**European History**

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Course

Date

**EUROPEAN HISTORY**

The history of Europe is traditionally divided into four time periods: prehistoric Europe (prior to about 800 BC), classical antiquity (800 BC to AD 500), the Middle Ages (AD 500 to AD 1500), and the modern era (since AD 1500). The first early European modern humans appear in the fossil record about 48,000 years ago, during the Paleolithic Era. People from this period left behind numerous artifacts, including works of art, burial sites, and tools, allowing some reconstruction of their society. Settled agriculture marked the Neolithic Era, which spread slowly across Europe from southeast to the north and west. The later Neolithic period saw the introduction of early metallurgy and the use of copper-based tools and weapons, and the building of megalithic structures, as exemplified by Stonehenge. During the Indo-European migrations, Europe saw migrations from the east and southeast.

The Fall of the Western Roman Empire in AD 476 traditionally marks the start of the Middle Ages. While the Eastern Roman Empire would continue for another 1000 years, the former lands of the Western Empire would be fragmented into a number of different states. At the same time, the early Slavs began to become established as a distinct group in the central and eastern parts of Europe. The first great empire of the Middle Ages was the Frankish Empire of Charlemagne, while the Islamic conquest of Iberia established Al-Andalus. The Viking Age saw a second great migration of Norse peoples. Attempts to retake the Levant from the Muslim states that occupied it made the High Middle Ages the age of The Crusades, while the political system of feudalism came to its height. The Late Middle Ages were marked by large population declines, as Europe was threatened by the Bubonic Plague, as well as invasions by the Mongol peoples from the Eurasian Steppe. At the end of the Middle Ages, there was a transitional period, known as the Renaissance.

*PREHISTORY*

*Paleolithic Period*

Homo erectus migrated from Africa to Europe before the emergence of modern humans. Homo erectus georgicus, which lived roughly 1.8 million years ago in Georgia, is the earliest hominid to have been discovered in Europe.[A. Vekua; D. Lordkipanidze; G.P. Rightmire; J. Agusti; R. Ferring; G. *[Maisuradze](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maisuradze" \o "Maisuradze)*; et al. (2002)] in Spain, in Italy and Kozarnika in Bulgaria are among the oldest Palaeolithic sites in Europe. The earliest appearance of anatomically modern people in Europe has been dated to 45,000 BC, referred to as the Early European modern humans

The definitive advance of technology is made by the Aurignacian culture. The origins of this culture can be located in the Levant and Hungary. By 35,000 BC, the Aurignacian culture and its technology had extended through most of Europe. The last Neanderthals seem to have been forced to retreat during this process to the southern half of the Iberian Peninsula. Around 29,000 BC a new technology/culture appeared in the western region of Europe

*Neolithic Period*

Evidence of permanent settlement dates from the 8th millennium BC in the Balkans. The Neolithic reached Central Europe in the 6th millennium BC and parts of Northern Europe in the 5th and 4th millenniums BC. The modern indigenous populations of Europe are largely descended from three distinct lineages: Mesolithic hunter-gatherers, a derivative of the Cro-Magnon population of Europe, Early European Farmers who migrated from Anatolia during the Neolithic Revolution, and Yamnaya pastoralists who expanded into Europe in the context of the Indo-European expansion.[8] The genetic makeup of speakers of the Uralic language family in northern Europe was shaped by migration from Siberia that began at least 3,500 years ago.[Lamnidis, Thiseas C.; Majander, Kerttu; Jeong, 2018] The Indo-European migrations started in Southeast Europe at around c. 4200 BC. through the areas around the Black sea and the Balkan peninsula. In the next 3000 years the Indo-European languages expanded through Europe.

*ANCIENT EUROPE*

*Bronze Age*

The first well-known literate civilization in Europe was that of the Minoans. The Minoan civilization was a Bronze Age civilization that arose on the island of Crete and flourished from approximately the 27th century BC to the 15th century B.C. It was rediscovered at the beginning of the 20th century through the work of the British archaeologist Arthur Evans. The Minoans were replaced by the Mycenaean civilization which flourished during the period roughly between 1600 BC, when Helladic culture in mainland Greece was transformed under influences from Minoan Crete, and 1100 BC. The major Mycenaean cities were Mycenae and Tiryns in Argolis, Pylos in Messenia, Athens in Attica, Thebes and Orchomenus in Boeotia, and Iolkos in Thessaly. In Crete, the Mycenaeans occupied Knossos. Mycenaean settlement sites also appeared in Epirus, Macedonia, on islands in the Aegean Sea, on the coast of Asia Minor, the Levant, Cyprus and Italy.

*Ancient Greece*

The Hellenic civilization was a collection of city-states or poleis with different governments and cultures that achieved notable developments in government, philosophy, science, mathematics, politics, sports, theatre and music. The most powerful city-states were Athens, Sparta, Thebes, Corinth, and Syracuse. Athens was a powerful Hellenic city-state and governed itself with an early form of direct democracy invented by Cleisthenes; the citizens of Athens voted on legislation and executive bills themselves. Athens was the home of Plato and the Platonic Academy. The Hellenic city-states established colonies on the shores of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. By the late 6th century BC, all the Greek city states in Asia Minor had been incorporated into the Persian Empire, while the latter had made territorial gains in the Balkans and Eastern Europe proper as well. In the course of the 5th century BC, some of the Greek city states attempted to overthrow Persian rule in the Ionian Revolt, which failed. This sparked the first Persian invasion of mainland Greece. With the end of the Greco-Persian wars, the Persians were eventually decisively forced to withdraw from their territories in Europe

*Ancient Rome*

Much of Greek learning was assimilated by the nascent Roman state as it expanded outward from Italy, taking advantage of its enemies' inability to unite: the only challenge to Roman ascent came from the Phoenician colony of Carthage, and its defeats in the three Punic Wars marked the start of Roman hegemony. First governed by kings, then as a senatorial republic (the Roman Republic), Rome finally became an empire at the end of the 1st century BC, under Augustus and his authoritarian successors. In the 4th century, the emperors Diocletian and Constantine were able to slow down the process of decline by splitting the empire into a Western part with a capital in Rome and an Eastern part with the capital in Byzantium, or Constantinople (now Istanbul). Constantinople is generally considered to be the center of "Eastern Orthodox civilization". [Parry, Ken 2009] Whereas Diocletian severely persecuted Christianity, Constantine declared an official end to state-sponsored persecution of Christians in 313 with the Edict of Milan, thus setting the stage for the Church to become the state church of the Roman Empire in about 380. The Roman Empire had been repeatedly attacked by invading armies from Northern Europe and in 476, Rome finally fell. Romulus Augustus, the last emperor of the Western Roman Empire, surrendered to the Germanic King Odoacer. Some other notable dates are the Battle of Adrianople in 378, the death of Theodosius I in 395, the crossing of the Rhine in 406 by Germanic tribes after the withdrawal of the legions to defend Italy against Alaric I, followed by the disintegration of the western legions, the death of Justinian I, the last Roman emperor who tried to reconquer the west, in 565, and the coming of Islam after 632. Many scholars maintain that rather than a "fall", the changes can more accurately be described as a complex transformation. [Hunt, Lynn; Thomas R. Martin; Barbara H. Rosenwein; R. Po-chia Hsia; Bonnie G. Smith, 2001] Over time many theories have been proposed on why the Empire fell, or whether indeed it fell at all.

*POST CLASSIC ERA*

*Early Middle Ages*

In the East and Southeast of Europe new dominant states formed: the Avar Khaganate (567–after 822), Old Great Bulgaria (632–668), the Khazar Khaganate (c. 650–969) and Danube Bulgaria (founded by Asparuh in 680) were constantly rivaling the hegemony of the Byzantine Empire. From the 7th century Byzantine history was greatly affected by the rise of Islam and the Caliphates. Muslim Arabs first invaded historically Roman territory under Abū Bakr, first Caliph of the Rashidun Caliphate, who entered Roman Syria and Roman Mesopotamia. As the Byzantines and neighboring Sasanids were severely weakened by the time, amongst the most important reason(s) being the protracted, centuries-lasting and frequent Byzantine–Sasanian wars, which included the climactic Byzantine–Sasanian War of 602–628, under Umar, the second Caliph, the Muslims entirely toppled the Sasanid Persian Empire, and decisively conquered Syria and Mesopotamia, as well as Roman Palestine, Roman Egypt, and parts of Asia Minor and Roman North Africa. In the mid7th century AD, following the Muslim conquest of Persia, Islam penetrated into the Caucasus region, of which parts would later permanently become part of Russia [Hunter, Shireen; et al. (2004).]

*High Middle Ages*

The High Middle Ages of the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries show a rapidly increasing population of Europe, which caused great social and political change from the preceding era. By 1250, the robust population increase greatly benefited the economy, reaching levels it would not see again in some areas until the 19th century. [Mundy,1973] From about the year 1000 onwards, Western Europe saw the last of the barbarian invasions and became more politically organized. The Vikings had settled in Britain, Ireland, France and elsewhere, whilst Norse Christian kingdoms were developing in their Scandinavian homelands. The Magyars had ceased their expansion in the 10th century, and by the year 1000, the Roman Catholic Apostolic Kingdom of Hungary was recognized in central Europe. With the brief exception of the Mongol invasions, major barbarian incursions ceased.

Bulgarian sovereignty was re-established with the anti-Byzantine uprising of the Bulgarians and Vlachs in 1185. The crusaders invaded the Byzantine empire, captured Constantinople in 1204 and established their Latin Empire. Kaloyan of Bulgaria defeated Baldwin I, Latin Emperor of Constantinople, in the Battle of Adrianople on 14 April 1205. The reign of Ivan Asen II of Bulgaria led to maximum territorial expansion and that of Ivan Alexander of Bulgaria to a Second Golden Age of Bulgarian culture. The Byzantine Empire was fully re-established in 1261.

The High Middle Ages produced many different forms of intellectual, spiritual and artistic works. The most famous are the great cathedrals as expressions of Gothic architecture, which evolved from Romanesque architecture.

*Late Middle Ages*

The Late Middle Ages spanned around the 14th and late 15th centuries. Around 1300, centuries of European prosperity and growth came to a halt. A series of famines and plagues, such as the Great Famine of 1315–1317 and the Black Death, killed people in a matter of days, reducing the population of some areas by half as many survivors fled. Depopulation caused labor to become scarcer; the survivors were better paid and peasants could drop some of the burdens of feudalism. There was also social unrest; France and England experienced serious peasant risings including the Jacquerie and the Peasants' Revolt. At the same time, the unity of the Catholic Church was shattered by the Great Schism. Collectively these events have been called the Crisis of the Late Middle Ages.

Beginning in the 14th century, the Baltic Sea became one of the most important trade routes. The Hanseatic League, an alliance of trading cities, facilitated the absorption of vast areas of Poland, Lithuania, and Livonia into trade with other European countries. This fed the growth of powerful states in this part of Europe including Poland–Lithuania, Hungary, Bohemia, and Muscovy later on. The conventional end of the Middle Ages is usually associated with the fall of the city of Constantinople and of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

*EARLY MODERN EUROPE*

*The Renaissance*

Despite these crises, the 14th century was also a time of great progress within the arts and sciences. A renewed interest in ancient Greek and Roman led to the Italian Renaissance. The Renaissance was a cultural movement that profoundly affected European intellectual life in the early modern period. Beginning in Italy, and spreading to the north, west and middle Europe during a cultural lag of some two and a half centuries, its influence affected literature, philosophy, art, politics, science, history, religion, and other aspects of intellectual inquiry. The Italian Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca), deemed the first full-blooded Humanist, wrote in the 1330s: "I am alive now, yet I would rather have been born in another time." He was enthusiastic about Greek and Roman antiquity. In the 15th and 16th centuries the continuing enthusiasm for the ancients was reinforced by the feeling that the inherited culture was dissolving and here was a storehouse of ideas and attitudes with which to rebuild. The renaissance was born: a new age where learning was very important. The Renaissance was inspired by the growth in the study of Latin and Greek texts and the admiration of the Greco-Roman era as a golden age. This prompted many artists and writers to begin drawing from Roman and Greek examples for their works, but there was also much innovation in this period, especially by multi-faceted artists such as Leonardo da Vinci. The Humanists saw their repossession of a great past as a Renaissance – a rebirth of civilization itself. [Nisbet, 1980]

*Exploration and trade*

Toward the end of the period, an era of discovery began. The growth of the Ottoman Empire, culminating in the fall of Constantinople in 1453, cut off trading possibilities with the east. Western Europe was forced to discover new trading routes, as happened with Columbus' travel to the Americas in 1492, and Vasco da Gama's circumnavigation of India and Africa in 1498. The numerous wars did not prevent European states from exploring and conquering wide portions of the world, from Africa to Asia and the newly discovered Americas. In the 15th century, Portugal led the way in geographical exploration along the coast of Africa in search of a maritime route to India, followed by Spain near the close of the 15th century, dividing their exploration of the world according to the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. They were the first states to set up colonies in America and European trading posts (factories) along the shores of Africa and Asia, establishing the first direct European diplomatic contacts with Southeast Asian states in 1511, China in 1513 and Japan in 1542. In 1552, Russian tsar Ivan the Terrible conquered two major Tatar khanates, the Khanate of Kazan and the Astrakhan Khanate. The Yermak's voyage of 1580 led to the annexation of the Tatar Siberian Khanate into Russia, and the Russians would soon after conquer the rest of Siberia, steadily expanding to the east and south over the next centuries. Oceanic explorations soon followed by France, England and the Netherlands, who explored the Portuguese and Spanish trade routes into the Pacific Ocean, reaching Australia in 1606 and New Zealand in 1642.

*Mercantilism and colonial expansion*

The Iberian kingdoms were able to dominate colonial activity in the 16th century. The Portuguese forged the first global empire in the 15th and 16th century, whilst during the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century, the crown of Castile (and the overarching Hispanic Monarchy, including Portugal from 1580 to 1640) became the most powerful empire in the world. Spanish dominance in America was increasingly challenged by British, French, Dutch and Swedish colonial efforts of the 17th and 18th centuries. New forms of trade and expanding horizons made new forms of government, law and economics necessary. Colonial expansion continued in the following centuries (with some setbacks, such as successful wars of independence in the British American colonies and then later Haiti, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and others amid European turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars). Spain had control of a large part of North America, all of Central America and a great part of South America, the Caribbean and the Philippines; Britain took the whole of Australia and New Zealand, most of India, and large parts of Africa and North America; France held parts of Canada and India (nearly all of which was lost to Britain in 1763), Indochina, large parts of Africa and the Caribbean islands; the Netherlands gained the East Indies (now Indonesia) and islands in the Caribbean; Portugal obtained Brazil and several territories in Africa and Asia; and later, powers such as Germany, Belgium, Italy and Russia acquired further colonies.

*REVOLUTION*

*Industrial Revolution*

The Industrial Revolution was a period in the late 18th century and early 19th century when major changes in agriculture, manufacturing, and transport impacted Britain and subsequently spread to the United States and Western Europe, a process that continues as industrialization. Technological advancements, most notably the utilization of the steam engine, were major catalysts in the industrialization process. It started in England and Scotland in the mid-18th century with the mechanization of the textile industries, the development of iron-making techniques and the increased use of coal as the main fuel. Trade expansion was enabled by the introduction of canals, improved roads and railways. The development of all-metal machine tools in the first two decades of the 19th century facilitated the manufacture of more production machines for manufacturing in other industries. The effects spread throughout Western Europe and North America during the 19th century, eventually affecting most of the world. The impact of this change on society was enormous.

*The French Revolution*

French intervention in the American Revolutionary War had nearly bankrupted the state. After repeated failed attempts at financial reform, King Louis XVI had to convene the Estates-General, a representative body of the country made up of three estates: the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners. The third estate, joined by members of the other two, declared with the people. As anti-royalism increased along with threat of foreign invasion, the king tried to flee and join France's enemies. He was captured and on 21 January 1793, having been convicted of treason, he was guillotined.

On 20 September 1792 the National Convention abolished the monarchy aby Maximilien de Robespierre of the Jacobin Club, to act as the country's executive. Under Robespierre, the committee initiated the Reign of Terror, during which up to 40,000 people were executed in Paris, mainly nobles and those convicted by the Revolutionary Tribunal, often on the flimsiest of evidence. Internal tensions at Paris drove the Committee towards increasing assertions of radicalism and increasing suspicions, fueling new terror.

*MODERN EUROPE*

*World War I (1914-1918)*

After the relative peace of most of the 19th century, the rivalry between European powers, compounded by a rising nationalism among ethnic groups, exploded in August 1914, when the First World War started. European soldiers were mobilized; 20 million soldiers and civilians died, and 21 million were seriously wounded. [Clark, 2013] On one side were Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria (the Central Powers/Triple Alliance), while on the other side stood Serbia and the Triple Entente – the coalition of France, Britain and Russia, which were joined by Italy in 1915, Romania in 1916 and by the United States in 1917. The Western Front involved especially brutal combat without any territorial gains by either side. Czarist Russia collapsed in the February Revolution of 1917 and Germany claimed victory on the Eastern Front. After eight months of liberal rule, the October Revolution brought Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks to power, leading to the creation of the Soviet Union in place of the disintegrated Russian Empire. With American entry into the war in 1917 on the Allied side, and the failure of Germany's spring 1918 offensive, Germany had run out of manpower, while an average of 10,000 American troops were arriving in France every day in the summer of 1918. Germany's allies, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, surrendered and dissolved, followed by Germany on 11 November 1918. The victors forced Germany to assume responsibility for the conflict and pay war reparations.

*World War II*

In the Munich Agreement of 1938, Britain and France adopted a policy of appeasement as they gave Hitler what he wanted out of Czechoslovakia in the hope that it would bring peace. It did not. In 1939 Germany took over the rest of Czechoslovakia and appeasement policies gave way to hurried rearmament as Hitler next turned his attention to Poland. After allying with Japan in the Anti-Comintern Pact and then also with Benito Mussolini's Italy in the "Pact of Steel", and finally signing a non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union in August 1939, Hitler launched the Second World War on 1 September 1939 by attacking Poland. To his surprise Britain and France declared war on Germany, but there was little fighting during the "Phoney War" period. War began in earnest in spring 1940 with the successful Blitzkrieg conquests of Denmark, Norway, the Low Countries, and France. Britain remained alone but refused to negotiate, and defeated Germany's air attacks in the Battle of Britain. Hitler's goal was to control Eastern Europe but because of his failure to defeat Britain and the Italian failures in North Africa and the Balkans, the great attack on the Soviet Union was delayed until June 1941. Despite initial successes, the Wehrmacht was stopped close to Moscow in December 1941.

Over the next year the tide was turned and the Germans started to suffer a series of defeats, for example in the siege of Stalingrad and at Kursk. Meanwhile, Japan (allied to Germany and Italy since September 1940) attacked Britain and the United States on 7 December 1941; Germany then completed its over-extension by declaring war on the United States. War raged between the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) and the Allied Forces (British Empire, Soviet Union, and the United States). The Allied Forces won in North Africa, invaded Italy in 1943, and recaptured France in 1944. In the spring of 1945 Germany itself was invaded from the east by the Soviet Union and from the west by the other Allies. As the Red Army conquered the Reichstag in the Battle of Berlin, Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered in early May. World War II was the deadliest conflict in human history, causing between 50 and 80 million deaths, the majority of whom were civilians.

*Cold War era*

The world wars ended the pre-eminent position of Britain, France and Germany in Europe and the world. At the Yalta Conference, Europe was divided into spheres of influence between the victors of World War II, and soon became the principal zone of contention in the Cold War between the two power blocs, the Western countries and the Communist bloc. The United States and the majority of European liberal democracies at the time (United Kingdom, France, Italy, Netherlands, West Germany etc.) established the NATO military alliance. Later, the Soviet Union and its satellites (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania) in 1955 established the Warsaw Pact as a counterpoint to NATO. The Warsaw Pact had a much larger ground force, but the American-French-British nuclear umbrellas protected NATO. Communist states were imposed by the Red Army in the East, while parliamentary democracy became the dominant form of government in the West. Most historians point to its success as the product of exhaustion with war and dictatorship, and the promise of continued economic prosperity. Martin Conway also adds that an important impetus came from the anti-Nazi wartime political coalitions. [Conway, 2004]

*Recent history*

The end of the Cold War came in a series of events from 1979 to 1991, mainly in Eastern Europe. In the end, these brought the fall of the Iron Curtain, the German reunification and the end of Soviet control over their Eastern European satellites and their worldwide network of communist parties in a friendly chain reaction from the Pan-European Picnic in 1989. The finals brought the division of the Soviet Union into 15 non-communist states in 1991. Italian historian Federico Romero reports that observers at the time emphasized that: The systemic and ideological confrontation between capitalism and communism had faded away. The geopolitical partition of Europe was no more. Nuclear deterrence was morphing into a less armed, almost hypothetical version of its previous self. Superpower rivalry was rapidly wound up with cascading effects in various areas of the world.

The Maastricht Treaty created a single currency for most EU members. The euro was created in 1999 and replaced all previous currencies in participating states in 2002. The most notable exception to the currency union, or euro-zone, was the United Kingdom, which also did not sign the Schengen Agreement. The EU did not participate in the Yugoslav Wars, and was divided on supporting the United States in the 2003–2011 Iraq War. NATO was part of the war in Afghanistan, but at a much lower level of involvement than the United States. In 2004, the EU gained 10 new members. (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which had been part of the Soviet Union; Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, five former-communist countries; Malta, and the divided island of Cyprus.) These were followed by Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. Russia's regime had interpreted these expansions as violations against NATO's promise to not expand "one inch to the east" in 1990. Russia engaged in a number of bilateral disputes about gas supplies with Belarus and Ukraine which endangered gas supplies to Europe. Russia also engaged in a minor war with Georgia in 2008.

Beginning in 2014, Ukraine has been in a state of revolution and unrest with two breakaway regions (Donetsk and Lugansk) attempting to join Russia as full federal subjects. (See Russo-Ukrainian War.) On 16 March, a disputed referendum was held in Crimea leading to the de facto secession of Crimea and its largely internationally unrecognized annexation to the Russian Federation as the Republic of Crimea.

In June 2016, in a referendum in the United Kingdom on the country's membership in the European Union, 52% of voters voted to leave the EU, leading to the complex Brexit separation process and negotiations, which led to political and economic changes for both the UK and the remaining European Union countries. The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020. Later that year, Europe was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Russia began an invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, in a major escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War that began in 2014. It is the largest conventional military attack in Europe since World War II. [ Herb, Jeremy; [*Starr, Barbara*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Starr); Kaufman, Ellie (24 February 2022)]

CONCLUSION

European history has had a great impact on a global scale. It has influenced the world socially, culturally and economically. It is only through studying the history of a people that we can assess our way forward when analyzing current events.

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