ANTISEMITISM, IMPERIALISM, & TOTALITARIANISM

The purpose of this weekly seminar is to discuss the links between antisemitism, imperialism, and totalitarianism. In her groundbreaking work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (originally published in 1951), the Jewish and German born political philosopher Hannah Arendt, who had just moved to the US to escape the atrocities of Nazism, was the first to link the three historical phenomena of antisemitism, imperialism, and totalitarianism together in what now constitutes the full text of the *Origins*. At one level, the interrelations between such phenomena is pretty obvious (even though not much has been done in the research which has been accumulating in the last two decades, to reexamine the conceptual links and analyses proposed by Arendt). For one, even though antisemitism was a widespread ideology throughout Europe by the turn of the century, it was nevertheless only the Nazi totalitarian regime which began systematically arresting and deporting Jews to the concentration camps (the fascist Vichy government constituted for its part a brief interlude, probably more important to French society itself than the rest of Europe). For another, both imperialism and totalitarianism denote a crisis of the European nation-state. In fact, the traditional nineteenth-century role of the nation-state could not fit anymore with the rapid expansion of capitalism and the need for new markets: thus imperialism also marked the end of the idea of the nation-state. On the other hand, both Bolshevism and Nazism mocked the traditional nation-state either as bourgeois or as “narrow” in its scope (e.g. favoring one class over another); and both sought extra-national experiences in their own terms either by means of an internalization of the labor movement for the Bolsheviks, or through military expansionism for the Nazis, both of which wrecked apart many of the European nation-states. More tellingly perhaps is the fact that both Soviet and Nazi totalitarianisms mocked all the legal, political, and social values of the traditional European nation-state.
In short, the phenomena of antisemitism, imperialism, and totalitarianism, all combined, were what brought the first serious set of crises in Europe, which culminated with the two world wars, since the dissolution of the old feudal states and their gradual replacement with the modern nation-states.

The intermediary Absolutist states still operated with the old feudal notion of the Sovereign whose body was the body politic, which was an outcome the King’s Two Bodies doctrine—the finite physical body and the everlasting body politic—and whose quintessential figure was the British monarchy. It was the explosion of such a doctrine that led to the passage to the modern nation-state. The new doctrine, which focuses on the rights of the individual rather than those of the Sovereign, found its expression in the philosophy of the Aufklärung and the Droits de l’homme et du citoyen of the French Revolution. In fact, the modern nation-state acknowledges individual rights, which are protected both legally (by means of a modernized judicial apparatus) and politically (universal suffrage). Not only is there no more Sovereign as representative of the body politic, but the society-of-individuals needs to protect itself from the abuses of the state and its bureaucracy, hence the notion of “civil society” and that of the “public sphere,” which assumes individuals communicating freely on public matters—a revival of the Greek polis, but with extended rights and duties. The nation-state assumes “autonomous” individuals, which have rights and duties towards the state and towards each other. Those individuals are also legally protected, and one essential aspect of their political rights is the right of free expression, which in turn leads to universal suffrage. Thus individuals enjoy the right to question all the laws, and the political and social practices of their nation. Nothing is divine anymore and nothing is sacred either, but anything could be the scrutinized by any of the individuals of the nation-state. The nation-state thus assumes a minimal degree of homogenization, which is first established on a de facto basis by means of language. Thus, all the European nation-states are by definition each tied to a single language, and when, as the Swiss case shows, a dominant language is impossible, federalism imposes itself as a political necessity.

Antisemitism, which as an ideology grew strongly in Europe during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, and had already begun few decades earlier in Russia, resulted from the impasse that the majority of the European Jews found themselves in vis-à-vis the nation-state. In fact, the Jews, despite their heterogeneous formation, behaved like a “nation” without territory, and which was spread all over Europe (and the world); and spoke in a mixture of Hebrew and Yiddish, in addition to the various European national languages. The nation-state, however, does not accept the idea of an individual whose primary loyalty goes to a group, be it religious or otherwise. The dilemma of the Jews was one of assimilation versus preservation. Assimilation would have implied a full subservience and loyalty to the nation-state, hence a complete integration so that the Jewishness of those individuals would have become their second nature, or a private matter, if you wish. Moreover, the nation-state—at least in principle—is unable to deal with groups as such since its legal and political systems protect individual rights only. What complicated matters even more forcefully was the fact that the old feudal states, out of which the modern nation-states emerged, dealt for the most part with the
Jews, whose moneylenders were mostly needed and appreciated, as special status groups. Even though the financial expertise of the Jewish moneylenders was still appreciated, the nation-state general policy was one of multiplying the financial resources of the state, hence the Jews became one possibility among several, and the big Jewish families ceased to be protected by a feudal prince or privileged by the early modern European states. Needless to say, however, the Jews were not a coherent group, and with the loosening of the bonds between the Jewish financiers and the state, it looks as if the Jews were pushed in toto to assimilate within a middle class status.

This course will therefore focus on the historical links, in the last two centuries, between antisemitism, imperialism, and totalitarianism. Even though our focus will be mainly on a theme rather than a geographic area, most of the readings concentrate on Europe, and even when other societies are concerned (e.g. Egypt, or the South Pacific islands), it is in their relationship with a form of colonialism or imperialism (e.g. the British). However, it would definitely be worth examining our conceptual framework for the American societies beginning with the late nineteenth century. How does antisemitism in the US differ from its European counterparts? Is there a US imperial experience similar from the French and British (the Philippines and Mexico during the nineteenth century, and more recently, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, etc.)? And finally, even though the US never went through a totalitarian experience as such, how does the US relate to totalitarian societies beginning with the Nazi and Soviet regimes, up to many of the societies in the world today?
GENERAL

There are weekly readings that you’re expected to discuss collectively in class. Your participation is essential for the success of the course. You might be also occasionally requested to prepare a presentation on a chapter or book which are part of the weekly assignments. *Class presentations and discussions shall count as one-fifth of the total grade.* Presentations should be improvised and 5 to 10 minutes long. Do not prepare a written presentation. The purpose of presentations is to let you check on your readings and give you the opportunity to perform and ask questions publicly. In addition to the routine weekly presentations, students are requested, after submission of a first-draft, to make a short presentation on their papers.

Besides the two-draft research paper (see below the section on papers), you’re expected to submit three interpretive essays. *The final grade will be calculated on the basis of one-fifth for the paper and one-fifth for each interpretive essay.* *All interpretive essays are take-home.* The purpose of the interpretative essays is to give you the opportunity to go “beyond” the literal meaning of the text and adopt interpretive and “textual” techniques. A failing grade in all interpretive essays means also a failing grade for the course, whatever your performance in the paper is. *All essays and papers must be submitted on time according to the deadlines set below.* If you’re absent from class for a deadline, you may e-mail your essay-paper as an attached file in MS Word format, or fax it to the number above, or drop it in my mailbox (CC-502, LT-910).

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READINGS

• Weeks 1, 2, 3 & 4 (January 17, 24, 31 & February 7): Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Harcourt).


  **February 14: FIRST INTERPRETIVE ESSAY**

• Week 6 (February 21): Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism* (Markus Wiener).

• Weeks 7 (February 28): Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (California).

  **March 6–11: Mid-Semester Break**


  **March 13: SECOND INTERPRETIVE ESSAY**


  **March 27: FIRST DRAFT DEADLINE**
  *April 3: preliminary presentation of first-drafts*


  **April 17: FINAL INTERPRETIVE ESSAY**

• Week 14 (April 24):
  *Discussion and presentation of term-papers*
  *(if you’re unable to meet for this last session, make an appointment: you’ll not receive a grade unless you’ve completed a presentation of your paper.)*
  **Tuesday, April 25: FINAL DRAFT DEADLINE***
PAPERS

You are requested to write one major research paper to be submitted during the last session, Tuesday, April 25. You will have to submit, however, a first draft of this paper on Tuesday, March 28. The first draft should be as complete as possible and follow the same presentation and writing guidelines as your final draft, but it won’t be graded. *Only your final draft will count as one-fifth of the total grade.* The purpose of the first draft is to let you assess your research and writing skills and improve the final version of your paper. It is advisable that you choose a research topic and start preparing a bibliography as soon as possible. I would strongly recommend that you consult with me before making any final commitment. It would be preferable to keep the same topic for both drafts. You will be allowed, however, after prior consultation, to change your topic if you wish to do so.

You may choose any topic related to the social, economic, political, and cultural history of antisemitism, imperialism, and totalitarianism. Papers should be analytical and conceptual. Avoid pure narratives and chronologies and construct your paper around a main thesis.


Keep in mind the following when preparing your preliminary and final drafts:

- once you’ve decided on a paper-topic and prepared a preliminary bibliography, send an abstract and bibliography of your topic to the class-list <h104h450-l@luc.edu> (see below). Your abstract should include: (i) title; (ii) description; (iii) sources; (iv) methodology (e.g. suggestions on how to read sources).
- preliminary drafts should be submitted on time, November 2. If you’re unable to attend class that evening, drop your draft in my mailbox (LT-910, CC-502).
- preliminary drafts should be complete and include footnotes and an annotated bibliography.
- do not submit an outline as a first draft.
- incomplete and poorly written first drafts will not be accepted, and you’ll be advised to revise your first draft completely.
- if you submit a single draft throughout the semester, you’ll receive X as a final grade (WF on your transcript).
- the oral presentation is an essential aspect of your grade; if you can’t attend the last session, request an appointment.
- your final draft should take into consideration all the relevant comments provided on your earlier draft.
- if you’re interested in comments on your final paper and interpretive essay, request an appointment by e-mail.
Please use the following guidelines regarding the format of your papers:

- use 8x10 white paper (the size and color of this paper). Do not use legal size or colored paper.
- use a typewriter, laser printer or a good inkjet printer and hand in the original.
- only type on one side of the paper.
- should be double spaced, with single spaced footnotes at the end of each page and an annotated bibliography at the end. (The bibliography that follows in the next section is annotated.)
- keep ample left and right margins for comments and corrections of at least 1.25 inches each.
- all pages should be numbered and stapled.
- a cover page should include the following: paper’s title, course number and section, your name, address, e-mail, and telephone.

E-MAIL DISCUSSION LIST

An open e-mail discussion list is available: each message—whether mine or from any student—will reach anyone else on the list, so that every subscriber could directly write to the list.

History 104 & 450: <H104H450-L@luc.edu>

The list includes students from two History courses. History 104 is a core course on Asia from a historical and anthropological perspectives. History 450 is a graduate course on antisemitism, imperialism, and totalitarianism.

The purpose of this electronic listserve is to discuss issues relevant to both courses, and current political and social matters as well. The focus, however, shall be primarily on the readings themselves since they represent our primary source for dealing with the complexities of these civilizations.

To join the list, please send an e-mail message to:

listproc@luc.edu

and include as your e-mail message (leaving the Subject: field blank, if possible):

subscribe H104H450-L first-name last-name

e.g., Janine Doe—you would type in:

subscribe H104H450-L Janine Doe
RECOMMENDED READING

**Historiographical Methods**

**History & the Social Sciences**

The works of “social scientists” like Karl Marx, Max Weber, Durkheim, Michel Foucault, Habermas, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Pierre Bourdieu, Hannah Arendt, Norbert Elias, Georges Dumézil, and Sigmund Freud, had a tremendous impact on the writing of history throughout the twentieth century.

Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge* (University of Minnesota Press, 1994). This is the best and most challenging book I have read in recent years which describes very aggressively the current status of the most recent historiographical methods. Rancière argues that Michelet was the real precursor to the *Annales* school (something that Lucien Febvre acknowledged and was the first to see clearly). First, Michelet was probably the first to have voluntarily stepped out from a pure history of kings and political events into some kind of “social history” and showed a great interest into this category which he broadly defined as “Le Peuple” (the people); second, Michelet was sensitive to the *document* as a starting point for his analysis: he created this unique method of reading *into* a document by creating his own narrative out of them and by listening to their silences. But Michelet could only create a dynamics out of a narrative where the Hobbesian Monarch does not play anymore the central role by transforming *France* as the real Subject of history—something that the *Annales* could not keep up with anymore. The *Annales* in fact transformed its historical “topics” into *objects* of research. In other words, France, for example, becomes an object of research like European feudalism or the Mediterranean. Thus by stating that every entity in the social world is worth being an object of scientific research, the *Annales* has ipso facto robbed traditional historiography, including that of Michelet, from its deepest foundations. Which leaves us today, towards the end of an eventful twentieth century, with a big problem: How can we rehabilitate the role of the subject—that is, any subject of democratic societies—in historical processes?


B. H. Moss, “Republican Socialism and the Making of the Working Class in Britain, France, and the United States: A Critique of Thompsonian Culturalism,” *Comparative Study in Society and History*, 35(2) 1993, 390-413. This essay is an attempt to analyze the impact that had Thompson’s *Making of the English Working Class* on studies of labor movements in France, England, and the United States, on the one hand, and the weaknesses of such “culturalist” analyses (as opposed to the Marxist and neo-Marxist) on the other. Moss concludes that what these studies have unknowingly confirmed is the traditional and Marxist view that socialism arises when intellectuals bearing collectivist ideas join with workers undergoing a process of proletarianization.

Carrard, Philippe. *Poetics of the New History: French Historical Discourse from Braudel to Chartier*. Parallax Re-visions of Culture and Society, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. Excellent introduction to the *Annales* tradition in historiography. More broadly, Carrard shows that the discipline of history is now marked by fragmentation and that *histoire totale* (in the strong sense of the project) is dead.

Editorial. “Histoire et sciences sociales. Un tournant critique?” *Annales É.S.C.* 2 (April–March 1988): 291-293. A key editorial of the *Annales* in which a “crisis” in contemporary historiography was admitted for the first time and a rapprochement with the rest of the social sciences is now considered as essential for the writing of a new (more fragmented) history. The notion of “document” is also questioned and a more “textual” approach seem to be suggested. Some of the responses to this editorial have been collected in the special issue of November-December 1989 celebrating the 60th anniversary of the *Annales*.


**Greecs**

The works of Moses Finley (*Ancient Economy, Use and Abuse of History, World of Odysseus, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*), Detienne (*Gardens of Adonis*), Vernant (*Myth & Society*), and Vidal-Naquet (*Le chasseur noir*), and few others, have transformed the field of ancient Greek history from the traditional linguistic and philological approaches of the old texts to social and economic history—the *Annales* type, and also the Frankfurt School cultural pessimism (for Finley in particular).
David Cohen, *Law, Sexuality, and Society. The Enforcement of Morals in Classical Athens* (Cambridge University Press, 1991). Cohen poses the difficult and often omitted problem of the relationship between law, the norms, social practices, and ideology, and in order to study the “hidden” and “unavailable” sphere of social practices from the classical Greek literature, he assumes that contemporary Mediterranean societies, studied by anthropologists, have roughly similar practices that the Greeks. He then confronts his texts with what they hide to see if all this makes sense. Even though Cohen ends up with some interesting results concerning the private and public, women, adultery, homosexuality, the law, and the polis, in ways different from previous scholarship, many will find his extrapolations and cut-and-paste technique from the new to the old highly controversial.

K. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (New York, 1978), is the most classic work on the subject of Greek “homosexuality.”

**Romans & Early Christians**

Peter Brown, *The Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Columbia University Press, 1988). In nineteen chapters, and basing himself on original manuscripts, Peter Brown is very successful in describing attitudes of early Christians towards the body and sexuality. Augustine, in the last chapter, provides the summa of the endless variations of the early Christians and their errings: fulfillment (salvation) is only achieved in the “city of heaven.” What Christianity has introduced to the Greek and Roman world-views is the duality between mind and body, a dualism we still live with in different forms whether Cartesian or Freudian. The mind “controls” the body, its appetites and drives, hence the mind controls the body’s sexuality. To the early Christians, this meant sexual renunciation and virginity in order to preserve the integrity of the soul. Brown demarcates Roman sexuality from the Christian in his introductory chapters: Roman sexuality looks at women, slaves, and barbarians as inferiors, hence sex with women was riddled with anxieties and it was common for men to have sex with their slaves. Brown, however, does not see Christian renunciation as caused by Roman “tolerance” and he never provides his readers with a sharp answer to the historical causes of Christian asceticism. Instead, he portrays to us the variations of the Christian model, and, with this, a view of religion as an agglomeration of infinitesimal efforts comes up, or, in other words, how disparate views become public and create an institution—the Church. Brown also provides an account of a religion—Christianity—as a social movement with no state control. Brown, however, seems locked up in his texts and I would have wished more social history on the Roman family and marriage, the social roots of the early Christians, and the Church and its clergy. Brown’s tone seems also to belong to the 1980s, under the influence of Veyne and Foucault, which looks at sexuality as a discourse, or rather, as a discursive practice. Also by Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (California University Press, 1967), *The Cult of Saints* (Chicago University Press, 1981).
Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire, A.D. 100–400* (Yale University Press, 1984).  
John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago University Press, 1980). Written as a contribution to “gay” history within a late twentieth-century political agenda, Boswell seems to have much more talent in “gay activism” than intellectual history and textual analysis in which he doesn’t seem much interested. If you don’t mind a cut-and-paste method in analyzing texts, then there’s a chance that you might like the Boswell style.

**Medieval Europe**

Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton University Press, 1957). In a first brilliantly written chapter, Kantorowicz argues that the King’s Two Bodies doctrine achieved its full maturity in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England during the reign of Elizabeth I, but was much weaker in its development on the Continent. Briefly, what the King’s Two Bodies doctrine implied was that the King had two bodies, his own temporal body subject to sickness, passions, and death, and an immortal body, the “body politic,” which was constituted of all the bodies and souls of the subjects of the Commonwealth. The novelty was much less in the duality of the system than with the notion that the immortal part was the “body politic,” that is, it was made up of all the citizen’s wills and desires as represented by the Monarch. Needless to say that such a theory prepares for more elaborate Hobbesian and Lockian systems of representation. Having sketched what he calls the King’s Two Bodies “legal fiction” in its mature phase, Kantorowicz will devote the rest of his book to a reconstruction of the variations of the King’s Two Bodies doctrine since the eleventh century. The turning point here was the twelfth-thirteenth century, with Frederick II, when the King was not seen anymore as the impersonator of Christ but as the sole legislator of Positive Law. An overwhelming study which breaks up many academic barriers and which sees “legal fiction” as constructing “reality.”

Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago University Press, 1984 [1981 for the French Gallimard edition]). This is a longue durée history of the Purgatory, roughly from early Christianity till the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when the Purgatory has achieved a more or less completed structure (even in its poetic form through Dante). Le Goff, however, is eager not to make his history “evolutionary,” that is, he insists that the history of the Purgatory remains unpredictable despite early signs (with Augustine in particular) of a desire to spatialize something between hell and heaven. This creation of an additional space of judgment and repentance shall be expressed differently from one
period to another, but by the thirteenth century one thing is certain: the Purgatory integrates well in the European societies where the judicial now plays a dominating and intermediary role between the “body politic” and “society” (or “civil society,” *civitas*). Le Goff’s method is very much “textual,” and even though he does well in integrating his material with the social trends of each period, one would have wished more social history, in particular for the thirteenth century when several things seem to come together: the political, religious, judicial, and economic.

**Modern Europe: Populations, Material life & the Economy**

Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1973 [first French edition published in Paris by Armand Colin, 1949]). Picking up where Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre (his “Maître de thèse”), Braudel constructs a thesis around the Mediterranean as an object of study for what became the cult book of the *Annalistes*: it’s not anymore Philip II who occupies the center of the stage, but the Mediterranean as a complex object of geography, economics, and cultures at the age of Philip II. Actually, Braudel dismisses the person of the King altogether as someone who was not even conscious of the importance of the Mediterranean: “I do not believe that the word Mediterranean itself ever floated in his consciousness with the meaning we now give it, nor that it conjured up for him the images of light and blue water it has for us.” With this, Braudel created a fundamental rule for both historians and social scientists: the historian does not have to identify with the “subjects” of history anymore—distance from what shines at the surface has become the golden rule (but wasn’t it so for Marx and Freud?). But the book, half a century later, has also aged tremendously: Braudel never took seriously the claim he has set up for himself and for the discipline of history as “La Reine des sciences sociales,” and he never borrowed much anyhow from the languages of the social sciences. The *Mediterranean* leaves us struggling with an array of questions concerning the role of the “subject” and “culture” in history.

Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Blackwell, 1994). Originally published in Germany in 1939 in two separate parts, *The History of Manners* and *State Formation and Civilization*, *The Civilizing Process* sees the sixteenth century as the period which created a new set of courtly manners very different from the “uncivilized,” barbaric and violent Middle Ages: manners in which shame and individuality have become crucial. In order to explain this sudden shift, Elias develops a theory of state formation which conceptualizes the Absolutist states (the new “monopolies”) as having totally eclipsed the old Feudal states based on territorial divisions. Elias’ analysis combines what he calls the psycho-genetic and socio-genetic levels of human experience—another terminology for the Weberian notion of subjective and objective meanings of social action or the Freudian ego and super-ego split. In his conceptualization of European history since the Middle Ages, Elias departs from the Weberian thesis that Protestantism was one of the elements which made capitalism possible (in the *Civilizing Process*, the role of religion is not even debated—it is simply absent), and from Marxism which looks at superstructures as a
“final-analysis-reflection” of economic infrastructures (Elias looks at state-formations as having a logic of their own).


**Intellectual Movements in Modern Europe**

Latour, Bruno and Steven Woolgar. Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts. London: Sage, 1979. A book that belongs to what we now qualify as the new “anthropology of the sciences,” i.e. a discipline (or sub-discipline) that focuses on how the natural hard-core sciences are produced and manufactured within the laboratories, élite teaching colleges, staff recruitment, and the professional journals that transmit and conserve scientific knowledge. A big step from the “idealized” Khunian paradigmatic view of the sciences that became dominant in the last three decades.


Peter Gay, The Cultivation of Hatred. The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud. Volume 3 (New York: Norton, 1993). This is the third volume after “Education of the Senses” (1984) and “The Tender Passion” (1986), and is fed by some rich insights. Gay argues that the Victorians were prone to mix cruel aggression and ferocious erotic pleasure; thus our Victorian legacy is a struggle to deal with the joys of aggression. The book also ends with a subtle analysis of the development of “professionalism” and the way all these finer specialties became finely guarded. Unfortunately, the bulk of the book forgets from time to time such rich insights and the reader is left with a bunch of facts that ranges from the very obvious to the sophisticated.

Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller (Johns Hopkins, 1980). Ginzburg argues that the heretical thoughts of Menocchio, his sixteenth-century miller, were the effect of an old rural popular culture despite the fact that Menocchio was an avid reader of some medieval texts. In a footnote
added later as a response to critics (pp. 154/5), Ginzburg claims a circularity—or complementarity—between élite and popular cultures. Looked upon retrospectively, two decades after the publication of the original Italian edition, which made a sensation, Ginzburg’s thesis on popular culture is neither convincing nor interesting. Going through Ginzburg’s 62 short partitions, one is more puzzled by the Church’s insatiable willingness to force Menocchio “confess” than by a popular culture which we can hardly see and perceive.


Denis Mack Smith, Mazzini (Yale University Press, 1995). The best biography available of one of those whose contribution weighted the most on the events that led to the “unification” of Italy in 1860 under Victor Immanuel. Mazzini was described by Nietzsche as “the man I venerate most,” and denounced by Marx for “false sublimity, puffy grandeur, verbosity and prophetic mysticism.” But in fact Mazzini gave only grudging approval to unification as it actually happened, even after Venetia had been incorporated in 1866 and Rome in 1870. He had wanted Italy to be made from below, for it to be socialist and republican (in his particular senses of those words) and to be reconciled with the papacy. Mack Smith is also the author of Cavour and Garibaldi 1860: A Study in Political Conflict (Cambridge University Press, 1954; 1985); Garibaldi (London: Hutchinson, 1957); Victor Immanuel, Cavour, and the Risorgimento (Oxford University Press, 1971); Italy and Its Monarchy (Yale University Press, 1990); Mussolini (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981); Cavour (London: Methuen, 1985).

**The French Revolution**


Alexis de Tocqueville, The Old Regime and the French Revolution, 1955. A great classic by the author of Democracy in America. Tocqueville was among the first to argue that much of what is usually attributed to the Revolution, namely the centralization of the state and its bureaucracy; the advancement of the “bourgeoisie” as a class, etc., were already part of the policy of the old monarchical regime.

Sewell, William H., Jr. Work and Revolution in France. The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. A classic on the French guilds, manufactures and labor force, and the first major historian to apply the Thompsonian problematic to France. An attempt to explain the rise of socialism and the making of the French working class. Sewell chose to highlight the culturalist theme and
argued that “socialism” was essentially a cultural reconstruction of an eighteenth-century
guild tradition of moral collectivism.

Sonenscher, Michael. Work and Wages. *Natural Law, Politics, and the Eighteenth-

1982).

University Press, 1993), addresses the subject of political crime in the first year of the
French Revolution.


Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (University of California
Press, 1992), analyzes the images and familial models that inhabited revolutionary
France.

**United States**

excellent introduction to the subject of slavery with an annotated bibliography for further
reading.

Robert W. Fogel & Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: the Economics of
American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1974).

Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*
(Free Press, 1963 [1913]). First published in 1913, Beard’s radical interpretation brought
the Constitution of the United States from its political “idealism” to its economic roots.
Scrubanizing the Constitution in light of economic forces, he proposed for the first time
that this politico-legal document was shaped by a group of men whose commercial
interests were best served by its provisions.

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville’s analysis of the
American democratic system remains my favorite in its simplicity and complexity. The
“democratic spirit” is traced back to the first Europeans settlers who were suspicious of all
the monarchies they had left behind and were thus not that eager to replicate on the new
continent political systems which they saw as potentially corrupt because based on rigid
hierarchies between individuals, classes, and status groups. Tocqueville then goes on to
show that this basic idea of democracy—that all men have the right to be “equal”—is
reproduced at every level. Thus, several laws were promulgated in the 17th and 18th
centuries in New England and the North-East in particular forbidding large property
holdings. In education, this meant the focus on “practical” matters rather than on formal
and abstract issues, a major weakness, according to Tocqueville, because it weakens
artistic and scientific creativity. The legal system is analyzed in terms of the “power of
judges” to overrule previous decisions and interpret the Constitution (another
particularity of the American system is that a singles Constitution frames both the
political and judicial). But the greatness of American democracy has its dark side too, and
in a concluding chapter, Tocqueville is more than cautious about a type of democracy,
which despite all its merits, also creates simple-minded individuals and mediocre spirits who have no choice but to leave “government” to a group of professionals.

J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832. Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge University Press, 1994). One of the latest attempts in the search for “a deeper understanding of the causes” of the Revolution. Clark makes three general claims: (i) that the years between 1776 and 1787 gave rise to a new dissenting conception of liberty which was the principal source of the ideas of popular sovereignty that some colonists employed against the traditional idea of absolute sovereignty; (ii) that 1776 may be understood as a revolution of natural law against common law; (iii) that the American Revolution was in essence “a rebellion by groups within Protestant Dissent against an Anglican hegemony.”

Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics. Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Harvard University Press, 1994). Ever wondered the influence of Greece and Rome on the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution? The addiction of the Founders to classical allusion has never been denied, but in the work of many recent historians its importance has been questioned. Richard’s book is a refutation of such doubts. It was in America that the historical and the legendary figures of antiquity could serve as real models for conduct rather than oratorical embellishment. Though Greece and Rome were equal partners in the colonial educational curriculum, it was to the Roman republic that the Founders turned for a model when they came to frame their constitution. Athenian democracy, criticized by Thucydides, condemned by Plato and disapproved of by Aristotle, inspired in them a fear of the tyranny of the majority. They favored instead what they believed was the “mixed government” of the great days of Rome, the era of the Second Punic War. Should we then be surprised that very few people participate in the democratic process today?

**Music & The Arts**

Theodor W. Adorno, *Mahler. A Musical Physiognomy* (Chicago University Press, 1993). A major study by one of the leading Frankfurt School giants that focuses on one of the most important Viennese musicians at the turn of this century. Adorno shows that Mahler’s music is the expression, in its artistic form, of the “end” of the false “totalities” that he found in metaphysics (by contrast, Beethoven would look very much like Hegelian). Knowledge of Mahler’s nine symphonies is, of course, a must for understanding Adorno’s analysis. For a broader account of modern music see Adorno’s *Quasi Una Fantasia. Essays on Modern Music* (Verso, 1993).

**History & The Social Sciences**

Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron, Monique de Saint Martin, et al, *Academic Discourse* (Oxford: Polity, 1994). The authors make the claim that “academic discourse” is a rare commodity, some kind of “cultural capital,” in the hands of professors-researchers who find it contrary to their interests to propagate and “popularize” especially among
students and other faculty members who might not have access to types of discourse
unknown to them and who are thus left in the dark on recent trends and discoveries in
the arts and social sciences. Unlike other critiques from the political left, the authors
argue that universities exert a conservative social influence not by transmitting an
intellectual heritage but by failing to transmit it. While the left and the right continue to
bicker over whether the academic culture students absorb is too traditional or too radical,
Bourdieu and his colleagues question whether students absorb the academic culture at all.
Thus, it is quite common for professors either to claim that their students “cannot
understand sophisticated theories,” or that it would be better, in a class-context, “to avoid
larky expressions and the like,” or to pretend that “they are already ‘familiar’ with such-
and-such an approach.” Academic discourse ends up a “cultural capital” in the possession
of the happy few who can afford it. The book, written and published in the mid-sixties
on the basis of extensive research on the French educational system, needs to be “re-
adapted” to an American context. My impression is that in the United States, a particular
kind of academic discourse, which borrows extensively from the French gurus (among
them Bourdieu, Lyotard, Derrida, and Foucault), is more common in the Ivy League and
the top-twenty-colleges than in other, more provincial, higher education institutions. But
even in the Ivy League, it remains to be seen how much of the academic discourse which
Bourdieu and his colleagues have in mind is transmitted and “absorbed.”

The State

of the modern European state from a historical and sociological perspectives.

Islam & The Early Empires—General

The Qur’ân is the holy book of the Muslims (in all their different factions and sects)
delivered by God in Arabic to the community of believers (umma) through the “medium”
of the Prophet Muhammad in sessions of “revelation” (wahî). Thus Arabic is not only the
language of the Qur’ân (and the Sunna), but also a divine language, the language of God.
All translations of the Qur’ân are thus considered as illegitimate and inaccurate. There
are several such “translations”/“interpretations” available. A classical one would be that of
A.J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted (Oxford University Press). For a recent “reading” of
the Qur’ân, see Jacques Berque, Relire le Coran (Paris: Albin Michel, 1993).

R. Stephen Humphreys, Islamic History. A Framework for Inquiry (Princeton
University Press, 1991), is a long annotated and commented bibliography thematically
organized. Recommended for all those looking at the best in the field for sources
available in English, French and German. Some references to primary sources, mainly
Arabic medieval sources, are also included. The problem with this “inquiry” is that it
excludes from its field of investigation all publications in modern Arabic, as well as
Turkish and Persian. In short, this book is an excellent tool for a primary survey on the status of the Middle Eastern Studies field in Europe and North America.


Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), is a complete fourteen-century history of Islamic societies. Chapters vary in depth and horizon. No particular focus—Tedious to read.

Bernard Lewis (ed.), *The World of Islam* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), is a thematically organized book with chapters on literature, jurisprudence, sufism, the cities, the Ottoman and modern experiences. Includes hundreds of illustrations and maps.


*The History of al-Tabari* (State University of New York Press, 1989), is a multivolume series of the translation of the “History” of Tabari, one of the major historians and interpreters of the Qur’ân of the early Islamic and empire periods.

al-Shâﬁ‘î, *Risâla. Treatise on the Foundations of Islamic Jurisprudence*, translated by Majid Khadduri (Islamic Texts Society, 1987). Shâﬁ‘î was the founding father of one of the four major schools of Sunni jurisprudence and the *Risâla* contains some of his major theoretical foundations on the notions analogy, *qiyâs*, and the *ijmâ‘*, consensus of the community.


Maxime Rodinson, *Muhammad* (Pantheon, 1971), is an interesting interpretation of the early Islamic period based on a social and economic analysis of the Arabian Peninsula at the dawn of Islam.


Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago University Press, 1988), discusses the notion of “government” and “politics” in Islamic societies.


Mahmood Ibrahim, *Merchant Capital and Islam* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), links the rise of Islam and the Islamic state with the emergence of a mercantile society in Mecca and views the Arab expansion as the means by which merchants consolidated their political ascendancy.


**The Ottoman Empire**

*REFERENCE*

For a general social history of The Ottoman Empire, see H.A.R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Volume One, 2 parts (London: Oxford University Press, 1950-57).


Halil Inalcik & Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1994). In four chronological sections, the contributors provide valuable information on land tenure systems, population, trade and commerce and the industrial economy.
The work is divided into three sections: Antisemitism, Imperialism, and Totalitarianism, with the last two parts having been revised in the 1958 and 1966 editions. (As the book was revised, it grew in length, running to 526 pages in the 1966 edition.) Each discusses an aspect of imperialism, but the thrust is the development of racism as a consequence of imperialism and the consequences of racism. Totalitarianism, fascism, and authoritarianism are all forms of government with some shared characteristics, but each is different from the others. Totalitarianism, Authoritarianism, and Fascism. What Is the Difference? Share.