

# **HISTORY 209—Europe, 1945 to the Present**

Prof. Greg Shaya

Spring 2026

## **FINAL EXAMINATION STUDY GUIDE**

Welcome to the Final Exam for History 209! It is a chance to demonstrate (some of) what you've learned this semester about Europe since 1945 and film & history. Preparing for an exam like this is not about cramming details into your short-term memory, rather, it is a chance to reflect on the most important examples we have studied and to consolidate your understanding of this history and these sources. As you will see, the emphasis here is on synthesis over memorization. If you have been paying attention along the way, I have no doubt you will do well.

**Time and Place:** Tuesday, May 12, 2026, 4:00 to 6:00pm, in our regular classroom, Kauke 237

**For the Exam:** Please bring your laptop and a power source. You will take the exam on Moodle. I'll bring along green books in case there are technical difficulties. The exam is closed book. You cannot use outside resources of any kind (notes, encyclopedias, internet searches, ChatGPT, etc.). However, I will allow you to bring one 3"x5" note card with a few notes you may want to bring along.

### **Guidelines**

The final exam will cover the entire course.

I have written this as a 90-minute exam, but you can stay as long as 120 minutes.

The exam will consist of two parts:

- *Part 1. Essay on Europe Since 1945* (50%, about 45 minutes). Answer one long essay question with an essay of about 4-5 full paragraphs. I'll give you the choice of two questions that center on major historical developments in postwar Europe.
- *Part 2. Essay on Film & History in Europe Since 1945* (50%, about 45 minutes). Answer one long essay question with an essay of about 4-5 full paragraphs. I'll give you the choice of two questions that center on film as a historical source.

### **What Makes for a Strong Exam?**

The best exams demonstrate strong arguments, a mastery of key details, and clear presentation.

### **How to Study?**

To review, work through this study guide, review the details, review your notes, look over class presentations. Meet in a group and talk through the essay themes below. Outline key arguments and examples for the essay themes.

### **For the Exam Itself**

Please read the essay questions carefully! Plan your essay before you start writing. Be sure you have a clear argument that responds to the question, and concrete details and analysis to deliver your argument.

Good luck! gks



### **Themes for Part 1 – On History of Europe 1945 to Present**

Turning Points in European History—what are some important turning points where the direction of history seemed to change? Or failed to change?

History & Memory—of the Second World War, of collaboration, or imperialism, of authoritarian governments, etc.

The Cold War—its source, its effects on Europe, turning points, its aftermath

Europe and the United States—political & economic ties, cooperation, tensions & ruptures

Eastern vs. Western Europe—divergent developments, parallel developments, points of contact, mutual influences

Social Experience—how has the social position of individuals shaped their experience of historical developments, Europe as a way of life, European identities, gender identities

The Rebirth of Europe—economic recovery, European institutions, the power of European example

Europe & Its Others—the legacy of empire, decolonization, immigration, nationalism, European identity, marginalized groups

### **Themes for Part 2 – On Film as Historical Source**

How can dramatic films help us to understand the past?

What are some changes in the history of Europe that are evident in the films we've watched?

How did European filmmakers grapple with the problems of their day and turn these into dramatic films?

How did European filmmakers grapple with social change?

How did European filmmakers portray political authority in postwar Europe?

How did European filmmakers deal with difficult national (and sometimes personal) memories?

### **Consolidated List of Details**

I will not ask you to identify details (as I did on the short exams), but this list of details from the previous study guides may be useful as you review material from the course and plan your essays.

#### **Details from Exam #1**

What are the elements of film?

Film representations as interpretations

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

How can we use history to understand film?

---

The impact of the Second World War  
physical, economic, human toll

Yalta Conference, Feb. 1945

Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill

Post-war democracy for Europe

Plan for United Nations

Potsdam Conference, July-Aug. 1945

Stalin, Truman, Atlee

Question of Postwar Germany - German  
Reparations

SED – Socialist Unity Party – in Soviet Zone  
of Germany (unifying Communists &  
Socialists)

---

*Open City* (1945)

Roberto Rossellini

Don Pietro / Pina / Francesco / Manfredi /  
Marcello

Communists and Catholics need to work  
together!

Benito Mussolini and the legacy of fascism  
 Italian Resistance  
 A “usable memory” of the war  
 ---  
 Charles de Gaulle  
 Vichy France and the experience of  
 collaboration  
 “myth of resistance”  
 Denazification  
 Nuremburg Trials  
 ---  
 Four Power Control Council or Allied  
 Control Council of Germany  
 George Kennan (Long Telegram, February  
 1946)  
 Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” speech (March  
 1946)  
 Harsh Winter of 1946/7  
 Crisis over Turkey & Greece (spring 1947)  
 Truman Doctrine (February 1947)  
 George Marshall’s Plan (June 1947)  
 Berlin Blockade & Airlift (June 1948-May  
 1949)  
 ---  
*Murderers Are Among Us* (1946)  
 Writer and Dir. Wolfgang Staudte  
 Soviet Zone of Germany  
 “Süss the Jew” 1940 Nazi anti-Semitic  
 propaganda film  
 Hans Mertens / Susanne Wallner / Bruekner  
 “rubble film” - Trümmerfilm  
 film style – pre-war German cinema  
 (Expressionist cinema)  
 War criminals into capitalists  
 A Romantic Comedy?  
 Another “usable memory” of the war  
 ---  
 DP’s  
 Stephen Spender on scars of war, physical,  
 economic, moral  
 Gerald Frank on Jewish refugees  
 Palestine

Bruno Foa on economic situation of 1945  
 The challenge of economic recovery  
 ---  
 Winston Churchill  
 Clement Atlee (PM 1945-51)  
 The Labour Party  
 Sir William Beveridge  
 The Welfare State  
 National Health Service  
 Ernest Bevin (Labour) Foreign Minister  
 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO,  
 1949)  
 ---  
*The Third Man* (1949)  
 Graham Greene / Carol Reed  
 Harry Lime / Holly Martins / Anna / Calloway  
 Postwar Vienna, a scarred people  
 Context of Four Power Occupation of  
 Austria  
 The Black Market  
 Film Noir – compromised heroes in a world  
 of moral ambiguity  
 Moral dilemmas in postwar Europe  
 A British view of the Cold War – and an  
 invitation to American action  
 ---  
 The Beveridge Report (1942)  
 “New Britain”  
 Five Evils  
 Cf. J.M. Keynes in 1919  
 George Marshall  
 Ernest Bevin’s role in the Marshall Plan  
 European Recovery Program (Marshall  
 Plan, May 1948)  
 ---  
 Charles De Gaulle – Chairman of French  
 Provisional Govt (resigned 1946)  
 French Fourth Republic (1946)  
 MRP (Mouvement Républicain Populaire) in  
 France  
 Jean Monnet – Technocrats  
 Christian Democratic Party (of Italy)

PCI – Italian Communist Party  
 Alcide De Gasperi  
 Federal Republic of Germany (FRG or BRD, 1949)  
 Konrad Adenauer  
 Christian Democratic Union (CDU) of Western Germany  
 ---  
 Hugh Seton-Watson (stages of Communist takeover)  
 Polish Workers Party  
 Poland – Wladyslaw Gomulka  
 “Prague Coup” (Feb. 1948)  
 Czechoslovakia – Edward Benes, Klement Gottwald, Rudolf Slansky  
 Cominform (Communist Information Bureau)  
 Yugoslavia – Marshal Tito  
 “People’s Democracies”  
 Socialist Unity Party of Eastern Germany (SED)  
 German Democratic Republic (GDR or DDR, 1949)  
 ---  
*The Bicycle Thieves* (1948)  
 Dir. Vittorio De Sica  
 Antonio / Bruno / Maria / The Thief  
 Italian Neo-Realism  
 In backdrop - elections of April 1948 – attempted murder of Palmiro Togliatti  
 Another scarred city  
 A crisis of fatherhood – and political authority  
 How to build a new Italy?  
 ---  
 Existentialism and Jean-Paul Sartre  
 Simone de Beauvoir  
*The Second Sex* (1949)

**Details from Exam #2**

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

See Tony Judt for key examples  
 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

 Eastern Europe after Stalin
 

- East Germany, Poland, Hungary...

 European Cooperation
 

- European Coal and Steel Community
- Treaty of Rome & European Economic Community

 ---  
 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

 ---  
*Mon Oncle* (1958)  
 Dir. Jacques Tati  
 Monsieur Hulot, The Arpel Family, Betty New France and Old  
 A distinctive sound landscape – diegetic sounds, music, minimal conversation...  
 Signs of modernity – Plastac, American jazz, the automobile  
 Consumerism, modernity, and the enduring value of play  
 What else is happening in 1958? New Wave Cinema, Trentes glorieuses, Algeria, Poujadisme  
 ---

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 – *les banlieues* – a social exclusion

Fears of Coca-Colonization

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

---

Forces of change in the 1950s

- Economic growth
- Decolonization
- European cooperation

Decolonization

Cf world of 1900 to world of post-1945 – empires to nations

Some examples :

- India and Pakistan (1947). Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, Lord Mountbatten, Partition
- Malaysia (1957). Communist insurgency
- Ghana (former Gold Coast, 1957). Kwame Nkrumah
- Kenya (1963)
- 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

---

Jawaharlal Nehru

Ho Chi Minh

Ferhat Abbas

---

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

---

*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

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

---

Europe in news - Ukraine

Russian invasion in February of 2022 – after occupation of Crimea in 2014

Long history as part of Russian Empire, Republic in USSR

And independent identity - Holodomor of the 1930s

Europe in news – German elections

Friedrich Merz and Christian Democratic Union

---

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 Ubricht (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

---

The Sixties

European economic integration

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

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)

- The promise of liberation – in the context of economic prosperity

- Mick Jagger on generations

---

*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?

---

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 – simple messages with simple graphics

Wider outcomes?

- Brezhnev Doctrine 1968

- West Germany – Willy Brandt - Ostpolitik

- Extreme left – turn to terrorism, RAF, Red Brigades

- Feminist movement

---

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)

---

*The Joke* (1969)

Dir. Jaromil Jires

Based on novel by Milan Kundera

Ludvic Jahn / Helena / Paul / 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

### **Details from Exam #3**

Chronologies for the 1970s

End of Economic Miracle

Oil crisis

Unemployment

Post-1968 Terrorism (R.A.F., Red Brigade)

Brezhnev Doctrine

Détente

Willy Brandt (SPD, Chancellor, 1969-1974)

*Ostpolitik*

Helsinki Final Act 1975

Dissent/Dissidents

The Plastic People of the Universe

Charter 77

---

*Samizdat*

Václav Havel (b. 1936)  
 “The Power of the Powerless” (1978)  
 “Post-Totalitarian Societies”  
 “Living in the Truth”  
 John Paul II. Karol Wojtyła, Cardinal of Craków, elected to Papacy (October 1978).  
 Visit to Poland (June 1979)  
 Solidarity – Solidarnosc (Organized and legalized 1980. Illegal 1981)  
 Gdansk – Lenin Shipyards  
 Lech Walesa  
 General Wojciech Jaruzelski (PM February 1981-1989)  
 Martial Law in Poland (1981)  
 - - -  
*Blind Chance*. Dir. Krzysztof Kieslowski, completed 1981, premiered 1987, Poland  
 Witek (& his father & Czuska & the Dean)  
 Witek – represents modern Poland – born Poznan, 1956, with ancestry that connects him to Polish history  
 Background: Reform in the Party / Dissidents / The Catholic Church / Free Universities / Samizdat  
 The search for a father – and the failure of authority  
 All three lives he leads are dead ends – this is a world with no escape  
 Kieslowski – brilliant filmmaker – a humanist – and a pessimist  
 - - -  
 Francisco Franco (d. Nov. 20, 1975)  
 Spanish Civil War (1936-39)  
 The Falange  
 King Juan Carlos and the Transition to Democracy – 1975-1977  
 “Pact of Forgetting” or “Pact of Ignorance” (Pacto de olvido)  
 Movida Madrileña, Madrid Movement, Spain’s “Sixties” (c. 1980)  
 Spain to NATO (1982) and EEC (1986)  
 - - -  
*Bad Education*. Dir. Pedro Almodóvar, 2004, Spain.

Angel/Juan/Zahara, Enrique, Ignacio  
 Father Manolo / Manuel Berenguer  
 1964 / 1977 / 1980  
 A Picture of Madrid Movement  
 A Portrait of (Complicated) Queer Lives  
 Spain and the Church  
 The Unraveling of the “Pacto de olvido”  
 Historical Memory Law (2007)  
 - - -  
 Economic challenges of UK in 1970s  
 Trade Union movement  
 Margaret Thatcher (PM 1979-1990)  
 Conservative/Tory Party Leader  
 The “Iron Lady”  
 Falklands War (1982) in the Malvinas Islands  
 Mineworkers Strike (1984-5)  
 Her politics: anti-welfare state, small govt, pro-private industry, pro-U.S., anti-Europe  
 - - -  
 Mikhail Gorbachev  
 Perestroika, Glasnost  
 “Sinatra Doctrine”  
 Failures of Soviet command economy (and of East European economies)  
 Slavenka Drakulic  
 Cascading events. Timothy Garton Ash: “Ten years in Poland, ten months in Hungary, ten weeks in East Germany, and ten days in Czechoslovakia”  
 Long history of reform in Poland  
 Solidarity Trade Union  
 Roundtable Talks in Poland (Feb-Apr 1989)  
 Elections in Poland (4 June 1989)  
 Polish People’s Republic (1989)  
 1989 in Hungary  
 Goulash Communism  
 Communist Reformers in Hungary  
 Opening of Hungarian Borders (May 1989)  
 State Funeral for Imre Nagy (June 1989)  
 Hungarian People’s Republic (1989)  
 “The Peaceful Revolution” (East Germany)

Monday Demonstrations in East Germany  
(Leipzig, Dresden, Berlin)

Erich Honecker, Chairman of Council of  
State, 1976-1989

Stasi, German Secret Police

Visit of Gorbachev (October 1989)

Opening of East German Borders (9 Nov  
1989)

Berlin Wall, 1961-1989

“The Velvet Revolution” (Czechoslovakia)

Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia

November Protests

Election of Vaclav Havel as President of  
Czechoslovakia (December 1989)

“Refolution” (Timothy Garton Ash)

The “End of History”? No

Return of Ethno-Nationalism

---

GDR/DDR/German People’s Republic/East  
Germany

FRG/BRD/Federal Republic of  
Germany/West Germany

German Reunification

- October 7, 1949. Founding of GDR
- August 13, 1961. Berlin Wall
- October 1989. Demonstrations in GDR  
Lead to Honecker Stepping Down.  
Egon Krenz
- November 9, 1989. Fall of Berlin Wall
- March 18, 1990. Free Elections
- October 3, 1990. Reunification with  
FRG

---

*Goodbye, Lenin!* Dir. Wolfgang Becker,  
2003, Germany

Alex, Alex’ Mother (Christiane), Ariane,  
Lara, Rainer

Alex’ Father, Dennis, Sigmund Jähn

October 7, 1989-October 7, 1990

DDR/GDR (1949-1990)

Things change... and quickly

Ossies & Wessies

Ostalgie – nostalgia for East Germany

A West-Germany Fantasy of the East – a  
West-German Celebration of the East –  
salve for the historical trauma of GDR and  
unification

### ***Details from After Exam #3***

Yugoslavia

The peoples of the former Yugoslavia:  
Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Slovenes,  
Kosovars, and others

Tito

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Slobodan Milosevic

Bosnian War 1992-5

UNPROFOR

Ethnic Cleansing

Dayton Accords

ICTY

- - -

*No Man’s Land* (dir. Danis Tanovic, 2001)

Nino / Ciki / Cera / Sgt. Marchand / Jane  
Livingston / UN FORCES

A film about humanity & hatred

International responses to the war

Compare to *All Quiet on the Western Front*  
(1928)

Sonja from Banja Luka

“Who started the war?”

- - -

Multicultural Europe? Views on  
multiculturalism

Immigration to Germany, France, Britain

jus sanguinis v. jus soli

xenophobia

Schengen Zone

Fortress Europe

The Far Right, 1980s to present. Anti-  
immigrant, xenophobic, ethnic-nationalist,  
anti-EU

Enoch Powell

Jean-Marie Le Pen

Jörg Haider

Neo-nationalism of 2010s

And today. Some exs we've mentioned

- Law & Order in Poland
- Victor Orban & Fidesz in Hungary
- Marine Le Pen in France
- VOX in Spain

Islamophobia

- - -

European Union today – 27 states, 446 m.  
features of intergovernmental AND a  
supranational org.

European Coal & Steel Community ECSC  
(1950)

Treaty of Rome 1957 – European Economic  
Community

Maastricht 1992 – European Union

Euro – a currency

Brexit – British exit from EU

Brussels! (Seat of many EU institutions)

“Democratic deficit”

Forces of European identity: sister cities,  
Champions League, Eurovision Song  
Contest, ERASMUS

Eurobarometer surveys on European  
identity

- - -

*The Spanish Apartment (L'Auberge  
Espagnole)*, dir. Cédric Klapisch, 2002

Xavier – and his apartment of friends

The ERASMUS Program

A fantasy of European identity. Travel as a  
path to understanding. A love letter to  
Europe.... but one full of stereotypes and  
contradictions

- - -

Tony Judt – Europe as a Way of Life – the  
“European social model”

What defines Europe?

Cf. American Dream and European Dream

Fika – coffee break in Sweden

Challenges of Europe today:

- Immigration and integration
- economic crisis
- rise of far right parties & populist  
politics

- US-Europe relations

- Threats of Russia

And European achievement in wake of 1945

- Peace on a continent of war

- Welfare State

- Commitment to human rights