

Grinnell College
Department of History
Fall 2008

History 295: History of the European Left, 1825-present

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Course Meetings: MWF 10-10:50 AM, Science 1245
Office Hours: M 1-2:30 p.m.; T 10:30-11:30 p.m.; W 11-12 p.m

This course traces the emergence and transformation of the “Left” in Western Europe from the early 19th century to the present. Key themes include Marxism and its utopian antecedents; the development of trade unions and working-class political organizations in the last third of the 19th century; the growth of the German Socialist Party (SPD); the impact of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution upon the Left; the Spanish Civil War, the Great Depression, and the “Popular Front” strategy of the Comintern in interwar Western Europe; the intellectual fascination with Communism after World War II; the emergence of the postwar welfare state; May 1968 and “red terrorism;” and the eventual collapse of the Cold War order and international Communism.

Course Requirements

1. Discussion (20%)

All students are expected to do all of the course readings at the time they are indicated on the syllabus, and to actively participate in class. Our class meetings are mandatory. While you may miss two meetings for any reason, any further failure to attend will have a negative impact on your participation grade unless this absence occurs due to a medical condition or a family emergency. In addition, I reserve the right to not issue a passing grade to any student who misses more than six class sessions (again barring medical or family emergencies).

As part of your participation grade, you will – in groups of two – be responsible for “anchoring” one discussion over the course of the semester. (The discussions are marked on the syllabus with an asterisk). You will not need to lead discussion for the entire length of the class, but you must meet beforehand (with each other and me) to prepare a list of discussion questions and key themes that you feel that the class should address. In short, your group will be the resident “experts” on that day of discussion.

2. Papers (60%: 15% for the two 5-page papers, and 30% for the 8-10 page paper)

You will submit three essays over the course of the semester. The first two will be 5-page papers, in response to particular readings, in the first half of the semester. The final paper, 8 to 10 pages in length and due near the end of the semester, intended to give you the opportunity to write

about a particular topic or question encountered during the course that you found most particularly engaging. This is not necessarily a primary-source paper (although you have plenty of possibilities in the context of this course); you must, however, go beyond the readings on the syllabus to supplement our class readings. Your paper should give careful attention to previous historiographical approaches to the topic and offer your own analysis and argument about your chosen sources

You will also note that you must submit an (ungraded yet mandatory) paper proposal and preliminary biography four weeks ahead of the final paper due date; this consists of a two-paragraph statement of what you intend to write about and the sources you plan on using for the project. You also must submit a two-page paper two weeks later detailing your argument, a sense of the historical “problem” you are approaching, and an outline for the rest of the paper.

3. Final Exam (20%)

You will have a take-home final examination dealing synthetically with the overall themes from the course.

Texts and Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the Grinnell College Bookstore. While I will attempt to place a copy of each on reserve at Burling Library, I would strongly recommend that you purchase them for your own convenience and to spare the CIA in case it ever examines your bookshelf.

Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850-2000* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Signet, 1998)

Emile Zola, *Germinal* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004, orig. 1885)

François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999)

George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (New York: Harvest Books: 1958)

Giorgio, *Memoirs of an Italian Terrorist* (New York: Carrol and Graf Publishers, 2003, orig. 1981)

The following readings are required and available as PDFs on PioneerWeb or at related internet links.

Robert Owen, “A New View of Society Or, Essays on the Principle of the Formation of the Human Character, and the Application of the Principle to Practice” (1813)

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/econ/ow04.htm>

Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu, eds., *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 189-203, 233-270

Robert Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), various selections

Eric D. Weitz, *Creating German Communism 1890-1990: From Popular Protests to Socialist State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 18-61

Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism. A Criticism and Affirmation* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 135-150, 189-199

Karl Kautsky, "Erfurt Program" of the SPD (1891)

Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause, eds., *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque: A Historical and Literary Anthology* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 147-163

Clara Zetkin, *Selected Writings*, ed. Philip S. Foner, (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 45-50, 72-83

Ross McKibbin, "Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?" *The English Historical Review* 99 (391) (April 1984): 297-331

Romain Rolland, *Above the Battle* (Chicago: Open Publishing Company, 1916), 37-55, 76-92
 Google books link:
<http://books.google.com/books?id=zaAMAAAYAAJ&printsec=titlepage&dq=Rolland+Above+the+Battle>

Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 3-6, 296-319

"Programme of the Popular Front," in Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France defending democracy, 1934-1938* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press), 299-302

George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, in *The Complete works of George Orwell, Volume 6*, Peter Davidson ed. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1986, orig. 1938), 1-37, 188-215

Susan Cooper, "Snoek piquante: The trials and tribulations of the British housewife," in Michael Sissons and Philip French, eds., *Age of Austerity* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), 33-54

Clement Attlee, *Purpose and Policy: Selected Speeches* (London: Hutchinson, 1947), 1-12

David Kertzer, *Comrades and Christians: religion and political struggle in Communist Italy* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 26-72, 98-130

Andrew Feenberg and Jim Freedman, *When Poetry Ruled the Streets: The French May Events of 1968* (Albany, 2001), 73-91, 123-145

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 11-34

Week 1A

August 29 Introduction (Eley, 3-12)

Readings:

Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy*

Week 1

September 1 Setting the Stage: Utopias and the French Revolution (Eley, 13-61)

September 3 Utopian Socialists and the Industrial Revolution
 (Owen and Fourier primary source selections)

September 5 Revolutionary Programs (Marx, 44-99 at the very least)

Readings:

Eley, *Forging Democracy*; Robert Owen, "A New View of Society;" Selections from Charles Fourier; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Week 2

- September 8 Marx the Philosopher (Marx, *Theses on Feurbach/German Ideology* – 143-145, 146-163, 176-186, 193-200)
- September 10 Marx the Economist (Extracts from *Capital* – 302-308, 336-343, 344-364, 439-442)
- September 12 Marx, Politics and the 19th Century (Eley, 62-84; Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Napoleon Bonaparte* – 594-617)

Readings:

Eley, *Forging Democracy*; Selections from Marx

Week 3

- September 15 The Commune of Paris (Begin Zola)
- September 17 Zola, Realism and *Germinal* (Zola, 5-134)
- September 19 The Miners Go on Strike (Zola, 137-294)*

Readings:

Emile Zola, *Germinal*

Week 4

- September 22 Miners, Mobs, and... Yuck (Zola, 297-373)*
PAPER #1 DUE, SEPTEMBER 22, MEARS 212, 5 P.M.
- September 24 The Miners: Still on Strike (Zola, 377-439)
- September 26 Fiction as History (Zola, 443-532)

Readings:

Zola, *Germinal*

Week 5

- September 29 Socialism as a Mass Party: Enter the SPD (Eley, 85-118; Weitz, 18-61)
- October 1 Revisionism and the SPD (Bernstein, 135-150, 189-199; Kautsky, “Erfurt Program”)*
- October 3 Feminism and Socialism (*Feminisms of the Belle Epoque*, 147-163; Zetkin selections)*

Readings:

Eley, *Forging Democracy*; Weitz, *Creating German Communism*; Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*; Karl Kautsky, “Erfurt Program;” Selections from *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque* and Clara Zetkin: *Selected Writings*

Week 6

- October 6 The British exception? (McKibbin, 297-331)*
- October 8 Outbreak of World War I (Eley, 119-138)

October 10 The Left and the War: Pacifism and Patriotism? (Rolland, 37-55, 76-92; Barbusse, 3-6, 296-319)*

Readings:

Ross McKibbin, "Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?"; Eley, *Forging Democracy*; Romain Rolland, *Above the Battle*; Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire*

Week 7

October 13 War and the Bolshevik Revolution (Eley, 139-151; Furet, 34-61)
PAPER #2 DUE, OCTOBER 13, MEARS 212, 5 P.M.

October 15 Revolution and Schism (Eley, 152-184; Furet, 62-92)
October 17 Believers and Unbelievers (Furet, 93-124)

Readings:

Eley, *Forging Democracy*; François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion*

MIDTERM BREAK!

Week 8

October 27 Radical Experiment: Weimar and the SPD (Eley, 185-200; 201-219)
October 29 Best of Enemies: Socialism, Communism and Fascism (Furet, 157-265)
October 31 The Depression (Orwell, ix-118)*

Readings:

Eley, *Forging Democracy*; Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion*; George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*

Week 9

November 3 The Depression and Socialism (Orwell, *Road to Wigan Pier*, 120-232)*
November 4 ELECTION DAY!
November 5 Popular Fronts: Mass Politics, Mass Culture (Eley, 220-277; "Programme of the Popular Front")
November 7 War in Spain (Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 1-37, 188-215 – read the latter part first!)

Readings:

Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*; Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*; Eley, *Forging Democracy*; "Programme of the Popular Front"

Week 10

November 10 World War II (Eley, 278-298; Furet, 315-360)
November 12 Settling the Cold War Order
PROPOSAL FOR FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS

November 14 Communism after WWII (Furet, 361-437)*

Readings:

Eley, *Forging Democracy*; Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion*

Week 11

November 17 The Modern Welfare State (Eley, 299-336; Cooper, 33-54; Attlee, 1-12)

November 19 Communists in the West (Kertzer, 26-72, 98-130)*

November 21 1956, or the Beginning of the End? (Furet, 438-477)

Readings:

Eley, *Forging Democracy*; Susan Cooper, "Snoek piquante;" Clement Attlee, *Purpose and Policy*; David Kertzer, *Comrades and Christians*; Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion*

Week 12

November 24 Decolonization, Mao and New Currents on the Left (Eley, 337-365)
TWO-PAGE ARGUMENT/HISTORICAL "PROBLEM"/OUTLINE SECTION DUE IN CLASS

November 26 May 1968 (Debord, 11-34; Feenberg and Freeman, 73-91, 123-145)*

November 28 **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING**

Readings:

Eley, *Forging Democracy*; Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*; Feenberg and Freeman, *When Poetry Ruled the Streets*

Week 13

December 1 The Left after 1968 (Eley, 366-404)

December 3 The Hard Left: Red Brigades and Red Army Faction (Giorgio, 1-92)

December 5 Life as a Red Terrorist (Giorgio, 92-191)*

Readings:

Giorgio, *Memoirs of an Italian Terrorist*; Eley, *Forging Democracy*

Week 14

December 8 Collapse of the Old Order (Eley, 405-456)
FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 8, MEARS 212, 5 P.M.

December 10 End of Certainties (Eley, 457-504)

December 12 Whither the Left?

Readings:

Eley, *Forging Democracy*

FINAL EXAM TO BE COMPLETED BY 12 P.M., DECEMBER 19

Additional Ground Rules:

1. Deadlines are to be taken most seriously. I will automatically grant you one extension on any of the three papers. You must e-mail me 48 hours before the paper is due; you do not need to explain the circumstances necessitating the extension. The extension will be for 72 hours. Barring exceptional emergency circumstances, I will not grant you an extension on another paper. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.
2. Papers must be double-spaced and have one-inch margins, and should not employ anything larger than 12-point font. E-mailed papers will not be accepted.
3. All written work at Grinnell College is subject to the Student Handbook. If you have questions as to how a particular assignment relates to the Student Handbook, please consult with me in advance of that assignment's due date.
4. All written work submitted for a grade must be completed in order to pass the course. In addition, any student who misses more than six classes (again, barring exceptional emergency circumstances) will not receive a passing grade.
5. If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, located on the third floor of the Rosenfield Center (x3702).