History 4350 Europe 1914-1945 Fall 2025

Tu-Th 14:00-15:20 Mierzejewski WH 115

I. **Introduction**. The first half of the Twentieth Century was a tumultuous period in European history that saw the most destructive wars in history and a fundamental change in the world balance of power. Behind the scenes, developments took place that profoundly shaped the world that we live in. Most importantly, the period saw a decline in Europe's dominant position in the world as measured in political, military and diplomatic terms, but also as a leader in technology, culture and economics. It saw the rise to maturity of ideas, technologies and ways of life that dominated the western world until 1990. It also saw the beginning of the end of European empires. This course will provide an overview of the political events that typify the period. It will also look at the underlying economic, social and cultural factors that shaped and were shaped by the political events with which we are most familiar. Among the developments that we will examine this semester will be the increase in state intervention in every phase of life in the course of developing the welfare state and fighting major wars, the rise to prominence of new social classes based on widened political participation, and the spread of totalitarian doctrines as a response to the perceived failure of democracy and markets.

II. **Accommodation Statement**. The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver Letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://disability.unt.edu/>. You may contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

III. **Inclusion**

As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation so we will work as a class to collaborate in ways that encourage inclusivity.

IV. **Grading**. Each test will consist of a list of ten identification items from which you will select five. Explain who or what it was, why it was important and when it was important (date). The identification items will be drawn only from the list provided. Each test will also include an essay question. One of you will draw a number to determine which question you will answer. Please see the instructions provided for the paper.

First Examination 16. Sep 25% of the final grade

Second Examination 21. Oct 25% of the final grade

Paper 13. Nov 25% of the final grade

Final 11. Dec 25% of the final grade

V. **Attendance**. Class begins at 14:00 sharp. Late entry is not allowed.

VI. **Office Hours**. My office is located at Wooten Hall 236. My office hours will be held on Tuesday and Thursday 12:30-13:30. Appointments may be arranged at other times. My e-mail address is alfred.mierzejewski@unt.edu.

VII. **Academic Integrity**. Submit only your own work. Material from integrative AI systems such as ChatGPT is prohibited.

VIII. **Emergency Notification Procedures**. Eagle Alert. For events effecting just this class, Email.

IX. **Course Goals**.

a. Learn the causes of WW I.

b. Learn the effects of WW II.

c. Learn the causes and effects of the Great Depression.

d. Learn the causes and effects of the Bolshevik Revolution.

e. Learn the causes and effects of World War II.

f. Learn the causes and effects of the growth of the state.

X. **Reading**. The books listed below are available at the bookstore. They are integral components of the course and should not be considered as substitutes for the lectures.

Robert Conquest. *Stalin. Breaker of Nations*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1992.

Adam Ferguson. *When Money Dies*. New York: Public Affairs, 1975/2010.

Harold James. *Europe Contested*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2019.

Paul Johnson. *Churchill*. New York: Penguin, 2009.

Ian Kershaw. *Hitler*. New York: Longman, 1991.

XI. **Class Schedule**.

19.-21. Aug Introduction: Europe before the Deluge. The Causes of World War I. Read James chapter 1.

26.-28. Aug The Campaigns of 1914. The Organization of States for War. Wartime Diplomacy. Read James chapter 2.

02.-04. Sep The Pinnacle of Violence on the Western Front. The Bolshevik Revolution.

09.-11 Sep The Defeat of Imperial Germany in the West. The Versailles Peace Settlement.

16. Sep First Examination.

18.-25. Sep Revolution in Central Europe: The Successor States. Revolution in Germany and the Creation of the Weimar Republic. Read James chapter 3, Ferguson all.

30. Sep-02 Oct The Triumph of Fascism in Italy. The Collapse of the Victorious Coalition.

07-09. Oct Britain and France between the Wars. The Rise of the Welfare State.

14.-16. Oct The Rise of the Stalinist Dictatorship. The Depression in Europe. Read Conquest, *Stalin. Breaker of Nations* and James chapter 4.

21. Oct Second Examination.

23. Oct The Rise of Nazi Germany. The Spanish Civil War.   
 Read Kershaw, *Hitler*, Introduction and chapters 1-5 and James chapter 5.

28.-30. Oct Hitler's Drive for War. Read Johnson, *Churchill*.

04.-06. Nov World War II: Hitler's Initial Triumphs.

11.-13. Nov Violent Social Engineering in Nazi Germany and the USSR. Read Kershaw chapter 6; James chapter 6. Paper due: 13. Nov 2025.

18.-20. Nov War Economies and State Control. The Defeat of Nazi Germany,  
 Read Kershaw chapter 7.

02.-04. Dec Conclusion. Review.

11. Dec Final. 13:30-15:30