



History 7020: Issues and Interpretations in European History
Jared Poley
Fall 2007

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1:15 – 2:00 (and by appointment).
Class meetings: Monday 5:30 – 8:50 in GCB 627

Course Description:

History 7020 is a readings seminar devoted to various “issues and interpretations” in European history. We will be reading and discussing a number of themes in European history: social interactions, the development of a consumer society, the history of ideas and of the self, the “age of revolutions,” the development of ideas about class and gender, the formation of nationalism and national identities, the generation of overseas empires, the legacies of war and genocide, Europeans in exile, intergenerational conflicts, and the question of modernity. By the end of the semester you should have a basic grounding in the contours of European history since the late medieval period and an understanding of the historiography.

Class Policies:

Naturally, the course syllabus is only a general plan for the course; “deviations” may be necessary. Attendance is essential; missing three class sessions—for any reason—will result in a failing grade.

Course Requirements:

- Faithful attendance at class sessions and steadfast dedication to maintaining progress through your reading list. Readings are to be completed before class.
- **Reading Responses and Class Discussion (40%).** This class is reading intensive. You are expected to do the assigned readings before class and to be prepared to discuss the readings vigorously and with intelligence. To facilitate this, I will expect short written responses (roughly 2 pages) to be handed in during class. In these responses you must summarize the reading and then offer your interpretation of it. **This response is due the day of class discussion; late responses will not be accepted.** Your contributions to the class discussions—both in quantity and in quality—are also a factor in this portion of your grade. Each of you will also be expected to introduce the readings one week, posing provocative questions and guiding discussion.
- **A Paper (60%)** (a mere 20-30 pages), to be handed in **by 5:00 pm on Monday, December 10.** The topic may be of your choosing (as long as it deals with European history), but take this as an opportunity to explore some of the central themes and historiographical issues raised by the course.

Itinerary and Readings:

The following readings are required for this course and are available at the campus bookstore. I have also asked the library to place copies on reserve in Library South.

August 20: Course Introduction**August 27: Medieval & Early Modern Social Interactions****Reading Assignment:**

- Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, Part II (pp. 45 -183; “Civilization as a Specific Transformation of Human Behavior”) and Part IV (pp. 363 ff.; “Synopsis: Towards a Theory of Civilizing Processes”) [on reserve]
- Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*
- David Sabean, “The Sins of Belief: A village remedy for hoof and mouth disease” in *Power in the Blood* [on reserve]

September 3: Labor Day/No Class**September 10: Money, Industrialization, & Consumerism****Reading Assignment:**

- Deborah Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past*
- Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*

September 17: Enlightenment**Reading Assignment:**

- Anke te Heesen, *The World in a Box: The Story of an Eighteenth-Century Picture Encyclopedia*
- Anthony La Vopa, “Conceiving a Public: Ideas and Society in Eighteenth Century Europe” in *Journal of Modern History* [link through JSTOR]

September 24: Revolution**Reading Assignment:**

- Jan Goldstein, *The Post-Revolutionary Self: Politics and Psyche in France, 1750-1850*

October 1: Class**Reading Assignment:**

- Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class*

October 8: Body**Reading Assignment:**

- Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*
- Barbara Duden, Chapter 4 (“The Perception of the Body”) in *The Woman Beneath the Skin* [on reserve]

October 15: Nationalism**Reading Assignment:**

- Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*

October 22: Imperialism**Reading Assignment:**

- Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*

October 29: War**Reading Assignment:**

- Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture And the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*

November 5: Great War**Reading Assignment:**

- Martha Hanna, *Your Death Would Be Mine: Paul and Marie Pireaud in the Great War*

November 12: Exiles**Reading Assignment:**

- Ehrhard Bahr, *Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism*

November 19: Holocaust**Reading Assignment:**

- Alexandra Garbarini, *Numbered Days: Diaries and the Holocaust*

November 26: 1968**Reading Assignment:**

- Dagmar Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany*

December 3: Modernism/Postmodernism**Reading Assignment:**

- Hal Foster, "Postmodernism in Parallax" in *October* [available through JSTOR]
- Perry Anderson, *Origins of Postmodernity*

December 10: papers due by 5:00 pm