

HIST 1270 W A01

New Directions in History:

Inquiries into the Power Relations of the Modern World

T/Th 11:30-12:45

Room: 201 St. John's College

Instructor: George Buri

Required Book: Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century*

This is not a traditional textbook. It will be used not only to provide context for lectures but also as the basis of one of the essay assignments in this course. It is available in the UM Bookstore.

Office Hours:

I will be in my office University College 343 from 11:30 to 12:30 Monday and Wednesday. Please feel free to drop by to discuss assignments or any other issues related to the course. If this is not convenient we can set up another time to meet or you can e-mail me any time at George.buri@umanitoba.ca.

Course Content: What is power? How do individuals or groups get it, lose it or hang onto it? What accounts for changes in power relations? This course will explore these questions in context of modern world history with an emphasis on the 20th Century and in particular the “30 Years Crisis” between 1914 and 1945 and the Cold War Era. Specific themes to be explored include imperialism and national rivalries, war and revolution and the rise and fall of global economic and military powers.

Assignments:

Primary Source Analysis Essay = 25% (Due Oct. 1)

Interpretative Essay 30% (Due Nov. 19)

Mid Term Exam = 15% (Oct. 22)

Final Exam = 30%

Since this is a course that meets the University Senate's W requirement, students must complete all essay assignments with a passing grade to pass the course.

Primary Document Essay: You will be required to write a 6-8 page (1500-2000 word) analysis of a primary source chosen from a list provided. This analysis should address how the source is useful to historians as a piece of evidence and how it contributes to our understanding of history. You should also place the source into its broader context using secondary materials. A list of appropriate primary sources will be provided on an assignment instruction sheet available through UMLearn.

Interpretative Essay: You will be required to write a 8-10 page (2000-2500 word) essay on one of three possible topics that derive from Eric Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes*. In addition to that book you will be asked to find at minimum of 3 additional sources that help you at answer the question. An instruction sheet on essay writing can be found on UMLearn.

Topic 1: Golden Age? Hobsbawm characterizes the years between 1914 and 1945 as the “Age of Catastrophe” and the period from 1945 to 1973 as the “Golden Age”. In looking at world history is this claim valid? Is this a useful way to periodize the twentieth century?

Topic 2: The World Revolution: Hobsbawm argues that the “World Revolution” that the Russian Revolution was supposed to instigate failed to materialize immediately after World War I. However, the post-1945 period of world history saw a number of revolutions outside the Western World. What then, is the legacy of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union in terms of promoting and encouraging revolution around the world? Was there ever a “world revolution”? Why or why not?

Topic 3: The Survival of Liberalism: Hobsbawm argues that liberalism faced an existential threat during the 20th Century but survived for a number of reasons. Are the factors that Hobsbawm identifies as allowing liberalism to survive challenges to it convincing? Are there other factors that he should consider? Was the threat to liberalism as grave as he suggests?

The Mid-Term and Final Exams: will consist entirely of essays in which you will be required to answer interpretative questions and back up your answers using specific reference to the material covered in lectures. A list of potential essay topics will be given out prior to the exam.

Late policy: For Essays you will lose one grade for every class that your essay is late. If you cannot hand your essay to me in person it may be handed into the history office where it will be date stamped. Deadlines may be flexible if you ask for an extension IN ADVANCE (the farther in advance the better). If you are experiencing problems with the workload in this or a combination of courses please come to see me and we can work something out. Please come see me beforehand rather than not handing anything in and then coming to see me afterward.

Regarding Plagiarism: *The common penalty in Arts for plagiarism on a written assignment is a grade of F on the paper and a final grade of F (DISC) (for Disciplinary Action) for the course. For the most serious acts of plagiarism, such as purchase of an essay and repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five (5) years from registration in courses taught in a particular department/program in Arts or from all courses taught in this Faculty.*

The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism or to other experts for authentication.

The common penalty in Arts for academic dishonesty on a test or examination is F for the paper, F (DISC) for the course, and a one-year suspension from courses acceptable for credit in the Faculty. For more serious acts of academic dishonesty on a test or examination, such as repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension for a period of up to five years from registration in courses taught in a particular department or program in Arts or from all courses taught in or accepted for credit by this Faculty.

Appeals: Students who wish to appeal a grade given for term work must do so within 10 working days after the grade for the term work has been made available to them.

Uncollected term work will become property of the faculty of arts and will be subject to destruction.

The Voluntary Withdrawal Date: is Nov 18 and evaluation of term work will be provided prior to then.

Marking: Letter grades correspond to number grades as follows:

A+ = 90-100

A = 80-89

B+ = 75-79

B = 70-74

C+ = 65-69

C = 60-64

D = 50-59

F = below 50

Keep in mind that the goal of this course should be to improve your skills, NOT to achieve any specific grade. Thus my comments on your assignments are far more important than the specific grade given. Please read comments carefully as I have put significant thought into them.

Class Schedule: Due Date in Bold

Sep 10: Introduction to Course

Part I: Origins of the 20th Century

Sep 15, 17: Industrialism, liberalism and Nationalism

Sep 22,24: European Colonialism and Imperial Rivalries

Part II: The 30 Years Crisis

Sep 29, Oct 1: World War One: Origins and Toll

Oct. 1: Primary Essay Due Today

Oct 6,8: World War One: Postwar Settlement and its impact

Oct 13,15: The Russian Revolution and Impact

Oct 20,22: Great Depression

Oct. 22: Mid-Term Exam

Oct 27,29: The Rise of Fascism

Nov 3, 5: Spanish Civil War

Nov. 10,12: World War II and postwar settlement

Part II: The Cold War Era

Nov 17, 19: Cold War

Nov. 19: Interpretive Essay Due Today

Nov 24, 26, Dec 1: Decolonization

Dec. 3, 8: American Hegemony in the post-Cold War Context