

Note: Course requires organized travel on February 6-8 and March 13-14 at 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 visiting professor 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 War of 1870 (Franco-Prussian War), WWI, and WWII. We will study these wars through the themes 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 eventually fanned the flames of armed conflict. In terms of the sheer scale and technological complexity of its organized violence, the war 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 WWII (what Germans called “zero hour”) came the rudiments of a lasting peace, constructed on the foundations of 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 lens of 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 (Schuman Plan, 1950). In a real sense, the story of Metz is the story of Europe in the twentieth century.

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 *February 6-8* and a 1.5-day weekend on *March 13-14 (ends at noon; in Paris)*. Sites in September include Verdun, Reims (Cathedral, Musee de la Reddition), Armistice Clearing (Compiègne), Museum of War of 1870 (Gravelotte), and Robert Schuman House. 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 Modules, which forms part of the course syllabus. Please review the document carefully and let me know if you have questions or would like further explanation.

How to Succeed in Class

The greatest keys to success in the class are preparation and participation. If you make a sincere effort to prepare class materials ahead of time and contribute daily to class discussion, you should perform well. I have designed the class to maximize student involvement. To succeed, the class therefore requires your active effort. Establish good working habits early in the semester so that you have less to worry about later. Try to avoid distractions (especially electronics), both in class and when preparing. It can be hard, especially with readings that may seem long at times, but make the effort and I think that you will find it worthwhile.

Communication Plan

I will communicate with you outside of class in two primary ways: through Canvas Announcements and Inbox. On Monday morning, I will send an Announcement for the upcoming week indicating the material that we will cover (Module), as well as the assignments that will be due. I will also give our two field trip schedules through Announcements. If I have a special need to contact the class on a specific matter, I will use email (Inbox) to reach you each individually.

You can always reach me through email (tim.stoneman@hsoc.gatech.edu). I do not keep office hours, since I am frequently in the building, but I can arrange to meet you anytime according to your schedule – just send me an email request. Please note that all late work, even if excused, should be submitted through canvas for grading purposes. If an assignment is closed, just ask me and I will open it for you.

Note: Make sure to leave notifications on in Canvas so that you receive Announcements.

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 for the people around you. Extended use of laptop in class may result in loss of daily attendance points.

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 of 1870
World War I, 1914-18
False peace, 1919-39
World 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 of 1870**
 - a. *Class 4.* Franco-Prussian War (1870-1)
 - b. *Class 5.* Understanding defeat

- III. **World 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. **World 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