

# History 209—Europe, 1945 to the Present

Prof. Greg Shaya

## STUDY GUIDE EXAM #2

### Directions:

The exam will take place at the beginning of class on Wednesday, March 11, 2026. Bring your laptops (and power if you need it). I will provide a link to the exam and you will complete your answers online. Make sure that you can use the Safe Exam Browser.

*For the exam:* Read all the directions! Watch the time carefully. You have thirty minutes for the exam (with a small grace period). Be sure that you address all the questions as well as you can. Your answers should be clear, precise, concrete, but concise.

*To study for the exam:* This second short exam will cover the material from Wednesday, February 11 through Monday, March 9 (from my introduction to the post-war economic boom and the 1950s through our discussion of *The Joke* and Communist Eastern Europe).

I'll ask you a mix of questions. The exam will be one-part names and dates and details (do you know your facts) and one-part big ideas (how should we think about these films that we've studied and the large questions of postwar European history?). To review, you'll want to read through your notes, review Hitchcock and the outside readings, consolidate your notes, and make outlines. You'll want to be sure that you can identify—and say a few words about—the key terms, names, dates, and sources. You will also want to think about how to answer the questions laid out below.

### Part 1. **Very Short Answer** (5 mins., 10 points)

Answer **all of the following questions** in a word or name or a phrase for each. (Choice of 12 questions; I'll grade out of ten; I'll only count correct answers).

*For example:*

1. What was the name of the Algerian group that led the fight for Algerian independence?
2. What do the tarot cards show Cléo?

### Part 2. **Short Answer** (10 mins., 10 points)

Answer **two of the following questions** with a few sentences each. *Choice of four questions.*

*For example:*

1. What was the message of *Mon Oncle* about modern France?
2. What was the message of Dubcek's "Communist Action Program"?

### Part 3. **Longer Answer** (15 mins., 20 points)

Answer **one of the following questions** in a few short paragraphs. Give concrete details from lecture, discussion, textbook, or films. *Choice of two questions.*

*For example*

1. Why was decolonization so difficult in Algeria?
2. What was the immediate impact of Stalin's death on eastern Europe?

### **Possible Questions for Part 3**

How and why did European leaders forge new European institutions?

What were the forces that produced decolonization?

What were the forces that resisted decolonization? Why was it so difficult, in Algeria, for example?

What was the impact of the death of Stalin on eastern Europe (in the short term, in the long term)?

What produced the remarkable youth culture of the 1960s?

What were the causes of the protests of 1968 in the west?

What produced the Prague Spring and why did it fail?

What was the outcome of protest movements of the 1960s, in France and Czechoslovakia, for example?

### **Key Terms, Ideas, Names, Dates, Sources**

What are the elements of film? See handout from week one. Mise-en-scene...

Film representations as interpretations (fantasies, cultural products)

How can we use film as a primary source to understand the past?

How can we use history to understand film?

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What features characterized the 1950s in Europe (West and East)?

Federico Fellini, dir., *La Dolce Vita* (1961)

The Economic Miracle, 1948-1973 (note the years)

- *Trentes glorieuses* (thirty glorious years)
- *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle)

Decolonization

- India, Indochina, Year of Africa, Algeria

European Cooperation

- European Coal and Steel Community

- Treaty of Rome & European Economic Community

Eastern Europe after Stalin

- East Germany, Poland, Hungary...

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How to think like a historian

The C's of history

- Change/continuity
- Context
- Causes
- Contingency
- Complexity

What is history good for?

- Rich understanding of the world

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*Mon Oncle* (1958)

Dir. Jacques Tati

Monsieur Hulot, The Arpel Family, Betty

Modern France and Old

A distinctive sound landscape – diegetic sounds, music, minimal conversation...

Signs of modernity – Placastac, American jazz, the automobile

Consumerism, modernity, and the enduring value of play

Film promises to reconcile old and new – in the character of Gérard

What else is happening in 1958? New Wave Cinema, Trentes glorieuses, Algeria, Poujadisme

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Victoria De Grazia

A new standard of living in late '50s and '60s – a new consumer society – based on an American model

The "Laundry Revolution"

Obsession with cleanliness (at the same time that wars of decolonization and student protests were unfolding)

The Kitchen Debate - Nixon & Khrushchev at the Moscow World's Fair – what system would deliver for adherents

Sarcelles - Modern French housing developments of the 1960s

And the French suburbs – zones of exclusion

Fears of Coca-Colonization

An open question – was American trade with Europe a manifestation of cultural imperialism?

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Forces of change in the 1950s

- Economic growth
- Decolonization
- European cooperation

Decolonization

- Cf world of 1900 to world of post-1945 – empires to nations
- India and Pakistan (1947). Ghandi, Nehru, Jinnah, Lord Mountbatten, Partition
- ~~Malaysia (1957). Communist insurgency~~
- Ghana (former Gold Coast, 1957). Kwame Nkrumah
- Kenya (1963). In wake of brutal fighting
- French Indochina (1954). Dien Bien Phu
- Algeria (1962). Brutal war of decolonization
- 1960 – the Year of Africa

How to explain differences ?

- Local contexts
- Settlers
- Political choices

Forces for decolonization...

- Ideas of self-determination
- Anti-colonial movements among colonial subjects
- European publics

Forces of resistance...

- Politicians – and some publics
- Settlers
- The Army – as in French Algeria

~~Cf. British vs. French decolonization~~

Suez Crisis, 1956. Gamel Nasser

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Jawaharlal Nehru. First PM of India

Ho Chi Minh. Vietnamese independence leader

Ferhat Abbas. FLN leader

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French Algeria

- Settler Society – 1950 c. 1 m. Europeans, 9 m. Algerians
- FLN (National Liberation Front)
- Algerian War, 1954-1962
- Battle of Algiers, September 1956-late 1957
- The Crisis of the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic – threat of army coup – and the Return of de Gaulle (1958)
- Charles DeGaulle, founder of the Fifth Republic
- Algerian Independence, 1962

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*Battle of Algiers* (1965)

Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo

Soundtrack of Ennio Morricone

Saadi Yacef (FLN operative) helped write the story, starred

Ali la Pointe / Col. Mathieu

Torture as state policy

Terrorism as resistance tactic

Visual style – documentary-like, closeups on faces, non-professional actors

Narrative style – complicated timeline

Violence of terrorism helps produce... a people. And the people will demand independence

Speaks the language of Franz Fanon on violence

Note the critique of Hannah Arendt on violence

What is missing here? Conflicts bw FLN and other Algerians, role of DeGaulle, the French public, international pressure, etc.

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What would follow death of Stalin? It's complicated!

Destalinization and the Soviet Bloc

- Death of Stalin, 1953
- Laurentia Beria – “New Course” – liberalization
- East German Protests, 1953. Walter Ulbricht “Constructing Socialism”
- Nikolai Kruschchev – pushes Beria out
- Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech” (February 1956)

Tocqueville thesis on reform and revolution

Poland

- Polish strikes 1956 – Poznan
- Polish Workers Party - Wladyslaw Gomulka (and the Polish Thaw)
- And 30 years of hard-line rule

Hungary

- Imre Nagy
- Hungarian Revolution of 1956
- Soviet military invasion – arrest of Nagy – and appointment of Janos Kadar
- And 30 years of Goulash Socialism

East Germany

- East Germany - 1949 - GDR (German Democratic Republic, DDR)
- SED – Socialist Unity Party
- Walter Ulbricht (Head of SED, then President of East Germany)
- Berlin Wall 1961 – Operation Rose
- Kennedy – “Ich bin ein Berliner”

French / German cooperation

- Under watch of DeGaulle & Adenauer
- Friendship Treaty 1963
- Different ideas of European institutions

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The Sixties

Chronology – a long way from early ‘60s to late ‘60s

Context of economic growth, European integration, and old leadership

Youth Culture

- Subcultures - Mods & Rockers – moral panic over youth
- The Beatles, “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (Lennon/McCartney, 1964)

- Rolling Stones, “Let’s Spend the Night Together” (Jagger/Richards, 1967)
- Youth culture and protest – the Vietnam War
- The promise of liberation – in the context of economic prosperity
- Mick Jagger on generational change

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*Cléo from 5 to 7* (1962)

Dir. Agnès Varda

French New Wave – a cinema of *auteurs* telling stories of real people – rejecting “Cinema of quality”

2 hrs. (90 mins.) from a woman’s life

Visual style – every shot carefully composed (Varda a photographer) – the presence of mirrors and glass – in the background a world of consumerism in midst of *trentes glorieuses*

Cléo’s life is in question - that leads her to see herself in a new light

An existential drama – a story of self-discovery and self-understanding – what is an authentic life?

What does it mean to be a woman in the 1960s?

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1968 in Europe

Paris – May ‘68

*Nanterre – Student Protest – Daniel Cohn-Bendit (Dany the Red) – Sorbonne*

*Occupation – police violence – workers – 10 m. on strike*

*Prime Minister Georges Pompidou – President Charles DeGaulle - National Elections in June*

1968 in West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany, FRG or BRD)

*Student protests over Vietnam – Remilitarization – Fascism – attempted assassination of student leader, Rudi Dutschke*

‘68ers

1968 in Italy

*Years of student protest*

*Strikes in 1969 – “Hot Autumn”*

*"Years of Lead" from 1960s to 1980s – terrorism*

1968 in Czechoslovakia

*Prague Spring*

- *Short-lived era of political liberalization*

- *Jan to Aug 1968*

*Alexander Dubcek – "Socialism with a human face" – liberalization – decentralization*

*August 1968 – Warsaw Pact invasion*

1968 in GDR? Poland? Hungary?

*See role of secret police, Stasi, for ex.*

Common features of protest in W. Europe

- Baby boom after WWII
- Crisis in the universities – overcrowding – disputes over curriculum – top-down control
- International affairs – Cold War – Vietnam
- Inspired by revolutionaries in China, Cuba, beyond – Mao, Castro, Ho Chi Minh, Che, 19<sup>th</sup> c. anarchists

Poster art of Paris in May '68 – graphics and powerful messages

Wider outcomes?

- Brezhnev Doctrine 1968
- West Germany – Willy Brandt - Ostpolitik
- Extreme left – turn to terrorism, RAF, Red Brigades
- Feminist movement – embraced activism

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Postwar Czechoslovakia and the Prague Spring

- "People's Democracy"
- "Prague Coup" (February 1948)
- Alexander Dubcek
- Who was Rudolf Slánsky? (d. 1952)
- Dubcek Government Commission of Inquiry on Political Trials (1968)
- Communist Action Program (1968)
- Warsaw Pact Invasion (1968)

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*The Joke* (1969)

Dir. Jaromil Jires

Based on novel by Milan Kundera

Ludvic Jahn / Helena / Paul/Pavel / Margareta

The film is a portrait of the revolutionary fervor (of 1948) & the disappointment (for some like Kundera and Jires) of the 1960s

Czech New Wave, or "Czech Film Miracle"

In the background – show trials (1950-1954)

The film is a document of the Prague spring – a critical perspective on Communist Czechoslovakia – but ultimately a pessimistic one. The film – and the story from Kundera – sees no hope in politics