HIST-B300 – JSTU-J304
Violence and Landscape in Alpine Borderlands
Bicentennial Grand Expedition syllabus
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Course description
This 10-day study course takes students across some of the most striking landscapes of Europe in the northern territories of Italy – territories that belonged to contested lands in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and later lay on the border between Italy and Hitler’s Greater German Reich. The course examines the way the landscape shaped the forms of conflict in the First World War, producing some of the most dramatic and testing battlegrounds in the three-year conflict between Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It will also explore the way these border regions acted as zones of persecution under Fascist rule, in which natural features, notably the caves of the Foibe in Istria, proved to be lethal sites of execution for both Fascists and partisans. Finally, it will look at the South Tyrol as route of escape for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution in the 1930s, and later for Nazis using the so-called ratlines to escape prosecution. These themes are pursued in the sensational landscapes of the Italian-Austrian borderlands, in South Tyrol and Friuli and the city of Trieste.

This trip evokes many of the features of the original Grand expedition. It takes the participants across European borders and reflects on the impact of changing borders. It has a strong emphasis on landscape – not only in the outdoor elements of the trip, but also in reflecting on the role of very distinctive terrain in shaping the experience of war, persecution, and flight. In short, it takes full advantage of place and landscape.
Course Format
Three preparatory lectures and one preparatory orientation session will take place before the trip in Bloomington. These will be held on three consecutive Fridays in April and one on May 1, 2020. The main component of the course is a trip to Austria and Italy from July 3 to July 13, 2020 involving lectures as well as visits to museums, battlefields, monuments, and sites of Fascist violence. It features a strong connection with nature and landscapes.

The outdoors hiking includes two robust exercises: 1) hiking across the border between Austria and Italy following the route of Jewish refugees (2 hour hike one day; 6-8 hours the next day); 2) Climbing Monte Piano up a mountain path to see the sites and remnants of the WWI battles there (a 4-5 hour hike up narrow mountain paths.). These are required for all participants of the trip. Participants will thus need to be fit enough to walk for 6-8 hours and to climb and descend 3,000 feet in one day. They will need ankle-high, water-resistant, worn-in hiking boots and appropriate walking clothes and backpack. (The hike across the main chain of the Alps involves an overnight stay where participants will need to carry hiking clothing, toiletries, and a sleeping bag liner. The other hikes are day hikes. A bus will transport luggage between stops.)

Students will be expected to purchase the course reading pack and bring it with them on the trip. (They do not need to carry it across the Alps.)

Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the course, a successful student will demonstrate:

- knowledge about key events and ideas in 20th-century history – Nationalism, World War I, Fascism, World War II and the Holocaust.
- the ability to reflect on the relationship between politics, culture, landscape and violence – on the demands landscape places on technologies of war, on the way it shapes the experience of conflict, and the opportunities it provides for evasion and resistance.
- the capacity to think critically and creatively by answering historical questions about the relations between empire, nation, and culture through experiencing the impact of border movements and contests in the 20th century.

Learning Assessment
The final grade will be based on four components

1) Active participation; 30%
2) Reaction pieces to readings for the Bloomington sessions; 15%
3) Five entries on experience and learning content that will be attached to the course geo-map. Students will enter one substantive content-related entry on the geo map (10%), and four smaller entries that reflect on their experience in situ (5% each); 30%
4) Final essay on landscape and violence to be submitted after the trip. 25%
Reading List
Each of the 12 Class Sessions has articles or book chapters associated with it. The readings will be assembled in a course pack. Because internet may not be available at some of the study locations, participants will be required to purchase the course pack in advance and bring it on the trip.

Monte Piano, Italy – World War I site

Prior to Expedition: Meetings in Bloomington

Week 1
Class Session 1: Nationalism and WWI
Friday April 10 2020, Time to be determined

Readings:
- Select chapters from Mark Thompson, *The White War*
Week 2

Class Session 2: Fascism and WWII
Friday April 17, 2020, Time to be determined

Readings:

Week 3

Class Session 3: Landscape, violence and memory in the Italian Alps between WWI and the end of WWII
Friday April 24, 2020, Time to be determined

Readings:

Week 4

Class Session 4: Logistics and preparations
Friday May 1, 2020, Time to be determined

Jewish exodus from Austria to Italy on the Krimmler Tauernweg, 1947
Trip Calendar

Meeting Day: Meet in Innsbruck at AC Hotel Innsbruck
Friday July 3, 2020, 5 pm
• Dinner and overnight at AC Hotel Innsbruck

Class Session 5: Orientation Meeting, 6-7pm

Day 1: Into the mountains Saturday July 4
Itinerary:
• Drive and hike to the Krimmler Tauernhaus
• 2 ½ hour hike
• Class Session
• Dinner and overnight at the Krimmler Tauernhaus

Class Session 6: Refugees and ratlines

Readings:
• Susanna Schrafstetter, “Jewish flight to Italy”, Holocaust and genocide studies (forthcoming)
• Gerald Steinacher, Nazis on the Run (select chapters)

Day 2: Escape through the mountains Sunday July 5
Itinerary:
• Hiking across the mountains following the trail of Jewish refugees 8 hours
• Class Session
• Dinner and overnight in Ahrntal

Class Session 7: Jews under Nazism and Fascism

Readings:

Day 3: Jews in Meran Monday July 6
Itinerary:
• Drive to Meran
• Visit to the Jewish Museum
• Dinner and overnight in Meran, Hotel Kolping
• Class Session
**Class Session 8: A day trip into deep history: Ötzi, the victim in the high mountains**

**Readings:**


**Day 4: Museum of Archeology, Bozen; Toblach lecture Tuesday July 7**

**Itinerary:**

- Drive to Bozen
- Museum of Archeology (Ötzi)
- Fascist monument to Victory
- Drive to Toblach
- Class Session
- Dinner and overnight in Toblach, Kulturzentrum Toblach Grand Hotel

**Class Session 9: Italy in WWI**

**Reading:**


Day 5: Monte Piano

Itinerary:
- Hike up Monte Piano to WWI sites 4-5 hours
- Visit to the Nasswand military cemetery
- Dinner and overnight in Toblach, Kulturzentrum Toblach Grand Hotel

Day 6: WWI museums in Austria

Itinerary:
- Drive from Toblach to Udine. Sites en route:
  - Museum 1915-1918 Kötschach
  - WWI Open air site on border
- Dinner and overnight in Udine, Hotel Ramandolo

Day 7: Isonzo

Itinerary:
- Class Session
- Isonzo Battlefield/Caporetto museum 4 hours
- Dinner and overnight in Udine, Hotel Ramandolo

Class Session 10: Caporetto as transformative moment in Italian history

Readings:
- Vanda Wilcox, Morale and the Italian Army during the First World War (Cambridge, 2016) (introduction)

Day 8: Redipulia and Trieste

Itinerary:
- Drive to Trieste
- En route Redipulia cemetery
- Class Session
- Dinner and overnight in Trieste, Hotel Continentale

Class Session 11: Jewish persecution under Fascism

Readings:
Redipuglia war memorial, Italy

Day 9: Violence and persecution in Trieste Sunday July 12

Itinerary:
- Risiera San Sabba Camp
- Foibe caves
- Class Session
- Dinner and overnight in Trieste, Hotel Continentale

Class Session 12: Violence, landscape, and memory

Readings:

Day 10: Jewish experience in Trieste Monday July 13

Itinerary:
- Jewish quarter and museum