Central European University, Budapest
Department of History
Department of Political Science

Reinterpreting Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe: A Comparative Analysis

M.A. Course, 4 Credits, Fall 2021 (from September 20 to December 10)

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Classes:
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The comparative historical analysis calls for interdisciplinary dialogue between sociology, political science, and history. The objective of this course is to draw up a narrative comparative interpretation, establishing similarities and differences, of the main demonstrations of political and collective violence, from anarchist terrorism at the beginning of the century to the later episodes of war and politics of extermination in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

After an introductory overview of the main interpretative frameworks offered by historiography, the course will turn its focus to a critical review of the most recent socio-historical research and debates concerning violence, with special emphasis on colonial violence, wars, revolutions, paramilitarism, sexual violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Students will be encouraged to develop comparisons with other time periods and other regions of the world.

Readings:
A huge body of literature exists on the large and important themes that we shall pursue in the course.

The following books are specially recommended:


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The course is organised into lectures and seminars. Typically the first meeting of the week is a lecture, while the second is a seminar. Regular participation in discussions is necessary and expected. During the seminars, students are expected to reflect critically on the mandatory readings and to engage in discussions. Questions and stimulating interaction during the lectures will be positively evaluated as well.

The items marked with an asterisk (*) under each week topic are mandatory. Each student will have to take part in one 25 minutes presentation in a group of 2, in the seminars, depending on the number of participants in the course. A general class discussion will follow.

Grade relevant features of the presentation will be: adequate representation of the literature processed and critical, innovative and stimulating thought. I will assist you with identifying core readings for the presentations.

There will be a final historiographic essay (ca. 7-page) to compare and evaluate the viewpoints of three authors on the same subject. The students should be able to elaborate a thesis/argument and support it with evidence taken from the texts. Please note that class attendance is required.

**GRADING:**

The final paper will weigh 50 percent of the grade. The remaining 50 percent will be assigned for presentations (30 percent) and participation in discussions (20 percent).

**LEARNING OUTCOMES AND THEIR ASSESSMENT**

The overall grade will primarily indicate the ability of the students to comprehend and rethink historical concepts and processes, to fit the pieces of that huge mosaic together, to establish the differences among politics, history and memory. The learning outcomes of the master program are supported and measured by the present course in the following ways: The ability to deploy effective oral presentation and discussion skills is assessed through the classes. The skills to analyse historical events and evaluate them in a comparative perspective will be reflected by the final paper. The discussions and final evaluation will also measure the ability of students to elaborate a critical review of the most recent socio-historical research and debates concerning Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1
Session 1: Course description, content and works of relevance to the course. History and Social Sciences.

Session 2: Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe: general patterns and periodization

Readings:


- BERGHAHN, Volker R., Europe in the Era of Two World Wars, Chapter I, pp. 7-32.
---“Daggers, Rifles and Dynamite: Anarchist Terrorism in Nineteenth Century Europe”, Terrorism and Politica Violence, 16, 1 (2004),
- DONALD, Moira, “Russia 1905: the Forgotten Revolution”, Moira Donald and Tim Rees (ed), Reinterpreting Revolution in Twentieth-Century Europe, pp. 41-54
Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):

Readings:

Week 3: War
-BERGHAHN, Volker R., Europe in the Era of Two World Wars, “Violence Unleashed, 1914-1923” (pp. 33-57) and “Terroristic Warfare” (pp. 99-112).

Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):

Readings:
-*MCMILLAN, James, “War”, in BLOXHAM, Donald and GERWARTH, Robert (ed), Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe, pp. 40-86

Week 4: Revolution and Counterrevolution

Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):
Readings:
-*CONWAY, Martin and GERWARTH, Robert, “Revolution and Counterrevolution”, in BLOXHAM, Donald and GERWARTH, Robert (ed), Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe, pp. 140-175.

Week5: Paramilitarism
Readings:

Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):

*Week 6: Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide*


**Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):**

**Readings:**


*Week 7: Sexual Violence*

- HERZOG, Dagmar (ed), *Brutality and Desire. War and Sexuality in Europe’s Twentieth Century.*

**Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):**

**Readings:**

**Part 2: Case Studies**

**Week 8: The Armenian Genocide**

**Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):**

**Readings:**

**Week 9: The Russian Revolutions of 1917**

**Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):**

**Readings:**

**Week 10: Paramilitarism, Fascism and Violence in Italy**

**Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):**

**Readings:**


**Week 11: Postwar. Europe in the Aftermath of World War II**

**Session 2: Seminar (Discussion):**

**Readings:**


**Week 12:**

**Session 1: The Revolutions of 1989: Seminar (Presentations)**


**Session 2: War in Bosnia 1992-1995: Seminar (Presentations)**

*IACOBELLI, Teresa, “The ‘Sum of Such Actions’. Investigating Mass Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina through a Case Study of Foca”, in Darmag Herzog (ed), Brutality and Desire, pp. 261-283.

*SOKOLOVIC, Dzemal, “How to Conceptualize the Tragedy of Bosnia: Civil, Ethnic, Religious War or…?”, War Crimes, Genocide & Crimes Against Humanity, vol. 1, nº 1, 2005, pp. 115-130