

Between Hitler and Stalin: European Culture and Society Between the Wars

Dr. Julia Fein
Tuesday / Thursday 3:00-4:30
Old Main 002

E-mail: jfein@macalester.edu
Office: Old Main 300, x6665

Office hours: Wednesday, 11-2
or by arrangement



The inclination to aggression is an...instinctual disposition in man...[and] it constitutes the greatest impediment to civilization.

- Sigmund Freud, 1930

Masked parties, Savage parties, Victorian parties, Greek parties, Wild West parties, Circus parties, parties where you have to dress as somebody else, almost naked parties in St. John's Wood, parties in flats and studios and houses and ships and hotels and nightclubs, in swimming baths and windmills... All that succession and repetition of massed humanity. All those vile bodies.

- Evelyn Waugh, 1930

Life has improved, comrades. Life has become more joyful.

- Joseph Stalin, 1935

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Economic crises, war and revolution, political regime change, and failed attempts at international governance: these are the backdrop to European society and culture in the period known as "interwar." In this course we examine European culture and society defined in a variety of ways: as mass communication and everyday habits of interaction and consumption; as aesthetics and

artistic production; and as landmark sites, milieux, and movements. The word “between” in the course title is also open to many interpretations. Most simply, this is about the people in interwar Europe’s most extreme societies - Germany and the Soviet Union - and the many Europeans caught geographically and/or ideologically somewhere in the middle. It is also about the wide range of lives and sites that are marginalized when the interwar period is defined by Nazism and Bolshevism. This means including sexual non-conformists, skulls in a museum, a trip to the Congo, and the artistic avant-garde, in addition to people living outside of Europe’s great powers, in Ireland, Poland, and - of course - Spain and Italy, where “interwar” may have very different meanings and periodizations.

Through individual and collaborative research and writing, you will also have the opportunity to explore areas of personal interest in areas such as: LGBTQ history; Jewish history; women’s and gender history; history of science and technology; history of African Americans in interwar Europe; history of the international left (and right); and so on. This exploration is integrated with the course’s focus on writing.

OBJECTIVES and OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to

- Approach European interwar history from a variety of angles, and identify topics that you would like to learn more about in future classes or independent reading.
- Discuss a wide variety of ways in which World War I’s legacy shaped Europe in the world, including but not limited to the connection between interwar *modernity*, and aesthetic *modernism*.
- Apply, appraise, and combine two different ways of understanding the diverse experiences of interwar Europe: 1) Europeans under Bolshevism, Fascism, and various shades of democracy shared a common modern culture; 2) everyday life in the Soviet Union, in Nazi Germany, and elsewhere were radically different habitats that produced radically different humans.
- Use scholarly writing about a particular primary source as a tool of discovery and analysis, and complete and revise a longer piece of scholarly synthesis based on individual research.
- Develop and practice oral presentation skills.

ASSESSMENT

30%. Participation

About half of our in-class time will be interactive lecture, and the other half will be discussion of texts and writing. **The most basic requirement for effective participation is coming to class *with the day’s reading*, either highlighted/underlined, or with notes referring to specific page numbers. Digital texts are fine *if you can highlight/underline and make notes on them*. Otherwise, you must print the readings.**

Please do not eat or chew gum in class, but you are welcome to bring a beverage. Given that digital texts on smartphones are too small to be used effectively in a class setting, phones should

be completely switched off. Laptops and tablets in class can be useful for quick fact-finding. Just know that it is extremely easy to tell from the front of the room when that is what is going on, versus something different.

24%. Three three-page (double-spaced) reading responses (8% each)

Over the course of the semester you will write three analytical-exploratory pieces, each focusing on *one reading* of your choice. At least one but no more than two must be done sometime in Weeks 1-5. In these papers I will be looking for a combination of your independent work with the text and an incisive treatment of major points from the group discussion. You do not need to use formal citation of sources for these.

Two of these must be on primary sources, and one on scholarly articles or book sections. (One of the primary source responses may be on images that we discuss in the week before spring break, rather than on a text.) They are due by email to me by noon on the Sunday *after* they are discussed in class.

11%. Image-object description and curation

Over the course of the semester, we will collectively create an online “museum” of interwar Europe. Once a week, each of you will find either an image produced in the period we have been studying, or a contemporary photo or drawing of an object from the time, and post it to a [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com) board shared by the class. Your caption should concisely elucidate its relevance to the narratives we are building/dismantling in class. All welcome to draw on these and other images in your research papers. These posts should be done by noon every Monday beginning February 1 and ending May 2, excluding March 21.

25%. Revised research paper

After spring break, you will begin work on a 12-page (double-spaced) paper that you will work on, present for peer-review, and revise based on my comments during the second half of the semester. There will be scaffolding activities (abstract, bibliography, introductory paragraph, outline) along the way, and some time to work on these in class. You will find two to five primary sources (depending on length), and three to five historical treatments (also depending on length) to explore a topic in interwar European history, and construct an argument about that topic’s meaning and significance. You are encouraged to use class readings in addition to your research sources. More detail will follow.

A complete *draft*, circulated to me and to selected peer readers, is due four days before your presentation (see below). The final, revised version is due at noon on May 9.

10%. Presentation of research-in-progress and participation in peer review

Our last two class sessions will be split between a look at the end of “interwar” and beginning of World War II, and presentations of individual research projects as they near the final revision stage. More detail will follow.

POLICIES and SUPPORT

If you are struggling in the class, you should first consult me and/or one of your classmates. While it is important that you let me know if you feel you are struggling, you may wish to go directly to the [Macalester Academic Excellence \(MAX\) Center](#), located in Kagin Commons. The MAX Center has peer tutors available for students in all stages of their writing. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Sunday through Thursday. You may drop in or call 651-696-6121 during the day or 651-696-6193 in the evening to schedule an appointment.

Students with disabilities are accommodated and protected from discrimination at Macalester College. Please coordinate communication about any problems with me and with the [Disability Services](#) office.

Maintaining academic integrity and abiding by the rules of scholarly inquiry are central to the college experience. This class will follow [Macalester's policies and procedures](#) for dealing with plagiarism or other breaches in academic integrity.

Macalester College is committed to fostering a safe and productive learning environment for all students. As a faculty member, it is my goal that you feel able to share information about your experiences as a student; however, please know that I am required to report any disclosure of harm to self or others, or any reported sexual misconduct of any kind, to the appropriate college personnel who are responsible for responding to such reports.

BOOKS for PURCHASE

- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*
- Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*

All other readings are available on Moodle or on reserve in the library. Note that the posted readings sometimes diverge slightly from the assigned pages. Consult the syllabus/Moodle for exact page assignments.

SCHEDULE and READING ASSIGNMENTS

January 21. Introduction

- E. M. Forster, "Jew Consciousness" (1939), 12-14 (in class)

January 26. Life and death on the Western Front

- Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War, 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War*, 9-20, 36-52 and 67-85
- Ernst Stadler, "Decampment"
- Siegfried Sassoon, "Counter-Attack," "Lamentations," and "Repression of War Experience"

The Great War Experience and the Redrawing of Empires

January 28. Women and the Home Front

- Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (1933), 94-134 and 190-214

- Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War, 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War*, 109-121 and 128-143

February 2. Other battles

- T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1922), 23-32, 49-60, 188-196
- William Butler Yeats, *Easter, 1916* (1921)
- Turtle Bunbury, *The 1916 Rising: The Photographic Record*, 11-52, 132-157 and 280-296 (note that this is mostly images)

February 4. Russian Revolution and Civil War

- Viktor Shklovsky, *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs, 1917-1922* (1923), 72-105, 113-119, 132-139
- Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, 49-65
- Isaac Babel, *Red Cavalry* (1926), 44-48, 63-65

February 9. Postwar

- Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, 41-75
- Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), 37-52 and 64-74
- Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, 1-22
 - Abel Gance, *J'accuse!* (1919), in class

Highs and Lows of the 1920s

February 11. Economic life and the radical right in the 1920s

- Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1925), 191-214
- Documents from *The Fascist Revolution in Italy: A Brief History with Documents*, 35-51 and 53-62
- Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*, 23-45

February 16. The 1920s and international Marxism

- Walter Benjamin, *Moscow Diary* (1926-1927), 9-14, 25-32, 66-69, 70-71, 73, 90-92, 104-105 and 110-116
- Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968*, 1-4, 10-40 and 44-51
 - Dziga Vertov, *One Sixth Part of the World* (1926), in class

February 18. Youth, spectacle, and technology

- Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Insider as Outsider*, 70-101
- Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, 241-271
- Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968*, 52-59

First source paper due by Sunday, February 21

February 23. Youth and sexuality

- Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity*, 187-219

- D. J. Taylor, *Bright Young People: The Lost Generation of London's Jazz Age*, 170-175 and 230-248
- Robert Byron, *Europe in the Looking Glass* (1926), pages TBD

February 25. Empire

- André Gide, *Travels in the Congo* (1927), pages TBD
- Documents from *The Fascist Revolution in Italy: A Brief History with Documents*, 141-146

March 1. Mass culture, race in the human sciences, and politics

- Documents from *The Fascist Revolution in Italy: A Brief History with Documents*, 95-105
- Alice Conklin, "Civil Society, Science, and Empire in Late Republican France: The Foundation of Paris's Museum of Man," *Osiris* 17 (2002): 255–290

March 3. Jewish histories

- Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968*, 127-141
- Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, 324-330 and 342-349
- Leora Auslander, "Jewish Taste?: Jews and the Aesthetics of Everyday Life in Paris and Berlin, 1920-1942," in Rudy Koshar, ed., *Histories of Leisure*, 299-315

March 8. Art and modernism - with guest lecturer

- Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Insider as Outsider*, 102-118
- Walter Gropius, "On the Bauhaus" (1923), 398-409
- Documents from *The Fascist Revolution in Italy: A Brief History with Documents*, 128-131 and 133-138

* March 10. Field trip to Minneapolis Institute of Art - with guest lecturer

- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), 414-433

Extremes

March 22. Into the First Five-Year Plan

- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 1-15, 24-28, 35-39 (1-39 recommended) and 122-127
- Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, 305-321 and 219-234

March 24. Extremes and banalities

- José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930), 11-18, 68-77 and 107-124
- Thomas Mann, "Europe Beware" (1936), 69-82

March 29. The collapse of the Weimar Republic and catch-up day

- Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Insider as Outsider*, 46-69 and 119-145

March 31. Stalinism as a way of life

- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 40-59, 62-93, 103-109 (40-114 recommended), 139-155 and 182-187

Depression, persecution, and the 1930s

April 5. Fascism

- Documents from *The Fascist Revolution in Italy: A Brief History with Documents*, 125-127
- Bianca Gaudenzi, "Press Advertising and Fascist Dictates: Showcasing the Female Consumer in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany," in Sarah Newman and Matt Houlbrook, eds., *The Press and Popular Culture in Interwar Europe*, 25-40
 - Leni Riefenstahl, *The Triumph of the Will* (1935), in class

April 7. Nazism and resistance to Hitler

- Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler: A Memoir* (~1940), pages TBD
- Patricia Szobar, "Telling Sexual Stories in the Nazi Courts of Law: Race Defilement in Germany, 1933 to 1945," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, nos. 1-2 (April 2002): 131-163

April 12. Soviet Purges

- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 130-138, 164-168, 175-178 and 190-217
- Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, 367-390

April 14. Nazism and Stalinism

- Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, 1-20
- Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, chapters 2-8 (each of you will read one chapter, assigned with your input on preference) - on reserve in DeWitt Wallace Library

April 19. Labor and politics in Western Europe

- George Orwell, *Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), pages TBD
- Jessica Wardhaugh, "Crowds, Culture and Power: Mass Politics and the Press in Interwar France," in Sarah Newman and Matt Houlbrook, eds., *The Press and Popular Culture in Interwar Europe*, 105-118

April 21. From Popular Fronts to Spanish Civil War

- George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), pages TBD
- Ronald Fraser, ed., *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (each of you will read one to three testimonies - five to ten pages, total - of your choice) - on reserve in DeWitt Wallace Library

World War II's early days, and research/writing presentations

April 26. European war in the east

- Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, 119-155

Presentations

April 28. European war in the west

- Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat: A Statement of Evidence Written in 1940*, 1-10 and 126-176

Presentations

Final paper due on May 9 at noon