

**Boston University
College of General Studies**

**Social Science 102
Spring 2012**

**THE MODERNIZATION OF
THE WESTERN WORLD**

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE

Professors:

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INTRODUCTION TO SEMESTER II

The Modernization of the Western World

During the first semester, we concentrated on social science methodology and learned some basic concepts fundamental to understanding human behavior and social structures. We examined the process of individual socialization; the concept of society as the interaction among individuals, groups, and institutions; and culture as the total way of life of the group. Under these broader concepts, we considered stratification, power and authority, economics, and social change. To illustrate these ideas, we looked at some particular examples from contemporary society and non-Western cultures. Finally, we looked at the beginnings of Western civilization's progress from a medieval agrarian society toward a modern industrial society.

In this semester, we pick up where we left off in December and carry our study into the twenty-first century. Medieval society, with its sacred values and its rural, agricultural culture, emphasized community at the expense of the individual. As market institutions and a money economy developed, a new emphasis on rationalism and the individual emerged. This change was accompanied by supporting ideologies and values.

As we study this process of Western modernization, we will pay particular attention to the interrelationships of various types of change. We will see how the evolution of political and economic institutions affected - - and in turn was affected by - - changes in family life, social stratification, religious ideas, and cultural outlooks. Finally, as we trace the growth of industrialization and modernization, we will examine the key reactions to this process - socialism, nationalism, fascism, and welfare state capitalism, as well as the emergence of the phenomenon of globalization.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course structure of SS102 is similar to that of SS101. Each week will contain one division (JSA) lecture, one team lecture, two sections, and an optional tutorial.

Your final grade in the course will be determined as follows:

- 15% Divisional midterm exam;
- 25% Divisional final examination;
- 60% to be determined by your team professor on the basis of two team exams, paper assignment(s), and classroom performance.

COURSE READINGS

1. Required Books for the Spring Semester :

McGrath/Martin, *The Modernization of the Western World* (used 1st semester)
Heilbroner, Robert, *The Worldly Philosophers*
Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
McGrath, John, ed., *Readings in Social Theory & Modernization*, V. 2 ("Reader")
Remarque, Erich Maria, *All Quiet on the Western Front*
Voltaire, *Candide* (Gordon translation; Bedford/St. Martin edition)

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

The College of General Studies takes the matter of plagiarism very seriously. For this reason we ask you to read the following excerpt from the college's Academic Conduct Code.

Plagiarism is any attempt by a student to represent the work of another as his or her own. This includes copying the answers of another student on an examination or copying or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in any oral or written work without citing the appropriate source; collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution; and attempting to copy or imitate the language, ideas, or thoughts of another author and present this work as one's own work.

The faculty of CGS requires that whenever more than three or more words are copied consecutively from another author, quotation marks must be used; students should also note that paraphrase or "indirect quotation" of others' ideas and thoughts must be credited. Students should familiarize themselves with the commonly accepted methods of documentation as taught in Rhetoric or other CGS classes, and as outlined in the handbook used in the rhetoric course. A student who has difficulty in interpreting this policy should err in the direction of caution, and is urged to consult with his or her instructor.

IMPORTANT DATES

Please note following dates that affect our course during this semester.

FIRST TEAM EXAMINATION: Thursday, Feb. 16, during team lecture hour**

PRESIDENTS' DAY: No classes Monday, Feb. 20. Tuesday is a Monday schedule.

MIDTERM EXAMINATION: Thursday March 8 during team lecture hour*

SPRING VACATION: Saturday March 10 – Sunday March 18

SECOND TEAM EXAMINATION: Thursday, Apr. 12, during team lecture hour**

PATRIOTS DAY WEEK: No classes Monday, Apr. 16. Wednesday is a Monday schedule.

LAST DAY OF INSTRUCTION: Wednesday, May 2

STUDY PERIOD: Thursday May 3- Sunday May 6

FINAL EXAMINATIONS: Monday, May 7 through Friday, May 11

Please make sure you consult the exam schedule **before** you make any travel plans!

* Makeups on mid-term and final examinations are given only if a student has been granted permission by the Division Chairman (Prof. Corrin, Room 517). This requires a written petition within 24 hours of the scheduled exam.

** Normally, there are no make-ups for missed team examinations. Your instructor may require the completion of an additional assignment as a makeup, or, in certain circumstances, give the midterm or final exam grade double weight towards your course grade.

COURSE OUTLINE

UNITS I-III: A SOCIETY IN TRANSITION

I. January 18 Capitalism and Political Centralization

The period of rapid social change and violent conflict that accompanied the Reformation heightened Europeans' need for stability, and led to the creation of a more centralized and effective political form, known as absolutism, by the 17th century. Thomas Hobbes, the era's greatest political philosopher, reflected these developments in his conclusions regarding the need for strong states to govern mankind.

These absolutist states, such as the one that Cardinal Richelieu and King Louis XIV created in France, exerted growing power over their subjects. In particular, this era saw the emergence of powerful bureaucratic administrations and armies that could only be supported by increasing tax revenues. Such monarchies also began to expand their control of the economy through policies and regulations that became known as mercantilism. In the long run, the mercantilist emphasis on productivity and profit gave an enormous boost to the development of capitalism, as cities and trade continued to grow alongside the political state.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapters 7 & 8: "Commerce, Cities, & Capitalism" and
 "The Centralization and Rationalization of the Political State"
 Hobbes, *Leviathan* excerpt (Reader)

II. January 25 The Enlightenment

During the eighteenth century, as secularism and rationalism continued to spread, Europe was generally at peace and experienced an intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment. With roots in Renaissance Humanism and the Scientific Revolution, this movement emphasized an empirical understanding of nature, and tended to reject traditional religious explanations. Europeans began to apply rational approaches to many different facets of their societies, relying upon a conviction that humans possessed the ability to improve their condition. Through the contributions of such figures as John Locke, Voltaire, and Adam Smith, the Enlightenment established a widely-held confidence in the idea of "progress" that would be essential for the development of modern society.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 9: "The Enlightenment"
 Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government* excerpt (Reader)
 Rousseau, *The Social Contract* excerpt (Reader)
 Voltaire, *Candide*

III. February 1 The French Revolution

Just as the Enlightenment was promising continual progress with increasing confidence, the French Revolution erupted, both fulfilling and confounding the predictions of Enlightenment thinkers. This was a turning point in modern western history, since it put into practice the ideas that had been shaping the minds of Europeans for four centuries, and shattered the last vestiges of the medieval social and political systems. This revolution also marked the emergence of the bourgeoisie as the new elite in European society. The French Revolution will be examined as a consequence of rapid social change, sparked by the failure of the French political state to adapt to an evolving social and economic environment. Although none of the participants could have anticipated the outcome, the violent and unpredictable course of events that characterized the French Revolution had far-reaching political, economic, social, and cultural consequences throughout the continent.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 10: "The French Revolution"
 The Declaration of Independence (Reader)
 Declaration of Rights of Man & Citizen (Reader)
 De Gouges, "The Declaration of the Rights of Woman" (Reader)
 Robespierre, "Justification of the Use of Terror" (Reader)

UNITS IV-VII: THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

IV. February 8 The Industrial Revolution

By the late eighteenth century, mercantilism, the growth of commerce, and social developments had all paved the way for massive economic change. In Great Britain, technological advances, the growth of consumer demand in an increasingly monetary economy, and an entrepreneurial spirit gave birth to the Industrial Revolution. Among other notable features, machinery began to replace artisanal skill, new energy sources replaced the traditional reliance on human and animal power, and the scale of economic enterprises grew exponentially. During the nineteenth century this new system spread elsewhere, and for the first time in history, mankind had developed the potential to overcome economic scarcity.

The powerful economic forces unleashed by the Industrial Revolution propelled revolutionary systemic social change. Thousands of people flooded the new industrial centers only to endure harsh and dehumanizing living and working conditions. Instead of prosperity, for many the rewards of industrialization were poverty, disease, and violent death. Many social observers of the time concluded that while the Industrial Revolution led to enormous profits for a few, for many others it actually worsened the quality of life.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 11: "The Industrial Revolution"
 Laslett, "The World We Have Lost" (Reader)
 "The Sadler Report" (Reader)
 Thompson, "Exploitation" (Reader)

V. February 15 Classical Liberalism

The Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution had created a society that relied far less on tradition and much more on the idea of progress. As the new industrial order developed, so too did the ways of thinking about property and profits. Increasingly, new ideologies emerged that steered European society in a more individualistic and materialistic direction. Concepts such as self-interest, private property, free enterprise, and competition gained widespread acceptance as the dominant philosophy of liberalism. As Europeans implemented the ideas of Adam Smith and Classical Liberals, capitalism flourished, providing different socioeconomic classes with uneven rewards.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 12: "Classical Liberalism"
 Heilbroner, *Worldly Philosophers*, Ch. 3
 Mill, *On Liberty* excerpt (Reader)

Thursday, Feb. 16: FIRST TEAM EXAM, during Team Lecture Hour

VI. February 22 Marx's Moral Vision and the Crisis Theory of Capitalism

Liberalism and capitalism were not without their critics, since, for all its promise, the Industrial Revolution had some severe negative consequences on European society. In the first half of the nineteenth century, conservatives advocated a return to pre-industrial society, romantically recalling a past when the aristocracy was supreme. In contrast, advocates of early socialism, while accepting the coming of industry, blamed social ills on the concept of private property that was so central to capitalism.

Karl Marx was undoubtedly the most significant critic of the capitalist form of production, and his political, social, and economic ideas have had a vast impact on modern society. The theory of Marxism differed from early socialism because it relied upon a "scientific" foundation, as Marx attempted to prove the inevitability of a proletarian revolution.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 13, "Karl Marx and the Socialist Response to Capitalism"
 Marx, *Communist Manifesto*, 8-32, 41-46
 Heilbroner, *Worldly Philosophers*, Ch. 6

VII. February 29 Nationalism and Imperialism

During the industrial era, the concept of "the state" that had emerged in the early modern period was supplanted by another, even more powerful idea: that of "the nation." Peoples throughout Europe began to identify themselves according to culture, religion, and shared historical experience, and they demanded that the political state accommodate itself to these realities.

Nationalism on the popular level emerged in concert with the development of intense international rivalries for territories and economic resources. By the end of the nineteenth century, European states had constructed immensely powerful economic and political institutions that enabled them to assert an unprecedented supremacy in world affairs. Private and political interests largely coincided to set Europeans on an aggressive and confrontational path not only within Europe, but also overseas, in a great burst of imperialism after 1870. Historians frequently refer to this half-century or so, during which the middle classes and their values came to dominate European society, as the "*Belle Époque*."

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapters 14 & 15: "Nationalism and Nations" and "The Age of Empires"
 Lenin, "Imperialism, The Latest Stage of Capitalism" (Reader)
 Von Treitschke, "The New Nationalism and Racism" (Reader)
 Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (Reader)

Thursday, March 8: Midterm Exam, during Team Lecture Hour

March 10-18: Spring Break

UNITS VIII-XI: CRISES IN MODERN WESTERN SOCIETY, 1914-1945

VIII. March 21 The Great War

In the twentieth century, the whole tone of life in the West shifted. The tensions and conflicts that simmered beneath the surface of the bourgeois order - - monopoly capitalism, class conflict, aggressive nationalism and imperialism- - exploded in 1914. The "Great War" shook the social, economic, and political order of Europe, plunging western society into a half-century of continuous crisis.

The participants in World War I were confronted with unspeakable horror. As one can see in Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the utilization of industrial methods of warfare made the conflict seem impersonal and senseless. Europe, it appeared, had sown the seeds of its own destruction, and after 1914, it would never be the same.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 16: "The Great War"
 Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

IX. March 28 The Great Depression

The end of the First World War solved little. Instead, it left European society with a host of serious problems, including severe economic weaknesses. In 1929, the western world plunged into the depths of the worst depression in history. Unemployment and corporate bankruptcies brought society to its knees, forcing a reevaluation of long-held liberal economic theories and causing a restructuring of the relationship between business and government. We will examine the economic approach known as Keynesian economics, which emerged as an alternative to laissez-faire policies after the collapse of Western capitalist systems.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 17: "Europe Between the Wars"
 Heilbroner, *Worldly Philosophers*, Ch. 9
 Roosevelt, "On the Democratic Welfare State" (Reader)

X. April 4

The Rise of Fascism

Fascism was one new and dangerous response that arose during this interwar period of crisis. While it played a central role at a particular point in history, it can also be seen as a sociological phenomenon that is critically linked to economic, political, and cultural change. To a great extent, fascism represents a failure of modernity, especially the rejection of rationality and individualism. Like the earlier phenomenon of nationalism that was one of its key components, fascism gave individuals a sense of community at a time of crisis and confusion. The impact of fascism on the direction of twentieth century history reveals a great deal about the profoundly difficult task of modernization and the social and cultural difficulties that it creates.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 18: "The Rise of Fascism"
Paxton, "The Anatomy of Fascism" (Reader)
Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism" (Reader)

XI. April 11

World War II and the Holocaust

The new ideology of fascism soon spread through Europe and led the world into yet another catastrophic war, one that had an even more pronounced global dimension. In contrast to the earlier conflict, the Second World War was characterized by "Total War" - - where civilians suffered as terribly as the active combatants. Between 1939 and 1945, it appeared that Europeans once again were intent on destroying themselves, this time with an even greater ferocity.

This episode in history raises some profound and disturbing questions about the relationship between the state and the people it is supposed to be serving. In particular, this episode in history asks us to reconsider what the entire concept of "progress" has contributed to the modern world, and whether our preoccupation with this idea has in fact diminished our humanity.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 19: "Total War: World War Two"
Mackey, "The Holocaust" (online)

Thursday, April 12: SECOND TEAM EXAM, during Team Lecture hour

UNITS XII-XIII: THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

XII. April 18 The Postcolonial Era

After 1945, war-shattered European nations began to relinquish control of their overseas colonies, creating dozens of newly independent political states around the world. Influential citizens in the “developing world,” such as Mohandas Gandhi and Frantz Fanon, offered different solutions to the challenges presented by decolonization. Meanwhile, the postwar struggle between communism and democratic capitalism affected economic and social modernization around the globe.

As the Cold War sputtered to an end with the disintegration of communist empires, Fukuyama's provocative essay "The End of History?" asks difficult questions regarding the relationship between ideology and material life. His optimistic conclusions were shared by many who anticipated a future of peace and prosperity around the globe. However, his assertions of liberalism's final triumph over its ideological competitors now seem premature, in large part because of the variance between the ideal of democratic capitalism and its actual operation in the modern world.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 20, “The Cold War”
Fukuyama, "The End of History?" (Reader)
Fanon, “Concerning Violence” (Reader)
Gandhi, “Letter to the Viceroy” (Reader)
Collins & Lappé, “Why Can’t People Feed Themselves?” (Reader)

XIII. April 25 Globalization

By this point in our course, we should appreciate that today's and tomorrow's problems are global problems. In recent years the world has been transformed rapidly but unevenly, increasing some of the inherited social divisions while forming new social structures and coalitions. While bringing unprecedented global economic activity, this process of globalization has also brought about a number of unique challenges and once again raised important questions about the relationship of culture and material life.

Reading: *Modernization*, Chapter 21, “Globalization and Social Change”
Malik, “The Rage of Islam” (Reader)
Barber, “Jihad vs. McWorld” (Reader)
Huntington, “The West: Unique, Not Universal” (Reader)
Chua, “Globalizing Hate” (Reader)

XIV. May 2 Required Film, during JSA lecture hour
Last Day of Instruction: Wednesday, May 2
Monday, May 7: Final Exams Begin

