Europe: Medieval to Modern Times

The European history division offers students the opportunity to engage in the study of both Western and Eastern Europe from the early modern period through the twentieth century.

Europe 1450-1789, or Early Modern Europe, covers a period that spans the dramatic European expansion associated with the Renaissance—economic, political, imperial, and above all cultural transformations—and the crisis of the Old Regime that culminated in the French Revolution. Graduate students may pursue specializations in national histories as well as comparative and thematically-organized transnational programs. The research interests of the early modern faculty are varied and wide ranging. Possible topics for graduate research and teaching include Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy; the social history of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations; the expansion of Renaissance Europe; the European encounter with the Americas and the Ottoman Empire; early modern globalization; the Scientific Revolution; the Baroque court; urban history; social and cultural history; political culture.

Graduate study in Early Modern European history is supported by our close relationship with other programs at the University of Washington, including the Center for West European Studies and other regional programs of the Jackson School for International Studies. Early modernists from across the humanities and social sciences also convene regularly under the auspices of the Early Modern Research Group, an interdisciplinary group of faculty and graduate students that hosts visiting lecturers and conferences and serves as a campus-wide forum for scholarly exchange.

Modern Europe concerns European history in its global context from the crisis of the European old regime to the present. Graduate students may pursue specializations in the national histories of Britain and France as well as in comparative and thematically-organized transnational programs of study. University of Washington faculty specializing in the history of Modern Europe pursue a variety of themes in their teaching and research, including empire and migration, ethnicity and nationalism, history and memory, modernity and globalization, religion and political culture, the rise of consumer culture, the social consequences of industrialization, violence and terror, war and revolution, and women and gender. They also participate in the History of Science and Comparative History divisions.

Graduate study of Modern Europe at the University of Washington is supported by close relationships with the Center for West European Studies, the European Union Center, and the program for Russian, Eastern European, and Central Asian Studies (REECAS), as well as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Professorship.

The East European history component of our program covers the history of the various peoples of East Central Europe from 1780 to the present, in particular the Poles, Czechs, Hungarians and Slovaks, along with the peoples and states of the Balkans. Students also have the opportunity to pursue fields in the history of the history of Jews in Eastern Europe.

Graduate study in East European history is supported by our relationship with other programs at the UW, including the Russian, East European and Central Asian Program (REECAS) in the Jackson School of International Studies, the European Union Center, and the Baltic Studies Program in the Department of Scandinavian Languages and Literatures. REECAS sponsors a yearly conference for
faculty and graduate students in the Pacific Northwest. Usually held in April, the event features a distinguished keynote speaker. The REECAS program also sponsors the publication of the Donald W. Treadgold Papers in Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, a nationally and internally recognized series of occasional papers featuring current scholarly research on the regions that the title indicate. Of special importance is our relationship with the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, which offers 1st and 2nd year courses in Polish, Czech, and Croatian/Serbian. Bulgarian and Romanian may also be offered at times. In addition to the History Department’s funding opportunities, students East European history are eligible for FLAS fellowships, the Jackson Foundation fellowship, and several smaller grants and opportunities specific to the region.

The University’s graduate library has outstanding collections pertaining to East European history. The library’s Slavic and East European Section actively acquires books, periodicals, newspapers, microfilms, maps, photographs, video-, DVD and CD recordings, CD-ROMs, and commercial Internet resources to build versatile, rich, and coherent research collections pertaining to the Russian, East European, and Central Asian area. At present, the collection totals over 400,000 books, 10,000 periodical titles, and thousands of microforms.

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