

Vesalius College

Course description

Course title: Development of the Major Powers, 1815-1945

Course code: HIS 202E

Teacher responsible: William L. Chew III, PhD, Full Professor of History at Vesalius College

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Aims of course, explanation of assignments; Unity and Disunity of Europe in 1815; Industrialization: The Industrial Revolution in Britain; Conservatism and Liberalism: Political and Social Forces of Continuity and Change; Liberalism, Democracy and Revolution: The French Origins of Liberalism; France: from Half-baked Revolution to “Empire”: France Under the Second Empire; Russia: Early Reform Movements: Russian Dissent, 1763-1861; Russia: From Attempted Reform to Revolution: Russian Dissent, 1861-1929 (part I); Russia: From Revolution to Dictatorship: Russian Dissent, 1861-1929 (part II); Soviet Totalitarianism: Stalinism and the CPSU; Weimar and the Rise of Nazism: German Totalitarianism; Germany Under National Socialism; European Reconstruction: Foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Lectures complement reading assignments, highlight individual aspects of special interest or offer alternative interpretations, exposing students to key issues of scholarly debate. Students present orally the findings of primary source analyses in a workshop atmosphere. Select documentary videos are added to further illustrate readings and stimulate discussion (e.g. interview with Sir Ian Kershaw on Hitler). Required papers: two oral presentations of a source, with a one-page handout for each; a research log, annotated bibliography and outline (these three ungraded, for comment); and a 15-page integrative primary/secondary term paper on a subject chosen from a proposed list; or on a subject developed by the student in consultation with the professor.

Course objectives:

Students majoring in International Affairs need to understand the origins of modern political culture and debate. For this, a grounding in the historical roots of the European powers since the 19C is necessary. Students shall deepen their understanding of the domestic history of France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Russia from the Vienna Congress to Foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany. While political, social and economic developments most directly related to the current state of the powers are stressed, a particular focus will be on nationalism, liberalism, conservatism and totalitarianism as dominant ideologies. International affairs are discussed as they relate to domestic developments. Methodological understanding of historical criticism as applied to sources shall be strengthened, as shall the research and analytical skills in historical writing through the drafting of a term paper.

Grade weighting scheme:

Presentations	10%
Term Paper	40%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%

Used course material (handbooks, readers, readings, newspapers, magazines) and references:

John Merriman. *A History of Modern Europe. From the French Revolution to the Present*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.

Dennis Sherman, ed. *Western Civilization: Sources, Images and Interpretations*. Vol. 2. Since 1660. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995f, 4th ed.