

# The Twentieth Century: Europe in Three Wars



Draft Syllabus 2025  
Utrecht Summer School  
Willem Verhoeven

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### Image Front Page

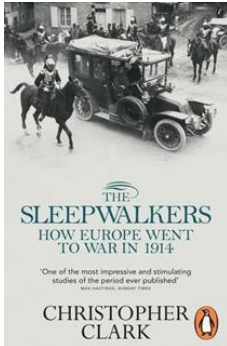
Berliners from both the communist eastern part and the capitalist western part of the city meeting at and tearing down the wall that separated their city for almost fifty years.

## 1. Formal Information

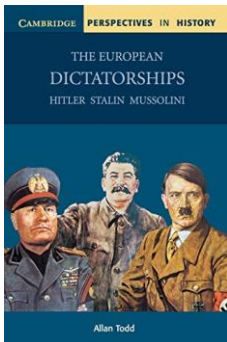
### Materials

Materials will include digital editions of relevant monographies, sections of textbooks, and several primary sources. Please check the Summer School website and contact the course coordinator for updates.

Literature will include segments of:



Christopher Clark,  
The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914.  
Penguin 2012.



Allan Todd,  
The European Dictatorships: Hitler Stalin, Mussolini.  
Cambridge University Press 2014.

### Course Duration

August 4-August 15, 2025.

### Credits

You will obtain 4.0 ECTS and a Certificate of Attendance after completion of the course.

### Faculty

Dr. Willem Verhoeven

Course Coordinator

[w.a.verhoeven@uu.nl](mailto:w.a.verhoeven@uu.nl)

### Contact Utrecht Summer School

Website: <http://www.utrechtsummerschool.nl>

Email: [summerschool@uu.nl](mailto:summerschool@uu.nl)

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## 2. Course Description

### Introduction

When asked about the twentieth century, most people in Europe associate it with the Second World War. Yet during the twentieth century, Europe experienced not just one, but many wars. These include the First World or Great War, the Second World War, and the Cold War that followed in its wake. These major conflicts were often accompanied or sparked by smaller, regional conflicts, like the Balkan wars, the Spanish Civil War, and the Yugoslav wars. For this reason, the twentieth century has sometimes been labelled “The Era of Violence” – and perhaps rightfully so. But this century might as well be regarded as an age of rebuilding, decolonization, ideological struggle, and global connections, therefore making the twentieth century much more diverse.

*Europe in Three Wars* will introduce you to a variety of questions relating to these three European and global conflicts. Why did these wars occur and what caused them to happen? What were the consequences on a human, political, and geopolitical level? Which postwar circumstances caused the Cold War and what were the repercussions of this era for the global European empires?

You will study these questions pertaining directly to these three wars, but also gain insight into major changes that took place in other areas of society. These changes included the way people lived, new political ideas and ideologies, key economic developments, and profound alterations of the world map.

You will receive lectures on, read sources from, and watch documentaries on a variety of historical topics. These will span the narratives of the three wars but also topics such as international cooperation and multilateralism, ideology, and the rise of welfare states.

Finally, you will also go on a number of excursions, for example to the Nazi concentration camp near the Dutch town of Amersfoort and to the International Court of Justice in the Peace Palace in The Hague.

### Course Objectives

At the end of this course, the students will be able to:

- Recognize the most important historical developments that characterized the twentieth century, with a special focus on the three wars.
- Analyze how the three wars of the twentieth century continue to influence Europe and the world today.
- Put European history in a global perspective and recognize the changing position of Europe in the world.

### Disclaimer

Depending on factors such as the size of the travel group and opening times/availability of some offers, individual parts of the excursions might change. Please check the Summer School website and contact the course coordinator(s) for updates.

### 3. Academic Program

#### Week 1

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#### Monday: August 4, 2024

10:00-10:30: Introduction: Welcome to the Course!

Lecturer: Willem Verhoeven

Location: TBA

11:00-12:00: Lecture 1: The European State System: Origins of the First World War

Lecturer: Willem Verhoeven

Location: TBA

13:00-14:00: Lecture 2: The Treaty of Versailles: Fall of the German Eagle

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

14:30-15:15: Seminar 1: The First Total War?

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

#### Literature:

- Eirini Karamouzi, Jan Koura, and Stéphane Michonneau, “Peace and Conflict in Contemporary History (ca. 1900–2000),” in: *The European Experience* (2023), 383-392.
  - Mary Wiesner-Hanks, “World War and Revolution,” in: *A History of World Societies* (2018), 820-831.
  - [OPTIONAL] Christopher Clark, “Conclusion,” in: *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to War in 1914* (2012), 555-562.
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#### Tuesday: August 5, 2024

10:00-12:00: Lecture 3: Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini: Rise of Ideological Contenders

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

13:00-15:00: Seminar 2: Antisemitism, the Holocaust, and the Netherlands

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

Literature:

- Allan Todd, “Dictatorships: ideologies and totalitarianism” and “Comparisons and Contrasts,” in: *The European Dictatorships: Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini* (2014), 1-12; 210-221.
  - Ian Kershaw, “‘Working Towards the Führer’. Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship,” *Contemporary European History* 2 (1993): 2, 103-118.
  - Jan Grabowski, “Poland: The Blue Police,” in: *How was it possible?: A Holocaust Reader* (2015), 562-574.
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**Wednesday: August 6, 2024**

Excursion 1: Full-day excursion to Kamp Vught (Nazi Concentration Camp)

Literature:

- TBA

**Thursday: August 7, 2024**

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10:00-12:00: Seminar 3: Turning Points of the Second World War

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

13:00-14:30: Seminar 4: Towards a New Global Order: A Continent Divided

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

Literature:

- Mary Wiesner-Hanks, “The Great Depression and World War II,” in: *A History of World Societies* (2018), 900-915.
- Mario Del Pero, “Incompatible universalisms: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the beginning of the Cold War,” in: *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War* (2014) 3-16.

**Friday: August 8, 2024**

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10:00-12:00: Lecture 4: Back to the Continent: Global Powers no More

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

13:00-15:00: Self Study for Assignment (coordinator available for advice)

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

Literature:

- Isabelle Surun, Mikuláš Pešta, and Gabriele Metzler, “Empires and Colonialism in Contemporary History (1900–2000)” in: *The European Experience* (2023), 317-326.
- [OPTIONAL] Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson, “Rethinking Decolonization: A New Research Agenda for the Twenty-First Century,” in: *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire* (2018), 1-26.

## Week 2

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### Monday: August 11, 2024

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10:00-12:00: Lecture 5: European Democracy

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

13:00-15:00: Seminar 5: Socio-Political Revolutions on the Continent

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

Literature:

- Martin Conway, “The Rise and Fall of Western Europe’s Democratic Age, 1945-1973,” *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004): 1, 67-88.

### Tuesday: August 12, 2024

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Excursion 2: Full-day excursion to The Hague

Literature:

- [OPTIONAL] Visit the website of the Peace Palace: <https://www.vredespaleis.nl/?lang=en> to get an impression of the institution that we will be visiting.

### Wednesday: August 13, 2024

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10:00-12:00: Lecture 6: Fall of the USSR: The End of History?

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

13:00-15:00: Self-study for Assignment (coordinator available for advice)

Lecturer: TBA

Location: TBA

18:00: Deadline assignment

Literature:

- Thomas F.X. Noble e.a., “The Communist Bloc: From Consolidation to Stagnation” and “The Collapse of the Soviet System, 1975-1991,” in *Western Civilization: Beyond Boundaries* (2014), 849-853; 859-864
- Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History,” *The National Interest* 16 (1989), 3-18.

**Thursday: August 14, 2024**

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10:00-13:00: Final Exam

Location: JK15A 101

**Friday: August 15, 2024**

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10:00-11:00: Final Ceremony: Presentation of Certificates and Drinks

Location: JK15A 101

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#### 4. Lecturers (provisional)

**Dr. Willem Verhoeven (course coordinator)** is a lecturer within the political history section of Utrecht University. His research interests include the political and intellectual history of Western Europe in the early-modern period, with a particular focus on the philosophy and politics of the Enlightenment.

**Jelle Lammerts van Bueren, MA** is a lecturer within the political history section of Utrecht University. His research interests are generally focused around Western European democracy in the twentieth century with a special interest for the cases of France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

## Excursions

During the course, we will make two full-day excursions, where we will see the traces and effects of European history in the Dutch landscape. For both excursions, transportation (by bus) will be arranged by the Summer School. You are, however, required to arrange your own lunch. Details on where and when the bus will pick you up will follow.

### **Kamp Vught**

Wednesday: August 7, 2024

During the war, Kamp Vught functioned as one of three Nazi concentration camps in the occupied Netherlands. Over the course of the occupation, 31.000 people were held captive at the camp and a significant number of Dutch jews was transported from this camp to extermination camps in Germany and German-occupied Poland. We will visit the remnants of the camp itself, the museum that is connected to it, and the woods surrounding the camp.

### **The Hague**

Tuesday: August 13, 2024

The second excursion will take us to the Peace palace in The Hague. It houses the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the United Nations International Court of Justice and The Hague Academy of International Law. At the visitors' center, a contemporary exhibition and an impressive film will give you an introduction to the establishment of the Peace Palace and the judicial institutions. We will also visit the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. The International Criminal Court investigates and, where justified, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.

Please note that at the various locations you'll have to present your **passport** to get access.

## 5. Attendance, Assessment, Grading

### Attendance

You are required to attend all lectures, seminar sessions, and excursions. Students who are absent due to factors beyond their fault (illness, accident, etc.) should submit a medical attest of this to the course coordinator (Jelle Lammerts van Bueren) as soon as possible. A compensatory assignment is expected for each absence and each uncompensated absence will result in a 10% subtraction of the final grade.

### Assessment

Your grade for this course will be based on two different assignments:

- Essay      40 %
- Exam       60 %

### Essay

To complete this course successfully, you will have to write an essay (1000 words max.) on a historical object that you encountered during one of the excursions. You will have to link your museum piece of choice to the broader themes and literature of the course, explaining why you have selected it and clarifying why you think it can represent the history of twentieth-century Europe. The essay will therefore have to consist of:

- a (brief) **description** of the object of choice (what, when, where);
- an analysis of the object's **historical importance** (what period, connection to literature);
- an explanation of why you think this particular object **represents** the history of twentieth-century Europe and its three wars.

In the essay you show that you are capable of critical reflection on the themes discussed during this course. You should demonstrate how these lectures and excursions helped you develop an understanding of the European twentieth century. You can also include pictures of the object that you made during excursions.

**Deadline:** The essay should be handed in on Wednesday August 14 (18:00). You can mail it to the course coordinator at [j.lammertsvanbueren@uu.nl](mailto:j.lammertsvanbueren@uu.nl).

### Exam

The course ends with a final exam of all course material (lectures, seminars, and literature) on Thursday August 15 (10:00-13:00).

### Grading

Your grades will be numerical grades, following the Dutch grading system. Dutch grades range from 0 (very bad) to 10 (excellent). At Utrecht University, a 5.5 is considered the lowest passing grade. Please note that grade inflation has not affected the Dutch grading system as much as it has some American institutions. Grades of 9 and higher are rarely given, the most common grades

awarded being between 6 and 8. The Utrecht University student registration system (Osiris) that will produce your transcript will round off all grades to whole numerals for 5 and lower, and half numbers for 5.5 and higher. Hence, ... 4 — 5 — 5.5— 6 — 6.5 — 7 — 7.5, etc. On course work and examinations, however, it is customary to receive a grade that has not been rounded off. Pluses and minuses are sometimes used, and count for one-fourth of a point, for instance: 8- = 7,75. The meaning of the final numerical grades is as follows:

9.00-10.00	Excellent
8.00-8.99	Very good
7.50-7.99	Good
7.00-7.49	Very satisfactory
6.50-6.99	Satisfactory
6.00-6.49	Sufficient
5.50-5.99	Acceptable; minimum pass
5.00-5.49	Insufficient; fail
4.00-4.99	Unsatisfactory
3.00-3.99	Very unsatisfactory
2.00-2.99	Bad
0.00-1.99	Very bad

\* Note that the conversion of grades that you have received in the Netherlands to grades at your home institution is the responsibility of your home institution, not Utrecht University. This chart should be used as an indication; no rights can be drawn from it.

\* Any case of plagiarism, including the use of text-generating AI, will be reported to the home institution and result in a course failure, meaning 1.00 as the final grade for this course.

## 6. Summer School Information

### Utrecht University Facilities

During the course, you can use several of Utrecht University's computer and printing facilities. You have received your computer login code (SOLIS ID) from the Summer School administration.

You are recommended to use one of the main computer rooms of the Faculty of Humanities in Kromme Nieuwegracht 80 (KNG 80). The computer rooms are opened from Mondays through Fridays from 08:00 to 19:00. The computer rooms are closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

Another option is to use the computers at the University Library (UB) Innercity (Drift 27). The library is open from Monday through Fridays from 08:00 to 18:00. It is closed on Saturdays and Sundays. Again, use your login code (SOLIS ID) to log in at any of the library computers.

### Social Program

Utrecht Summer School not only offers you a fine selection of interesting courses in all kinds of disciplines, it also aims at giving the participants an unforgettable stay. Therefore, we invite all students during the months July and August to an attractive social program, including excursions, sport activities and social gatherings. The activities will provide the perfect setting for you to get to know your classmates better and to meet international students from other Summer School courses!

Information on the Summer School Social Programme can be found on the website [https://utrechtsummerschool.nl/social\\_programme](https://utrechtsummerschool.nl/social_programme).