

HC 314 Age of Dictators: Totalitarianism in the Interwar Period (1919 – 1939)

Naperville Campus; Monday: 6:30 - 9:30 P.M.; March 27 – June 11

Faculty: Charles DiCola; 5413 Maplewood Place; Downers Grove, IL 60515; Cell: 630 989-2849

Fax: 630 969-3565; E-mail: chuckdicola@aol.com

Office Hours: Mondays 5:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M., or by appointment

Course Description:

Casual observers of 20th century history who identify the 1919 – 1939 time span primarily with America's "Roaring 20s," Great Depression, and New Deal lack a thorough understanding of the era. Critically examined through a wider lens, the period yields a story of compelling drama. For while the United States retreated to an isolationist foreign policy following World War I, cataclysmic events in Europe shook the world.

This course is called "Age of Dictators" because Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Joseph Stalin were dominant figures in the years between the world wars. Their rule over their respective societies was later described as totalitarian. We will discover how totalitarianism affected Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union in the interwar period – and how it impacted the course of world history. We will also try to comprehend why events played out as they did, and determine if this story contains any universal truths about human behavior. The study of history is often messy, spirited, and contentious, which is as it should be. During our examination of the age of dictators we will generate more questions than answers, more skepticism than certitude. We will search for understanding with curiosity, humility, and respect for the opinions of others.

Faculty Biographical Sketch:

I am a member of the SNL visiting faculty. I received my B.A. from the School for New Learning in 2002 and will be awarded my Master's Degree in education from DePaul in June. I am a student of 19th and 20th century history, with an equal focus on the rulers and those they ruled. As a veteran of SNL I understand how hard it is to balance the demands of school, work, and personal life. In the classroom I gave my best effort. As a teacher I promise to give you your precious time and money's worth.

Competencies:

A-3-C: Can examine a social issue from an ethical perspective.

1. Identifies and describes a social issue or situation.
2. Identifies an ethical perspective relevant to the issue or situation.
3. Uses that perspective to raise or explore questions about this issue or situation.

A-4: Can analyze a problem using two different ethical systems.

1. Identifies and describes an ethical situation or problem.
2. Describes the distinctive assumptions of two different ethical systems.
3. Analyzes the problem by comparing and contrasting how these two different systems would apply to that particular ethical issue or problem.

The Holocaust looms over this course like a storm cloud, but Hitler was not the era's only mass murderer. While the Nazi's were formulating their solution to the "Jewish Problem," Stalin's first Five-Year Plan had already killed untold millions of Soviet citizens. How could such madness happen? We will try to understand the ethical implications of totalitarianism and the slaughter of innocents after examining several philosophical systems.

H-1-F: Can describe and explain the roles of individuals, groups, societies, or states in history.

1. Demonstrates an understanding of connections among selected events over time.
2. Uses an informed historical approach to interpret events or roles of individuals, groups, or states.

Was the age of dictators predetermined, or did it require the presence of unique personalities at critical junctures? Was World War II inevitable or could it have been prevented? What happened before the interwar period that foreshadowed later events? Ask some questions of your own. Tie some of this story's loose ends together in a plausible "knot" and you will have mastered this competence.

H-2-G: Can evaluate the role and impact of mass media or information technology on society.

1. Specifies a medium of mass communication or an information technology and articulates its scope.
2. Describes the role that this medium or information technology plays in society.
3. Evaluates the impact of this medium or information technology on society or on one's perceptions of societal norms and issues.

The dictators' propaganda machines were created in order to control their societies and shape the citizens' view of reality. The media manipulation was augmented by systematic terror and intimidation. We will explore the ways and means of state-sponsored brainwashing, indoctrination, and repression, and then try to gauge their repercussions.

The Learning Experience:

Unlike survey courses that span broad time frames and cover highlights, this course will take a different approach. A familiarity with names, places, and dates is essential to comprehending the flow of events, but we will not fixate on memorization. We will devote ten class sessions to the job of asking questions and searching for answers. The questions will include big-picture, philosophical queries about man's inhumanity to his fellow man. But they will also concern other aspects of the era, i.e., geo-politics, media, culture, leadership, etc. There will be a premium on class participation. Since a lot of time will be devoted to discussion, I expect you to complete the weekly reading assignments. Our class time will include lecture, discussion, and small group interaction. Film and other artifacts will be used to help bring the interwar period into clearer focus.

Ideas and opinions can be expressed in any number of ways, but writing is the coin of the realm in college. You will receive a grading rubric that will describe the range of attributes of papers graded "A" through "F." Regarding the coursework, you will discover a direct correlation between effort and reward. I hope you do your best because your compensation will exceed a mere letter grade.

Required Texts:

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999).

Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, (New York: Arnold, 2000).

Patricia Knight, *The Spanish Civil War*, (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1998).

James Rachels, ed., *The Right Thing to Do: Basic Readings in Moral Philosophy*, 2nd Edition (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1999).

Rogers, Perry M., *Aspects of Western Civilization, Volume II* (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000).

Note on the Texts:

The required class texts will be used for most assigned readings; the rest will be provided as handouts or on-line. These compact books provide a solid introduction to the interwar period and moral philosophy at minimal expense.

Note on Additional Reading:

These short selections will be assigned at appropriate times during the quarter. They were selected to offer additional insights and opinions.

Recommendations for Additional Study:

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1968).

Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (San Diego: Harcourt, 1970).

Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986).

Robert Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* (New York: Norton, 2000).

Miron Dolot, *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust* (New York: Norton, 1987).

- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford UP, 1994).
- James M. Glass, *“Life Unworthy of Life”: Racial Phobia and Mass Murder in Hitler’s Germany* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997).
- Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001).
- Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism The Inner History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995).
- Adam Hochschild, *The Unquiet Ghost: Russians Remember Stalin* (New York: Mariner, 2003).
- Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (New York: Vintage, 1994).
- Ian Kershaw, *The “Hitler Myth”: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford UP, 1987).
- David King, *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin’s Russia* (New York: Holt, 1999).
- Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2001).
- William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America: 1932-1972*, volume one (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973).
- Richard Pipes, *Communism: A History* (New York: Modern Library: 2001).
- Gabriele Ranzatto, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: Interlink, 1999).
- John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2001).
- Joseph Roth, *What I Saw: Reports From Berlin, 1920-1933* (New York: Norton, 2003).
- Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (New York: Ballantine, 1958).
- William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Touchstone, 1990).
- Michael Stürmer, *The German Empire: A Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2002).
- Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York: Ballantine, 1994).
- David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (London: Routledge, 1993).
- Robert S. Wistrich, *Hitler and the Holocaust* (New York: Modern Library, 2001).

Evidence of Competence Achievement:

The course is designed to satisfy the requirements of four separate but compatible competencies. The following evidence of achievement provides multiple ways for you to succeed.

- **Attendance/Participation:**

Coming to class will be worth **5** points per week. Participation will be worth up to **5** more points per week. Be advised that quantity does not equal quality, and that your attitude toward your classmates is a component of the participation grade.

- **Discussion Questions:**

You will prepare two discussion questions each week derived from the assigned readings. The questions should be e-mailed to me by 3:00 P.M. each Monday. If you cannot send the questions, bring copies to share with the class. The discussion questions will be worth up to **10 points** per week.

- **Reaction Papers:**

During the quarter four reaction papers will be written as **responses** to the readings and/or class discussions. They are **not** reviews of the readings and discussions. Take an attitude; give your two cents’ worth. Convey your thoughts in 2 pages, using a 12-point serif font (please, no *Courier*), double-spaced, with standard one-inch margins. Reaction papers are worth up to **20** points each. The class schedule (page 7) lists the dates for submission of reaction papers. **Note:** late papers will be worth a top score of **10** points.

- **Oral Report Option:**

You may choose to submit an oral report of your reaction to the readings and/or class discussions instead of writing a reaction paper. The oral report will last approximately five minutes and will be accompanied by a written outline of your ideas. Be prepared to conduct a brief Q & A/discussion following your presentation. Oral reports will be worth up to **20** points. This option can be used **twice** during the quarter.

- **Midterm Exam:**

You will have a take-home midterm exam, assigned during the fifth class session, to be handed in at the beginning of the sixth session. The midterm will consist of several questions to be answered in short essays.

Your exams will be graded for both content and adherence to accepted grammatical standards. You will receive a grading rubric to guide you in the preparation of your essays.

- **Essay:**

You will write an essay due at the beginning of the ninth class session. The essay will be approximately 7 to 8 pages in length, using a 12-point serif font (no *Courier*), double-spaced, with standard one-inch margins. Choose your topic from a list I will provide conforming to your applicable competence statement(s). The essay will include a minimum of 5 scholarly sources (**excluding** course texts). I will provide individual assistance for this essay, worth up to **200** points. Essays turned in late will lose **20** points per day.

Pass/Fail Grade Option:

You have the option of taking this course on a Pass/Fail grading basis. Be aware that a “Pass” or “Fail” grade will have no effect on your Grade Point Average. For those students receiving worksite tuition reimbursement, a letter is available from DePaul describing the school’s Pass/Fail grade option.

“Incomplete” Grade Policy

The student who needs a grade of incomplete (**IN**) must formally request in writing that I issue this grade. The request must be made by the end of the ninth week of the quarter in which you are enrolled, i.e., the 2003 Fall term. A copy of the policy accompanies this syllabus. I strongly recommend completing your coursework according to schedule. Please understand that **IN** grades are issued only in exceptional circumstances that justify your inability to complete all coursework by the end of the quarter. If you receive an “Incomplete,” you will sign a contract agreeing to complete all work by a specified date (no later than two quarters after the end of the 2003 Fall term) or receive the grade of “F.”

Class Schedule (tentative):

1st Session:

Introduction, Orientation, Overview

Course syllabus and discussion: goals, objectives, expectations, classroom procedures, questions.

“Why study History?”

Lecture: the interwar period in context.

Maps, pictorial, and video overview

Film excerpts: *The Great War*, and *Triumph of the Will*

2nd Session:

Prelude: The Great War as Watershed

19th century flashpoints

The end of innocence, mechanized madness

A society in turmoil

Versailles, the League, and the U.S. return to isolationism

Film: *Between the Wars, Vol. 1* (excerpt)

3rd Session:

Ideology and the emergence of the Soviet state

Definitions: similarities and disparities

Lenin and the main chance

Civil War, consolidation, and adaptation

Film Segment: *The Great War, Vol. 3* (excerpt)

4th Session:

Transition and Depression

Mussolini takes over

Stalin succeeds Lenin

Nazis persevere, succeed

U.S.

Great Depression’s impact

Film: *Between the Wars* (excerpt)

5th Session:

Dictators in Control

Collectivization and terror in Soviet Union
 Hitler consolidates power
 Mussolini maintains reign

6th Session:

Midterm Exam due
Propaganda perfected
 Film: *Triumph of the Will* (part 1)
Essay topic selection

7th Session:

A New Kind of Reality
 Film: *Triumph of the Will* (conclusion)
 Adaptation and resistance
 The “Jewish Problem”

8th Session:

The “Peace” Under Siege
 The demand for *Lebensraum*
 Spanish Civil War, Condor Legion attacks
 Mussolini moves on Ethiopia
 The Far Eastern menace
 Munich
 Film Segment: *Between the Wars*
Essay outline and references due

9th Session:

Totalitarianism as Ideology
 Law of a different kind
 Rational responses
Essay due

10th Session:

The Road to War
Anschluss, Austria, and the Czechs,
 Hitler and Stalin’s unlikely alliance
 The benefit of hindsight: assigning responsibility
 Film: *Between the Wars* (excerpt)
 Summing up
Essay returned

11th Session: November 24

Individual Conferences (by appointment)

Vincentian Mission Statement:

This course and its assessment tools are designed to actively incorporate the Four Cornerstones of a high-quality learning relationship here at DePaul University: **empathy, clarity, integrity, and flexibility**.

Academic Integrity Policy Statement:

I will vigorously uphold the University’s written guidelines (see attached) on academic integrity. Please be **very** attentive to the meaning of this policy – breaking it could cost you your degree.

Attendance Policy Statement:

All students are expected to attend **all** class meetings. Students who miss more than **two** classes are likely to fail the course. Please let me know if you are going to miss a class, arrive late, or leave early.

Essay-Writing Assistance:

Feel free to discuss with me any concerns you have regarding your writing assignments.

DePaul offers essay-writing assistance at:

<http://condor.depaul.edu/~history/webresources/hstwriting.html>