

COURSE OUTLINE

EUROPE OF THE DICTATORS

This module focuses on the dictatorships in Europe from 1919 to 1939. Europe would never be the same after the First World War. The 'war to end all wars' was followed by a period dominated by economic depression, dictatorship and, ultimately, by a further devastating conflict. While apparently diverse, the dictatorships shared a common rejection of the liberal/democratic tradition. They also had marked similarities in practice: the cult of the leader; the use of repression and of propaganda. The principal focus is on Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, and on the circumstances in which they came to power, thrived and developed; also on how their regimes affected society, and why there was so little effective opposition.

Analysis of developments within the various states is complemented by a study of the relations between them in the interwar years. How was it that Britain and France, the two dominant powers in the League of Nations, failed to limit German foreign policy? How far should they be blamed for the rise to power of Hitler and why did they allow Mussolini's expansionist ambitions to go unchecked? An understanding of this period in all its economic and social diversity, as well as an informed appreciation of its politics and international relations, is a prerequisite for a proper comprehension of today's world.

Recommended Reading

The reading you are recommended to do before the course begins will depend on what you know already. All students are recommended to establish a basic familiarity with the broad histories of the areas and periods covered by each of the three units. For this purpose, the relevant parts of an AP European History textbook, or something like it, would suit anyone who has not already taken the AP or a similar course. More advanced students will be ready to make a start on any of the volumes that follow. You are advised to spend more time on preparatory reading for the unit you have chosen for special focus in your tutorials than on the others.

Stephen J Lee *European Dictatorships 1918-1945* (2000) ISBN 0415454859

Martin Kitchen *Europe Between the Wars: A Political History* (2006) ISBN 058289414X

If you are unable to obtain books locally, they may be ordered from

<http://bookshop.blackwell.co.uk>

or

www.amazon.co.uk