and African Arena, ca. 1750–1850', in A.G. Hopkins (ed.), Globalization in World History (2002), 45-72

B. Mazlish, 'Consumerism in the Context of the Global Ecumene', in B. Mazlish & Iriye (eds), The Global History Reader (2005), 125-32

L. Nelson, 'South Korean Consumer Nationalism: Women, Children, Credit, and Other Perils', in S. Garon & P. Maclachlan (eds), The Ambivalent Consumer: Questioning Consumption in East Asia and the West (2006), 188-208

#### *Further reading*

A. Appadurai (ed.), The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective (1986)

M. Berg, 'In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century', Past and Present 182 (2004), 85-142 (E)

J. Brewer & R. Porter (eds), Consumption and the World of Goods (1993)

J. Brewer & F. Trentmann (eds), Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges (2006)

L. Cohen, A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (2003)

V. De Grazia, Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th-Century Europe (2005)

B. Fine, The World of Consumption: The Material and Cultural Revisited (2002)

R. J. Foster, 'Tracking Globalization: Commodities and Value in Motion', in: C. Tilley et al (eds), Handbook of Material Culture (2006)

D. Held, A. McGrew, Globalization/Anti-Globalization (2007, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

S. Garon & P. Maclachlan (eds), The Ambivalent Consumer: Questioning Consumption in East Asia and the West (2006)

- K. Gereth, China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation (2003)
- D. Howes (ed.), Cross-Cultural Consumption: Global Markets, Local Realities (1996)
- D. Miller (ed.), Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local (1995)
- A. Offer, The Challenge of Affluence: Self-Control and Well-Being in the United States and Britain since 1950 (2006)
- K. Pomeranz, The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy (2000)
- K. Soper & F. Trentmann (eds), Citizenship and Consumption (2007)
- P. N. Stearns, Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire (2001)
- F. Trentmann, 'Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on consumption', Journal of Contemporary History 39 (2004), 373-402 [E]
- F. Trentmann, 'Consumption', in J. Merriman & J. Winter (eds), Europe since 1914: Encyclopaedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction (2006), vol. 2
- F. Trentmann, Free Trade Nation: Commerce, Consumption, and Civil Society in Modern Britain (2008)
- R. Wilk, Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists (2006)
- V. Zelizer, Culture and Consumption. in N.J. Smelser & R. Swedberg (eds) The Handbook of Economic Sociology (2005)