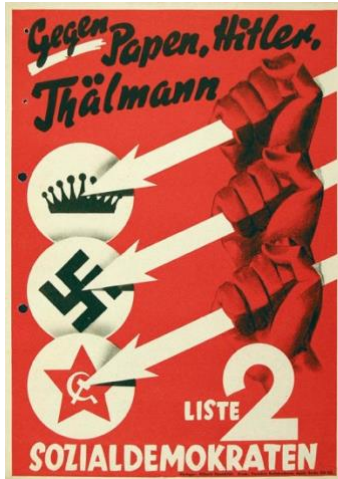
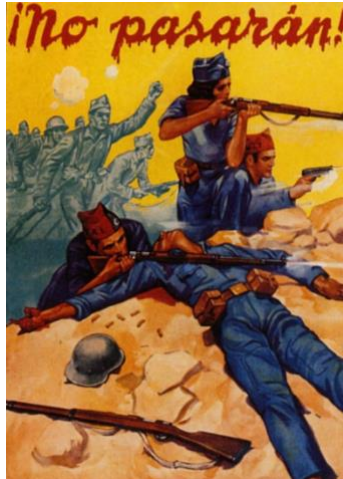


HIST 408:
Dictatorship and Democracy: Europe 1919-1945

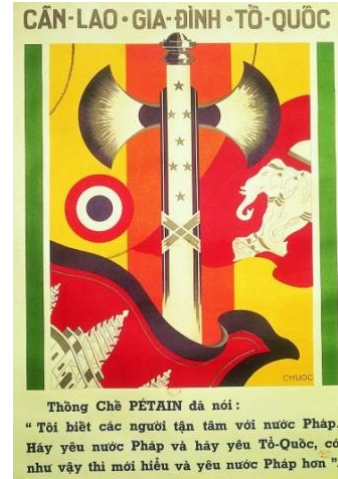
Tuesdays and Thursdays
9:00-10:15
BRNG 1242



“Against Papen, Hitler, Thälmann”
Election poster for the German
Social Democratic Party (c. 1932)



“They Shall Not Pass!”
Leftist propaganda poster from the
Spanish Civil War (c. 1936)



“Work, Family, Fatherland”
Vichy-era propaganda poster in
Vietnamese (c. 1942)

Prof. Andrew Bellisari
ahbellis@purdue.edu
BRNG 6169

[Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30-12:30 or by appointment](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The period between the First and Second World Wars is often regarded as one of failure: a dark time defined by economic crises, social malaise, and radical ideologies that witnessed democratic possibilities scuttled by dictators like Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin. This course re-examines this period as one of great contingency, rather than one of inevitable collapse, when radical possibilities emanating from across the political spectrum attempted to remake societies broken by the Great War in revolutionary ways. It does so not from the perspective of infamous political leaders, but from the lived experiences of average Europeans to better understand those who both assisted—and resisted—attempts to secure futures defined by communism, fascism, and democratic governance.

Our course examines this period’s key political, social, economic, and cultural transformations across four in-depth case studies: the Soviet Union’s tumultuous attempt to build socialism through rapid industrialization and mass collectivization, Italy’s Fascist “revolution,” Germany’s haunting slide to Nazi dictatorship, and France’s transformation from a beleaguered, but robust republican government to a wartime collaborationist regime that attempted its own authoritarian undertaking. We will evaluate how these transitions altered the internal dynamics of these societies as well as their affects further afield: on the battlefields of Spain, amid the plains of Abyssinia, and in the streets of colonial Saigon and Hanoi. In so doing we can assess the lessons this period holds for our own uncertain moment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Understand the historical context, political debates, and socio-cultural transformations that occurred in interwar Europe.
2. Define and differentiate among several major ideologies of the twentieth century, including socialism, communism, fascism, and liberalism.
3. Analyze and evaluate historical monographs and visual, textual, literary, and archival documentation.
4. Craft evidence-based argumentation through written assignments that employ primary and secondary sources to address fundamental questions of historical change in interwar Europe.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following texts are required to be purchased and brought to class on the appropriate days. Books may be purchased from the university book store or online (links provided).

1. [William Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922-1945* \(Brattleboro, VT: Echo Point Books and Media, 2014\)](#)
2. [Christopher Duggan, *Fascist Voices: An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy* \(London: Vintage Books, 2013\)](#)
3. [Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism, Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* \(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999\)](#)
4. [Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* \(New York: Vintage Books, 2004\)](#)
5. [Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* \(New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994\)](#)

Supplemental required readings indicated on this syllabus will be available on Brightspace. Students are expected to print these readings and bring them to class to facilitate discussion and in-class activities.

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Communication: Responding to your messages is one of my highest priorities, but if you send me an e-mail after business hours during the week, or anytime during the weekend, I cannot guarantee that I will respond to you before the next business day. Please reserve email communication for notifications or discrete questions that can be easily answered in writing, such as those related to attendance, scheduling, or other practical issues. All content related questions should be discussed in office hours or class meetings.

Attendance: Attendance is required. Students are permitted two (2) free unexcused absences, which may be taken at any time. All subsequent absences will result in a 5-point penalty to your attendance and participation grade. All other absences must fall within those categories established by Purdue University regulations, which include jury duty, grief/bereavement, military service, parenting leave, as well as emergent medical situations involving hospitalization, emergency, or urgent care visits. These excused absences should be accompanied by the corresponding request form, which can be [submitted online](#) through the Office of the Dean of Students.

When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for university-sponsored activities and religious observations, you should inform me of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency absences when advance notification is not possible, contact me as soon as possible—however I cannot guarantee that you will receive an excused absence.

Students are fully responsible for any missed classes and work. Except for university-sanctioned absences, in-class assignments (e.g. quizzes, presentations, etc.) may not be rescheduled or made up without prior written approval. Otherwise, tardiness or absences leading to missed in-class assignments will result in students not receiving credit for that assignment.

Device Use: Phones, tablets, and laptops are not permitted, except in support of certain in-class activities or in accessibility-related cases.

Assignment Submission: All assignments are due on the date and time indicated on this syllabus or the course website, unless otherwise specified. Students who have issues with online submission must notify me immediately and make arrangements to submit the assignment via email or other electronic means. If I cannot open an electronic file, or if the file appears to have been corrupted, it will not count as having been successfully submitted. *Technical issues are your issues: you are the only person responsible for ensuring that your assignment is submitted.*

Late Policy: All late take-home assignments are subject to a 5-point penalty every 24 hours after the deadline. Late assignments will not be accepted after seven days from the original submission date.

Extensions: Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis and only in exceptional circumstances after consultation with me (e.g. grave illness requiring hospitalization, important family obligations, or other serious disruptions). No extension will be given less than 48 hours prior to a deadline.

Incomplete Grades: A grade of Incomplete (I) will be given only in exceptional circumstances to record work that was interrupted by unavoidable absence or other causes beyond a student's control. To receive an Incomplete, a written request must be submitted before the end of the semester and approved by the instructor following an in-person consultation. Together we will discuss the circumstances leading to the request and agree upon a proposed timeline for completing coursework. Submitting a request does not ensure that an incomplete grade will be granted. Any requests made after the course is completed will not be considered. For the official policy on incomplete grades, see Purdue's [Academic Regulations](#).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: As Purdue's Honor Pledge states: "As a Boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together — we are Purdue." All students are responsible for knowing and following the rules of academic integrity, which can be found in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). The Code also outlines the procedures to investigate any suspected breach of academic honesty.

Incidents of academic misconduct in this course will be addressed by the course instructor and referred to the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities \(OSRR\)](#) for review at the university level. Any violation of this course's policies as it relates to academic integrity will result minimally in a failing or zero grade for that assignment, and at the instructor's discretion may result in a failing grade for the course.

Use of Generative AI: Humans have been telling stories about themselves since the beginning of their existence. This course explores and analyzes what it means to generate historical narratives of all kinds, be they accurate, incomplete, or intentionally false. You now have the privilege to think critically about the history you have been taught and develop your own narratives. That is a daunting task, but a rewarding one.

To that end, submitting AI-generated writing or research as your own will be considered academic dishonesty and *carries the same penalties as plagiarism*. You will always learn and develop better skills as a writer and researcher by composing your own original work. You have earned the right to craft your own history, use it.

Civil Discourse, Freedom of Expression, and Classroom Citizenship: We are going to be talking about big ideas in this class. Many of these ideas were controversial in their own time. Many remain controversial today. Indeed, our present is shaped by the past of Europe in the 1920s and 1930s and given the nature of this course's content, discussions of modern-day events and commentary is likely.

Students are encouraged to reflect on how the past affects the present in exercising their right to free inquiry and expression as responsible university citizens. Your course grade will always be based on your academic performance, not on the opinions you express. However, to maintain a positive learning environment, students should be conscious of their interactions with other students during discussion: be respectful of other's perspectives, contributions, and space. Everyone learns and communicates differently, and as a class we have a collective responsibility to build a safe and supportive learning environment. Disruptive and disorderly behavior, bullying, abuse, discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, and any other action that threatens a safe classroom environment will be investigated according to the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

For more information, see the University's [Commitment to Freedom of Expression](#), [Nondiscrimination Statement](#), and [Bill of Student Rights](#).

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Brief descriptions of graded assignments are below. Detailed instructions for each assignment, including a schedule of due dates, rubrics to guide evaluation, and guidelines on participation will be discussed in class and made available on Brightspace.

Attendance and Participation (10%): Attendance in class is mandatory (see attendance policy above). The success of our class depends greatly on the willingness of everyone to participate actively in discussion. It also depends on everyone having read the assigned material. The quality, as well as the frequency, of your participation in discussion will be factored into your grade for the course.

Annotation (10%): In order to facilitate classroom discussion, we will use the Perusall annotation platform to annotate certain course texts (generally a primary source). This will hone your active reading skills by allowing you to interact directly with our texts and add your own commentary and thoughts directly to the page. To get full credit, you will be expected to leave at least five (5) high quality comments or questions on a chosen text and engage with and respond to your classmates' comments.

Map Quiz (5%): Understanding the complex geography of interwar Europe is just as important as understanding its complicated history. There is no better way to remember where everything is located than with an old-fashioned map quiz.

Primary Source Analysis (15%): Primary sources are the means by which historians gather information about the inner-lives of the people and institutions they study. For this assignment, you will write a 1,500 word essay that assesses the primary sources encountered in Unit II.

In-Class Midterm Exam (20%): The midterm exam will comprise an hour-long written assessment and may include identifications, short answers, and essay responses based on the material in the first half of this course.

Secondary Source Analysis (15%): For this assignment, you will write a 1,500 word essay that assesses elements of William Allen's classic monograph *The Nazi Seizure of Power* and builds a historical argument about the National Socialist movement before and after 1933.

Digital Archive Project (25%): Studying history is not merely about memorizing dates and facts with no purpose. It is about becoming fluent in a frame of analysis that will allow you to influence public discourse. In this assignment, you will build an interactive digital exhibit using [ArcGIS StoryMaps](#) aimed at informing the general public about some aspect of the everyday lived experience of Europe's tumultuous interwar period. Through this project, you will learn how read and interpret archival collections, as well as how to use the information you find to construct a story about the documents for the public. This assignment will be scaffolded and will include developing a topic idea, building a list of archival sources that you will exhibit, submitting a project design report with an accompanying historical essay, and finally building your StoryMaps digital exhibit.

GRADING SCALE

94 – 100: A	80 – 83.9: B-	67 – 69.9: D+
90 – 93.9: A-	77 – 79.9: C+	64 – 66.9: D
87 – 89.9: B+	74 – 76.9: C	60 – 63.9: D-
84 – 86.9: B	70 – 73.9: C-	0 – 59.9: F

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Accessibility Support: Purdue strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) (email: drc@purdue.edu; phone: 765-494-1247).

Mental Health: Purdue is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, please contact the [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) ([online appointment scheduler](#); phone: 765-494-6995). In-person support is available during weekday business hours on the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center. Virtual and phone support is offered 24/7.

Writing Support: [Purdue OWL](#) (Online Writing Lab) is an online and physical writing center available to students. You can schedule an in-person or virtual session with OWL's tutors or attend a writing workshop to improve your skills.

Additional Resources: Do you have another question and are not sure where to go? Purdue's [Office of the Dean of Students](#) can provide you with information and resources to assist you as you navigate issues that may be affecting you academically, financially, or personally. Student support specialists can assist with emergency loans or other financial assistance, mental and emotional support, and help with academic challenges.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit I: Definitions and Delineations

Tuesday, January 14. Introduction

Reading: Course Syllabus

Thursday, January 16. Revolutionary Potentials: Re-Thinking Interwar Europe

Reading: No Reading

Tuesday, January 21. Fascism, Communism, Democracy

Reading: “Chapter 1: Introduction” and “Chapter 8: What is Fascism?” in Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 3-23; 206-220.

Enzo Traverso, “Historicizing Communism: A Twentieth-Century Chameleon,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 4 (October 2017): 763-780.

Patrice Gueniffey, “Democracy” in *The French Republic: History, Values, Debates*, ed. Edward Berenson, Vincent Duclert, and Christophe Prochasson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 119-126.

Thursday, January 23. NO CLASS

Unit II: The Soviet Union – Revolution from Above?

Tuesday, January 28. The Russian Revolution and the Rise of Stalin

Reading: “Introduction” and “Chapter 1: The Party is Always Right” in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism, Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-13; 14-39.

In Class: Map Quiz

Thursday, January 30. Building Socialism

Reading: “Chapter 3: Palaces on Monday” in Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 67-88.

Excerpts from John Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), ix-33.

Annotation: Stalin on Industrialization and Collectivization (1928-1929)

Tuesday, February 4. Soviet Society

Reading: “Chapter 4: The Magic Tablecloth” and “Chapter 7: Conversations and Listeners” in Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 87-114; 164-189.

Scott, *Behind the Urals*, 82-92.

Thursday, February 6. The Terror

Reading: “Chapter 8: A Time of Troubles” in Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, 190-217.

Annotation: Scott, *Behind the Urals*, 187-206; 247-249.

Primary sources excerpted from “Chapter 11: The Storm of 1937: The Party Commits Suicide” in J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

Tuesday, February 11. NO CLASS

Thursday, February 13. The Spanish Mirror: The Politics of International Interventionism

Reading: “Chapter 6: Death in the Afternoon: The Spanish Civil War and the Destruction of Guernica” in David Clay Large, *Between Two Fires: Europe in the 1930s* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990), 223-266.

Annotation: Excerpts from George Orwell, “Homage to Catalonia” in *The Orwell Reader: Fiction, Essays, and Reportage by George Orwell* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1956), 165-212.

Friday, February 14: Primary Source Analysis due at 11:59 p.m.

Unit III: Italy – *La Rivoluzione Fascista*

Tuesday, February 18. Postwar Disorder and the Rise of Fascism

Reading: Preface and Chapters 1-3 in Christopher Duggan, *Fascist Voices: An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy* (London: Vintage Books, 2013), xi-86.

Thursday, February 20. *Il Duce*

Reading: “Chapter 4: The Man of Providence” and “Chapter 8: The Politics of Intimacy” in Duggan, *Fascist Voices*, 87-112; 216-248.

Tuesday, February 25. Remaking Society

Reading: “Chapter 5: Purifying the Nation’s Soul” and “Chapter 10: Defence of the Race—The Campaign Against the Jews” in Duggan, *Fascist Voices*, 113-147; 305-318.

“Chapter 1: Towards an Autarkic Italy” in Diana Garvin, *Feeding Fascism: The Politics of Women’s Food Work* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 15-46.

Annotation: Excerpts from Benito Mussolini, *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*, trans. Jane Soames (London: The Hogarth Press, 1933).

Thursday, February 27. Teaching Totalitarianism (guest lecture by Dr. David Salomoni)

Reading: No Reading

Tuesday, March 4. Fascism as a Colonial Project

Reading: “Chapter 9: A Place in the Sun” and “Chapter 10: Defence of the Race—Sexual Fears and Making Imperialists” in Duggan, *Fascist Voices*, 249-282; 283-304.

“Chapter 6: The Long Term: Radicalization or Entropy” in Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 148-171.

Thursday, March 6. Midterm Review + Final Project Discussion

Reading: No Reading

Tuesday, March 11. IN-CLASS MIDTERM

Thursday, March 13: NO CLASS – CONFERENCE TRAVEL

Tuesday, March 18: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Thursday, March 20: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Unit IV: Germany – A Microhistory of the National Socialist Revolution

***Important note:** you are expected to read *all* of *The Nazi Seizure of Power* during spring break before we come back. Excellent beach reading (surely, no one will look askance at the cover either). The chapter breakout listed below is meant to structure our classroom discussion.

Tuesday, March 25. Re-Evaluating the Totalitarian Paradigm (guest lecture by Dr. Antoine Lê)

Reading: Prefaces and Chapters 1-9 in William Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922-1945*, rev. ed. (Brattleboro, VT: Echo Point Books and Media, 2014), xii-147.*

Thursday, March 27. National Socialist *Weltanschauung* and Norheim: A Case Study, Part I

Reading: Chapters 10-14 in Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, 149-232.*

Annotation: “The World-View of Nazism” in *Sources of the Western Tradition, Volume II: From the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Marvin Perry, Joseph R. Peden, and Theodore H. Von Laue (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991), 331-336.

Friday, March 28: Exhibition Topic and Preliminary Archival Source List due at 11:59 p.m.

Tuesday, April 1. National Socialism Ascendant

Reading: Chapters 15-18 in Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, 233-279.*

“Chapter 3: The Night of the Long Knives: Nazi Germany and the Blood Purge, 1934” in Large, *Between Two Fires*, 101-137.

Annotation: Excerpts from Patrick Leigh Fermor, *A Time of Gifts: On Foot to Constantinople from the Hook of Holland to the Middle Danube* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2011), 38-39, 51-52, 66-70, 102-103, 130-134.

Thursday, April 3. Norheim: A Case Study, Part II

Reading: Chapters 19-20 in Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, 281-303.*

Tuesday, April 8. War and Radicalization

Reading: No Reading

In Class: Excerpts from *Das radikal Böse*, directed by Stefan Ruzowitzky (docMovie GmbH, 2013).

Secondary Source Analysis due at 11:59 p.m.

Unit V: France – From Republicanism to *Révolution Nationale*

Thursday, April 10. The Third Republic in Crisis

Reading: “Chapter 5: The Decadence” and “Chapter 6: A Famous Victory” in Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), 111-146; 147-181.

Tuesday, April 15. A Strange Defeat and the Rise of Vichy

Reading: “Chapter 10: The War Nobody Wanted” in Weber, *The Hollow Years*, 257-279.
“Prologue: Summer 1940” in Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 3-50.

In Class: Excerpts from *The Sorrow and the Pity*, directed by Marcel Ophüls (Norddeutscher Rundfunk and Société Suisse de Radiodiffusion, 1969).

Revised Source List and Draft Design Report due at 11:59 p.m.

Thursday, April 17. Pétain’s National Revolution: Was France Fascist?

Reading: Excerpts from “Chapter 1: The French Quest for Collaboration, 1940-1942” and “Chapter 2: The National Revolution” in Paxton, *Vichy France*, 51-68; 136-185, 221-233.

In Class: Excerpts from *The Sorrow and the Pity*.

Tuesday, April 22. Vichy in the Tropics: The Case of French Indochina

Reading: “Chapter 6: Adapting the National Revolution to Indochina” and “Chapter 7: Toward a New Indochina” in Eric Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics: Pétain’s National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940-1944* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 130-161; 162-198.

Thursday, April 24. NO CLASS – CONFERENCE TRAVEL

Sunday, April 27: Presentation draft Story Map due at 11:59 p.m.

Tuesday, April 29. Digital Archive Exhibition

Thursday, May 1. Digital Archive Exhibition + Conclusions

Sunday, May 5: Finalized Story Map and Design Report due at 11:59 p.m.