

# GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE

## SPRING 2011 TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

### ECON 289 / ECON 489: Political and Economic History of Europe in the XX<sup>th</sup> Century

Instructor: Andrea Giuntini, GIF

#### *Course Description*

At the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century the European apogee was at the top. The international political and economic power was concentrated in the hands of a few countries, which were ruling the world. The rise of Fordism, the main industrial system spread all over the major nations, and the birth of the big company are the most relevant economic elements of this historical period. The First World War represented a dramatic break-up, putting into troubles and indebting all the European countries. The consequences of the war and the peace that failed are deeply affecting the '20s until the great crash of Wall Street in 1929. The economic uncertainties are facilitating the diffusion of protectionism and dictatorships during the Thirties, from the first Italian Fascism to the birth of Soviet Union, a country which is massively growing thanks to the push given by Stalin. The Second World War and the following Reconstruction are constituting the definitive passage to the prevalence of the Usa and the conflicts of the Cold War. The economic "boom" of the '50s and the '60s is changing the face of Western Europe. During those decades also the process of European unification is making decisive steps ahead. The roots of the long path bringing to the single currency are to be found in this historical moment. The Oil shock is sharply provoking a change in the international economic trend. Europe is living the years of disillusionment after the previous hopes. On the other hand, it is starting the never ending decline of the communist countries which will bring to the fall of Berlin wall in 1989. The reaction to the overwhelming crisis was the introduction of the principles of the Supply side economics, firstly in Great Britain, and the attacks against the Welfare state, which are still so strong nowadays. Between the '70s and the '80s the information and technology revolution and the spread of the new economy are the major events in the most advanced European countries. The fall of Berlin wall and the end of communism, together with the advent of the global economy, are belonging to the present days and will be the point of arrival of the course.

#### *Course Aims/Objectives*

The course is focusing the most important changes in the political and economic field in Europe in the XX<sup>th</sup> century. The approach is an open and multidisciplinary one, paying the highest attention to economic and political events and processes in a historical perspective and adopting the most updated achievements of the historiography. The most relevant objective of this course is to introduce students to the analysis of the XX<sup>th</sup> century and to help them to familiarize with all the linked topics that characterize the current intriguing historical debate. It will provide for students a new economic awareness and knowledge.

#### *Requirements and Prerequisites*

There are no prerequisites for this class, students are asked to take notes during the instructor lectures and read textbook as it is indicated in the syllabus.

#### *Learning outcomes*

At the end of the course students should be able to: identify, define, and solve problems; locate and critically evaluate information; master a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry; understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies; communicate effectively; understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines; acquire skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning.

#### *Developmental Outcomes*

Students should demonstrate: responsibility and accountability, independence and interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, appreciation of differences.

#### *Class methodology*

Class methodology is based on: lectures, structured class discussions, readings, groupworks, oral presentations

#### *Class participation and attendance*

Participation is a vital part of the course, which means mandatory attendance. Students are also expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments before the class and come in on time. If they need to miss class for medical reasons, they let the instructor know in advance of meetings so plans can be made accordingly. If they miss any meetings without an excused absence from the instructor, their final grade will be dropped accordingly. Students are responsible for making up any missed assignments.

#### *Assessment/Grading Policy*

The assessment method includes in-class participation, written papers, oral presentations and weekly homework (reading of the assigned chapters of the textbook and other materials). Grades are based on a student's cumulative average calculated from attendance and in-class participation, a mid-term paper, an oral presentation and a final exam.

#### *Summary of how grades are weighted:*

- 10% Attendance
- 20% Group discussion/class participation
- 20% for the Midterm paper
- 20% for the Presentation
- 30% for the final exam

#### *Textbook*

Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of extremes. The short twentieth century 1914-1991*, London, Abacus, 1995 (later editions are available)

Week by week breakdown of academic calendar

Week 1	
Lesson 1	Topics: 1 The short twentieth century and the European apogee 2 Second industrial revolution, Fordism, birth of the big company
	Required Reading: <i>The century: a bird's eye view</i> , pp. 1-17

Week 2	
Lesson 2	Topics: 1 The war and its consequences: the peace that failed 2 The “roaring” Twenties and the crash of Wall Street
	Required Reading: <i>The age of total war</i> , pp. 21-53

Week 3	
Lesson 3	Topic: The socialist revolution
	Required Reading: <i>The world revolution</i> , pp. 54-84

Week 4	
Lesson 4	Topic: Protectionism and dictatorships: the Thirties
	Required Reading: <i>Into the economic abyss</i> , pp. 85-108

Week 5	
Lesson 5	Topic: War and Reconstruction
	Required Reading: <i>Against the common enemy</i> , pp. 142-177

Week 6	
Lesson 6	Midterm Paper

Week 7	
Lesson 7	Topic: The cold war
	Required Reading: <i>Cold war</i> , pp. 225-256

Week 8: Break	
---------------	--

Week 9	
Lesson 9	Topic: The economic “boom” and the European integration Oral presentation and in-class debate
	Required Reading: <i>The golden years</i> , pp. 257-286

Week 10	
Lesson 10	Topic: The crisis decades Oral presentation and in-class debate
	Required Reading: <i>The crisis decades</i> , pp. 403-432

Week 11	
Lesson 11	Topic: The Supply side economics and the crisis of the Welfare state Oral presentation and in-class debate
	Required Reading: <i>The social revolution 1945-1990</i> , pp. 287-319

Week 12	
---------	--

Lesson 12	Topic: The fall of Berlin wall Oral presentation and in-class debate
	Required Reading: <i>End of socialism</i> , pp. 461-499

Week 13	
Lesson 13	Oral presentation and in-class debate Final Summing Up

Week 14	
Lesson 14	Final Paper