European History since 1500

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[COURSE INFORMATION]

COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS

This course is an introductory survey of European history across the last five centuries. It focuses on how European society has developed through the interaction of political, social, cultural and economic changes and encourages students to make links between the experiences of individual states and nations and those of the continent as a whole.

It aims to enhance students’ abilities to write, to read and to think critically and, through the use of primary and secondary sources, to introduce them to key ways in which historians approach the past as an object of study.

PREREQUISITE

None.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class discussion; Weekly quizzes (weeks 2, 4 and 5) [short factual and interpretational questions]; Midterm source analysis [1000 words on one of the sources from the first half of the course linking this to the secondary reading]; Final exam.

GRADING POLICY

Class discussion/participation 10%; Quizzes 15%; Source analysis 35%; Final exam 40%.

TEXTS & REFERENCES

The core text is:


This is available in a single-volume paperback (and in a two-volume edition) from Amazon and other vendors. Additional secondary reading and primary sources will be provided.

INSTRUCTOR’S PROFILE

Gordon Pentland studied modern history as an undergraduate at the University of Oxford, before undertaking postgraduates study (MSc and PhD) at the University of Edinburgh. He has taught at the University of York and is currently Reader in History at the University of Edinburgh. His research focuses on the political and cultural history of Britain since the French Revolution.
## WEEKLY TOPIC & CONTENTS

### WEEK 1
- **Europe c. 1500**
  - Where and when was ‘Europe’?
  - Medieval Inheritances
  - Renaissance
  - [Readings from Merriman and indicative source material are given below]
  - Merriman, chapters 1-2.

### WEEK 2
- **1500-1600**
  - Reformations and Counter-Reformations
  - States and their Rulers
  - New Worlds
  - Merriman, chapters 3-5.
  - Luther, *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants* (1525).
  - De las Cases, *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542).

### WEEK 3
- **1600-1750**
  - Thirty Years’ War (1618-48) and ‘General Crisis’
  - Absolutism
  - Enlightenments
  - Merriman, chapters 6-11.
  - Louis XVI, *Memoires*.
  - Frederick the Great, *Anti-Machivel* (1740).

### WEEK 4
- **1750-1850**
  - French Revolution and Europe
  - Napoleonic Empire
  - Liberalism/Nationalism/Socialism
  - Merriman, chapters 12-16.
  - Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1792).
  - St Just speech to National Convention, 13 November 1792.

### WEEK 5
- **1850-1950**
  - Modernity and the City
  - Social Divisions
  - The ‘Second Thirty Years’ War’ (1914-45)?
  - Ernst Junger, *Storm of Steel* (1920).
  - Mussolini on fascist doctrine, 1932.

### WEEK 6
- **Since 1950**
  - Postwar Reconstruction and Affluence
  - Union and Disunion
  - Retrospective
  - Churchill speech at University of Zurich, 19 September 1946.