



College of Europe
Collège d'Europe



Natolin

ECTS CARD

STUDY PROGRAMME(S) / STUDY TRACK(S)

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies
Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (Study Track: European Security and Strategy)
Master of Arts in Transatlantic Affairs (Study Track: European Interdisciplinary Studies)
Master of Arts in Transatlantic Affairs (Study Track: European Interdisciplinary Studies - European Security and Strategy)

YEAR

2026-2027

COURSE TITLE

East-Central Europe, 1815-1940

SEMESTER

1

PROFESSOR(S)

BUTTERWICK-PAWLIKOWSKI Richard

ACADEMIC ASSISTANT(S)

SACCO ZAUT Andrea

COURSE TYPE

Core Course

MAJOR(S)

Not applicable

ECTS CREDITS

3

TEACHING HOURS

14

INDIVIDUAL & GROUP STUDY TIME

60

TUTORIAL(S)

1

COEFFICIENT

0.75

LANGUAGE(S)

EN

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course seeks to introduce students to modern Central and Eastern Europe through the presentation and discussion of its most important political and cultural problems from the early nineteenth century until the outbreak of the Second World War. The course is particularly aimed at those students who have not previously studied European history in depth, in breadth, or systematically, and so it draws on the introductory prerequisite: 'History of European Civilization.' The course will explain the deep roots of the region's problems, while also highlighting its potential and achievements. The first session introduces students, most of whom have not studied history at university-level before, to historical approaches to the study of region, discussing the shifting locations and meanings of 'Central Europe', the deep legacies of the past, and the revolutionary transformations of the decades preceding 1815. The overarching theme of the course thereafter is the relationship between empires and nations. It is structured around transformations, studied from the perspective of the region. The first transformation is of the idea of nations (both by the state, and despite the state) that took place during and after the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, in the age of 'Romanticism'. Mass nations, some of them new ones, emerged from the forge – and the reasons have been much contested. Long established, politically conceived nations – such as the Poles and Hungarians – had to adapt to new circumstances. The second transformation was the uneven, disorienting onset of 'modernity' on the empires and nations of the region. Their societies experienced urbanization, industrialization, technological breakthroughs, the erosion of traditional social and cultural barriers, and the arrival of mass education and mass politics. The third transformation was the birth, rebirth, or expansion of nation-states (kingdoms and republics) in Central

and Eastern Europe. They rose from the wreckage of the Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires, which were destroyed by wars and revolutions in the second decade of the twentieth century. The fourth transformation is of the former Russian and German empires into the Soviet and Nazi totalitarian regimes, challenging and ultimately overthrowing the constitutional order in the space between them during the interbellum. The course will consider the extent of political, cultural, and economic resilience of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe, before finishing with the Nazi-Soviet partition of the region in 1939-40.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- 1) Understand modern Central and Eastern Europe history, encompassing both the deep roots of the region's problems, and its less well-known potential and achievements (A7, ERSP1, ERSP3);
- 2) Acquire a sound understanding of the history of the European construction within the longer context of the history of European Civilization, including Central and Eastern Europe, and its wider neighbourhood and global contexts. Students will be able to challenge 'occidocentric' assumptions about Europe (A2, B1, ERSP1, ERSP3);
- 3) Critically analyse and evaluate the changing idea of Europe, the changing aims of the European construction and changing social, political and economic realities in Europe and in the world to understand better the phenomenon and uniqueness of the region (A1, A2, ERSP2, MATA 1.4);
- 4) Master a significant body of historical literature on broad topics in European and global history, including Central and Eastern European History (A2, ERSP5).

RECOMMENDED PREPARATION

- Introductory Course "History of European Civilization" - prerequisite
- WANDYCZ, Piotr S., *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*, 2nd edn, London-New York: Routledge, 2001.

TEACHING METHOD(S)

Illustrated lectures and individual study.

ASSESSMENT METHOD(S)

Assessment will be based on the following elements:

- Final exam (100% of the final mark): 1.5-hour, written, digital, closed-book, on-site exam. Students will answer one question from a choice of three.

COURSE CONTENTS

1. Understanding Central and Eastern Europe through History;
2. Empires and nations (1815-1864)
3. Empires, nations, and modernity (1850s-1914);
4. Breaking empires, making nations? (1914-1923)
5. Nation-states and multinational states in the interbellum (1920s-1930s);
6. Totalitarian dictatorships: The Soviet Union and Nazi Germany (1920s-1930s);
7. Breaking nations, re-making empires? (1935-1940).

COURSE MATERIALS (readings and other learning resources/tools)

Readings and visual materials via slides, detailed in the course outline and on the e-learning platform.