

Note: Course requires organized travel on Sept 12-14 and Oct 3-4 (noon; in Paris).

Georgia Tech-Europe, European Campus of the Georgia Institute of Technology

HTS 2037 RMZ – Twentieth Century Europe

(Europe at War and Peace, 1870 – 1970)

Fall 2025

Course Syllabus

Instructor

Dr. Timothy Stoneman
School of History and Sociology
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Office 223, GTL Building

Time and Place

TuTh – 2:00-3:15pm
Red Room

Course Attributes

HTS 2037 fulfills the Core Area E Social Science Requirement and the International Relations Requirement for the IP at Georgia Tech.

Course Prerequisites

None

Welcome !

It is a pleasure to have you in the class. The class offers you a unique opportunity to discover Europe and the Metz area by studying its history in class and then visiting historic sites in person. It is an opportunity that you will not have in Atlanta – and is indeed the reason why you chose to study abroad!

An Introduction to Myself

I am the product of three influences in my background: the northeast, the ACC, and France. I grew up in the greater New York area, but spent a high school year studying abroad (like you) in France. I attended Duke and double majored in history (no surprise!) and comparative literature (French/Russian). I tried careers in pre-law and retail banking before settling on high-school teaching in the Atlanta area. I completed my PhD at Georgia Tech in 2006 in the history and sociology of science and technology (HSOC) and started teaching at GTL in summer of 2005 ! After a “postdoc” at MIT for two years, I ended up back in the ACC as a VAP at Clemson University and then returned to GTL in France in 2011, this time for good. I have been at GT-E ever since (along with my family!).

Course Description

For the first time in several generations, Europe is at war again, now on its outside border in Ukraine. The war in Ukraine throws into the question the long-term viability of the postwar democratic order established in Europe after 1945. HTS 2037 looks at the course of war and peace during the long twentieth century in Western Europe from 1870 through 1970 by examining its three major military conflicts: the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, WWI, and WW2. We will study these wars through the combined lenses of geopolitics, ideology, and technology. The arrival of Germany as a nation-state in 1871 culminated the centuries-old geopolitical rivalry between France and its eastern neighbor; the “German question,” would dominate European diplomatic and military affairs through the outbreak of WWI. A tenuous, and ultimately unstable peace, resulted from the war. The ideological conflict between the competing visions of fascism, communism, and liberal democracy fueled a bitter thirty-year civil war that further fanned the flames of armed conflict. In terms of the sheer scale and technological complexity of its organized violence, WW2 that followed made the twentieth century the most destructive in world history for soldiers but especially civilians. Out of the ashes of the total destruction wrought by WW2 (what Germans called “zero hour”) came the rudiments of a lasting peace, constructed through Franco-German reconciliation and shared economic prosperity – the European Union.

Our course tells the story of war and peace in Europe's twentieth century through the locales of Metz and eastern France. The strategic fortified city of Metz and the surrounding border regions of Alsace and Lorraine were critical fulcrums in the century's three major military conflicts – from precursor (Franco-Prussian War of 1870) to battlefield (Dornot crossing of the Moselle and Battle of Metz, 1944) to cradle of postwar peace (Robert Schuman Plan, 1950). In a real sense, the story of Metz is the story of Europe.

Field trips

As part of the offering of HTS 2037 in Europe, our class will feature specially organized field trips to a range of historic sites. The course will require two weekends of travel to historical battlefields, memorials and cemeteries, and museums: a three-day weekend of travel from *September 12-14* and a 1.5-day weekend on *October 3-4 (noon; in Paris)*. Sites in September include Verdun, Reims (Cathedral, Musee de la Reddition), Armistice Clearing (Compiègne), Museum of War of 1870 (Gravelotte), Robert Schuman House, and Fort de Queuleu. Sites in October include Memorial de Caen (museum), American cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, Omaha Beach, Pointe du Hoc, and the Fortresse du Mont Valerien (outside Paris). Required readings will be assigned for field trips. GT-E will pay all hotel and travel expenses (with the exception of the return TGV trip from Paris), as well as some major meal expenses. Please let me know immediately if you do not have a EuRail pass. You will receive class credit hours for the field trips (seven classes).

Course Objectives

Students will accomplish the following objectives:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that have historically influenced social behavior.*
- Students will be able to judge factual claims and theories on the basis of evidence.*
- Students will demonstrate proficiency in the process of articulating and organizing rhetorical arguments in written, oral, visual, and nonverbal modes, using concrete support and conventional language.*

(* Language is taken directly from the General Education Mission Statement of Georgia Tech's Core Curriculum, available on the Registrar website.)

Core IMPACTS

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

Grading

Please see Canvas for the separate document “grading policy” On Canvas (Course documents), which forms part of the course syllabus. Please read the document carefully.

Honor Policy

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.*

Students are expected to abide by the Georgia Tech honor code. All infractions will be handled through the Office of the Dean of Students and treated with the utmost seriousness.

(* Language is taken directly from the GT Syllabus Essentials, 2023-2024.)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office or Disability Services at 404.894.2563 or their website, as soon as possible, to discuss your needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Then, make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your learning needs.*

(* Language is taken directly from the GT Syllabus Essentials, 2023-2024.)

Statement on Inclusion

The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology’s commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society. (Statement taken from Ivan Allen College Dean’s Office.)

Miscellaneous

Class calendar – The class will use Canvas Modules to regulate the flow of class, including all activities and deadlines. Please also read the Canvas Announcement for important dates on the course calendar, including field trips, no classes, film nights (optional), and special lunches (optional).

Electronics - Please do not use electronic devices in class, including laptops and cell phones, except for explicit in-class assignments. Use of electronics detracts from discussion and is a distraction to the people around you.

Good and drink - Food and drink are not allowed in the classroom (per GT-E policy), except on special class occasions (such as film nights).

Course Materials

There are no required textbooks (and associated costs). All reading material will be provided through Canvas. The course will utilize Canvas as its class website and management tool. You should see the course website for all assigned texts.

Course Units

Introduction
War, 1870
War I, 1914-18
False peace, 1919-39
War II, 1939-45
Lasting peace (EU), 1951-73
Conclusion

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Course Units and Topics

- I. **Introduction**
 - a. *Class 1.* Course overview
 - b. *Class 2.* War & peace in the 21st century
 - c. *Class 3.* Thirty Years War

- II. **War, 1870**
 - a. *Class 4.* Franco-Prussian War (1870-1)
 - b. *Class 5.* Understanding defeat

- III. **War I, 1914-18**
 - a. *Class 6.* Prelude: Road to World War, 1870-1914
 - b. *Class 7.* Total War, 1914-18
 - c. *Class 8.* America I, 1917
 - d. *Class 9.* False peace

- IV. **False peace, 1919-39**
 - a. *Class 10.* Interlude
 - b. *Class 11.* The great civil war

- V. **War II, 1939-45**
 - a. *Class 12.* Road to war
 - b. *Class 13.* War of empire
 - c. *Class 14.* America II, 1941-45
 - d. *Class 15.* Conduct of war
 - e. *Class 16.* Outcomes & legacies
 - f. *Class 17.* Cost of war

- VI. **Lasting peace (EU), 1951-73**
 - a. *Class 18.* Postlude: Destruction & reconstruction; displacement
 - b. *Class 19.* Steps to Peace – European Union (1951, 1957)
 - c. *Class 20.* 1960s & EU expansion (1973)

- VII. **Conclusion**
 - a. *Class 21.* Last class – European identity: Myth or new reality?

Course readings [selections only]

- Timothy Snyder, "Ukraine Holds the Future," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2022
- Volodymyr Yermolenko, "War and peace, Europe's two hearts," *voxeurope*, August 2023
- Peter H Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (2019)
- Peter Wilson, *Iron and Blood: A Military History of the German-Speaking Peoples since 1500* (2023)
- Brendan Sims, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy, 1453 to the Present* (2013)
- Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (2020)
- James Joll, *Europe since 1870: An International History* (1990)
- Wolfgang Schivelbusch, "Introduction: On Being Defeated" in *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery* (2003)
- Wolfgang Schivelbusch, "France" in *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery* (2003)
- Hans Kundnani, "The German Question" in *The Paradox of German Power* (2014)
- Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (2012)
- Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe, 1914-1949* (2015)
- Hew Strachan, ed., *The Oxford History of the First World War* (2014)
- Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau, "Battlefield Violence in 1914-1918," *Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah* (2008)
- Jennifer Keene, *The United States and the First World War* (2022)
- Geoffrey Wawro, *Sons of Freedom: The Forgotten American Soldiers Who Defeated Germany in 1918* (2018)
- Michel Goya, *Winners: How France Won the Great War* (2018)
- Michael S. Neiberg, *The Treaty of Versailles: A Concise Introduction* (2017)
- Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (1998)
- Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origin of Our Time* (1944)
- Richard Overy, *Blood and Ruins: The Last Imperial War, 1931-1945* (2023)
- Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (2022)
- Ricahrd Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (1995)

Paul Kennedy, “How to Seize an Enemy-Held Shore” in *Engineers of Victory: The Problem Solvers who Turned the Tide in the Second World War* (2013)

Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (2005)

Hans Kundnani, “Conclusion: Geo-economic semi-hegemony” in *The Paradox of German Power* (2014)

Hans Kundnani, “‘The Eurocentric fallacy’: the myths that underpin European identity,” *The Guardian*, August 17, 2023