



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Totalitarian regimes (1922-1953): Nazism and Communism in Europe	

Academic staff	Core academic unit(s)
Coordinating: Alisa Miller	Vilnius University, Faculty of History, Department of Modern History Universiteto st. 7, Vilnius (2026)

Study cycle	Type of the course unit
Bachelor	Optional

Mode of delivery	Semester or period when it is delivered	Language of instruction
Face to face	Autumn/Spring	English

Requisites	
Prerequisites: none	Co-requisites (if relevant): none

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Student's workload (total)	Contact hours	Individual work
5	133 h	32h	101 h

Purpose of the course unit
This course will address the history of totalitarianism, focusing mainly on Nazi Germany and Soviet Union. The goal is to provide students with general understanding of totalitarian ideology: its main idea, implication methods as well as similarities/differences between different totalitarian regimes in the first half of XXth century. Turning then to the crimes executed by both regimes in Eastern Europe, the course will briefly address genocide (Holocaust and Soviet terror in occupied territories) with special attention to the Lithuanian case. The knowledge gained during the course will serve as both: the theoretical framework for understanding totalitarianism as a concept and governmental model as well as the factual base for future analytical analysis of XXth century history.

Learning outcomes of the course unit	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
1. Students will be able to understand and examine the main concepts and arguments of totalitarian ideology as well as its problematic origins and impact on local and occupied communities.	Problem-oriented lectures Seminars (text analysis and case study, group tasks) Individual studies and group work (self-study of related documents and literature)	Assessment of work during the seminars 2 presentations delivered during the seminars
2. Critical insight into history of fascist and communist regimes, their governmental models, oppressive techniques, human response to total control and genocide.		
3. To develop skills in critical evaluation of historical resources and historical representations as well as in informed discussion and interpersonal dialogue.		

Content	Contact hours							Individual work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Workshops	Laboratory work	Internship	Contact hours, total	Individual work	Tasks for individual work
1. Introduction to totalitarian ideology and its origins. Brief history of government: totalitarian dictatorship/leadership as a new type of rule. Historical roots of totalitarian ideology, role of the party and society, symbols and myths of regime. Key questions: - Differences between totalitarianism and tyranny - Connecting modernity and totalitarianism: masses, rootlessness, secular religion	4						4	9	Independent analysis of sources and literature
2. Case Study I. Nazi Germany Emergence of Fascism in Europe: fascist regimes in aftermath of WWI. Nazi rise to power, governmental model, society control methods, leadership. Key questions: - Relationship between Fascism and Nazism - Hitler's consolidation of power: key people, ideas, techniques.	4						4	9	Independent analysis of sources and literature
3. Case Study II. Stalinist Russia Fall of Empire, October Insurrection, New Economic Policy, Lenin-Trotsky-Stalin Key questions: - Peasantry transformation into Soviet man: Industrial proletariat and party-state bureaucracy - Differences and similarities between Nazism and Bolshevism (Stalinism)	4						4	9	Independent analysis of sources and literature
4. Seminar: everyday life of totalitarian regimes Soviet man vs Third Reich citizen: routine, beliefs, challenges Khomiakov, Klemperer, Hellbeck.			2				2	15	Independent analysis of sources and literature, preparation for the seminar

5. Totalitarian culture I. Goebbels and his methods Origins of Goebbels techniques and their evolution, key stereotypes and concepts. Key questions: - Did Goebbels invent anything new in the field of propaganda techniques?	4						4	9	Independent analysis of sources and literature
6. Totalitarian culture II. Stalinist propaganda Stalinist political art of the 1930s, Russian history and literature as Stalinist propaganda, the concept of epic revisionism. Key questions: - How (if) Stalinist propaganda methods were different from Goebbels'?	2						2	5	Independent analysis of sources and literature
7. Totalitarian crimes I. The Great Terror and Gulag. First Soviet occupation in Lithuania. Stalin's purges in the 1930s, 1940-1941 Soviet occupation in Lithuania Key questions: - Ideological basis of the Great Terror	2						2	5	Independent analysis of sources and literature
8. Totalitarian crimes II. Holocaust. Eastern Europe and Lithuanian case study Nazi policies in Eastern Europe, Nazi occupation in Lithuania. Holocaust: broad overview and anti-Jewish nazi policies in Lithuania Key questions: - What was (if was) a general anti-Jewish policy/plan in Eastern Europe?	4						4	9	Independent analysis of sources and literature
9. Seminar: Totalitarian reflections in literature George Orwell. <i>1984</i>. Erich Fromm. <i>Escape from Freedom</i>. Friedrich August von Hayek. <i>The Road to Serfdom</i>. Albert Camus. <i>The Rebel</i>.			2				2	15	Independent analysis of sources and literature, preparation for the seminar
10. Trials of totalitarian crimes. Nuremberg trials and Eichmann in Jerusalem. Novelty and challenges of Nuremberg trials. Importance of Eichmann capture and trial for Holocaust memory.	2						2	4	Independent analysis of sources and literature

Key questions: - What sort of justice did Nuremberg and Eichmann trial pursue?									
11. Seminar: Totalitarian reflections in cinema Terry Gilliam. <i>Brasil</i> . 1985 Michael Haneke. <i>The White Ribbon</i> . 2009 Jonathan Glazer. <i>The Zone of Interest</i> . 2023 Andrew Niccol. <i>Gattaca</i> . 1997			2				2	12	Independent analysis of sources and literature, preparation for the seminar
Total	26		6				32	101	

Assessment strategy	Weight %	Deadline	Assessment criteria
Participation in lectures	40%	During each seminar km	Student gets 2 points out of 10 for being present at 90% of lectures. Additional points are given to actively participating students, - engaging in discussion during lectures, etc.
2 Presentations	60%	Interim presentation and presentation towards the end of the course	Student gives 2 presentations on selected topics during the course (1 during each of the seminar)

Author (-s)	Publishing year	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing house or web link
Required reading				
Arendt, Hannah.	2004	The Origins of Totalitarianism.		New York: Schocken Books
Evans, Richard J.	2005	The Third Reich in power, 1933-1939		Penguin Press
Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich	1986	Utopia in Power: the history of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the present.		New York, N.Y.: Summit Books,
Welch, David	2004	Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People's Community	Journal of Contemporary History 39, no. 2	http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180722 .
White, Stephen	1980	The Effectiveness of Political Propaganda in the USSR."	Soviet Studies 32, no. 3	http://www.jstor.org/stable/151166 .
Conquest, Robert	2018	The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties	50th Anniversary Edition	Vintage Books
Snyder, Timothy	2010	Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin		Basic Books
Arendt, Hannah	2006	Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil		Penguin Classics

Recommended reading				
Bongiovanni, B., & Rugman, J.	2005	Totalitarianism: The Word and the Thing	Journal of Modern European History 3(1),	https://www.jstor.org/stable/26265805
Kershaw, Ian.	2004	Hitler and the Uniqueness of Nazism.	Journal of Contemporary History 39, no. 2	http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180723 .
Schwabe, Klaus	2014	World War I and the Rise of Hitler.	Diplomatic History 38, no. 4	https://www.jstor.org/stable/26376610 .
Faulkner, Neil.	2017	Stalinism	People's History of the Russian Revolution	http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1k85dnw.18 .
Michael Geyer, Sheila Fitzpatrick	2009	Beyond totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism compared		Cambridge University Press
Applebaum, Anne	2007	Gulag. A history		Anchor
Browning, Cristioher R.	1998	Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland		Harper Perennial
Borgwardt, Elizabeth	2008	A New Deal for the Nuremberg Trial: The Limits of Law in Generating Human Rights Norms.	Law and History Review 26, no. 3	https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/27641612.pdf