



SMU | CENTER FOR
PRESIDENTIAL HISTORY



Czech and Germany in WWII and the Cold War A Travel Experience for Students, Alumni & Friends of SMU

May 16-26, 2022

Southern Methodist University's (SMU's) Center for Presidential History's Jeffrey A. Engel and Essential History Expeditions' Brian DeToy are pleased to partner for an on-site exploration of Prague, Nuremberg, Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin, walking the cities and fields where soldiers fought for Europe's liberation and spies schemed for generations to create a new world order. This intergenerational tour offers students, alumni and friends the opportunity to see the places history took place.

This fully guided and immersive tour will explore the people and places of central Europe, from the September 1938 German occupation of Czechoslovakia, to the liberation battles in 1944-45; through the battle of Berlin in April-May 1945 that completed Europe's liberation from Nazi rule; and then on through the decades-long Cold War in the capitals and cities of two nations caught between the Great Powers. We will walk the fields and city

streets, learn from local experts and guest lecturers, and be assigned a renowned (or reviled) figure from history to investigate and role-play. Plus, we'll have plenty of time to explore these iconic sites on your own and to reconnect with SMU friends and students in some of Europe's most scenic sites. This trip will also provide opportunities to connect with current SMU students through meaningful discussions and mentorship.



Background

While Americans, naturally, focus on the “western” campaigns of North Africa, Italy and, especially, northwest Europe from D-Day through the Battle of the Bulge and on into western Germany – scholars know that the main theater of the war was the Eastern front. The Soviets and Nazi Germany engaged in a titanic land struggle that dwarfed the western invasions. This expedition will examine several key elements of that Ost (“east”) front – including its last battle for Berlin, as well as aspects of the war such as Final Solution death and concentration camps, and the Resistance of Czechs, Germans and others. Finally, in each of the major locations, we will examine what came next – the Cold War struggle for over 40 years that engaged the efforts of the USA and the USSR and their allies. We will examine the 1948-49 Berlin Airlift, 1961 and 1989 Berlin Wall episodes, the 1968 Prague Spring and the 1989 Velvet Revolution, among others.

We will begin in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. It was Hitler’s annexation of Czech Sudetenland that led to the infamous 1938 Munich agreement. In Prague we will examine the Habsburg city’s history along with its 1945 liberation and, most important, its abortive Cold War thawing in the 1968 Prague Spring and then the successful 1989 Velvet Revolution led by Vaclav Havel.

Heading west, our next stop is northern Bavaria and the spiritual home of Nazi Germany – Nuremberg. Here we will examine the great Nazi Rally stadium and the courthouse where the famed post-war trials brought

Nazi leaders to international justice. The Old Town also has many Habsburg imperial sites that we will explore.

From Nuremberg we drive over and through the hilly, picturesque Thuringerwald into the old East Germany. We will stop in Jena, a great university town and examine the pivotal October 1806 battle in which the French under Napoleon destroyed the old Prussian Empire in the twin battles of Jena-Auerstadt. Then, it's on to Dresden, the classical city destroyed in one of the worst fire-bombing air raids of WWII, immortalized in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*. We will also discuss the titanic 1813 Napoleonic battle here that resulted in the naming of the first true Allied Supreme Commander (forerunning Foch in 1918, and Eisenhower in 1944-45). Here is also where Colonel Vladimir Putin spent his days at the end of the Cold War, right up to the collapse of Berlin's Wall.

Heading west, we will visit Leipzig, home to Bach and the epicenter of Cold war German resistance to the DDR and Soviets. In the 1980s, it was the citizens of Leipzig who were at the forefront of the protest movements. We will visit sites from those days as well as discuss the 1813 Battle of Nations, the largest in European history until World War One.

Before entering Berlin, we will stop at the Elbe River and visit the bridge at Torgau, where American and Russian forces met in April 1945, sealing off the Germans in Berlin. In Wittenberg we will have lunch in the old Market Square and visit the Castle Church where on October 31, 1517 Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the side door and began a revolution that we call the Reformation. Then, in the Berlin suburb of Potsdam we will discuss the final allied conference of the war as well as the Cold War's Bridge of Spies.

Arriving in our final stop – Berlin – we will spend several days in examining the climactic battle of the European war as well as decades of Cold War spy-vs-spy craft. Berlin was not only the Nazi capital and headquarters, but it also includes nearby sites associated with the war – from the Final Solution at the Wansee Conference, to the world-renowned Holocaust Memorial. The battle for Berlin in the spring of 1945 was on a scale of vicious fighting and retribution and destruction that can scarcely be imagined. Moving on to the Cold War, we will examine the critical Berlin Airlift of 1948-49, as well as the building and subsequent destruction of the Wall in 1961 and 1989. Checkpoint Charlie, Tempelhof Airport, spies, and much more await.

The Reunification of Germany in 1990 has created an economic and diplomatic powerhouse in the center of Europe. For centuries this nation has occupied a critical space on the Continent and on the world stage. At no time was this more true than in the years of World War Two and the subsequent Cold War. This central European expedition will take us to new regions and provide expansive opportunities to discover how our new world came to be.

Day 1, Monday, May 16th: Arrival in Prague

- Arrival and check into our central Prague lodgings.
- Time on your own to explore Prague.
- Group dinner and introductions. SMU's Director of Presidential History Dr Jeffrey Engel and Essential History Expeditions' Dr. Brian DeToy will provide opening remarks.
- Prague hotel: Residence Agnes



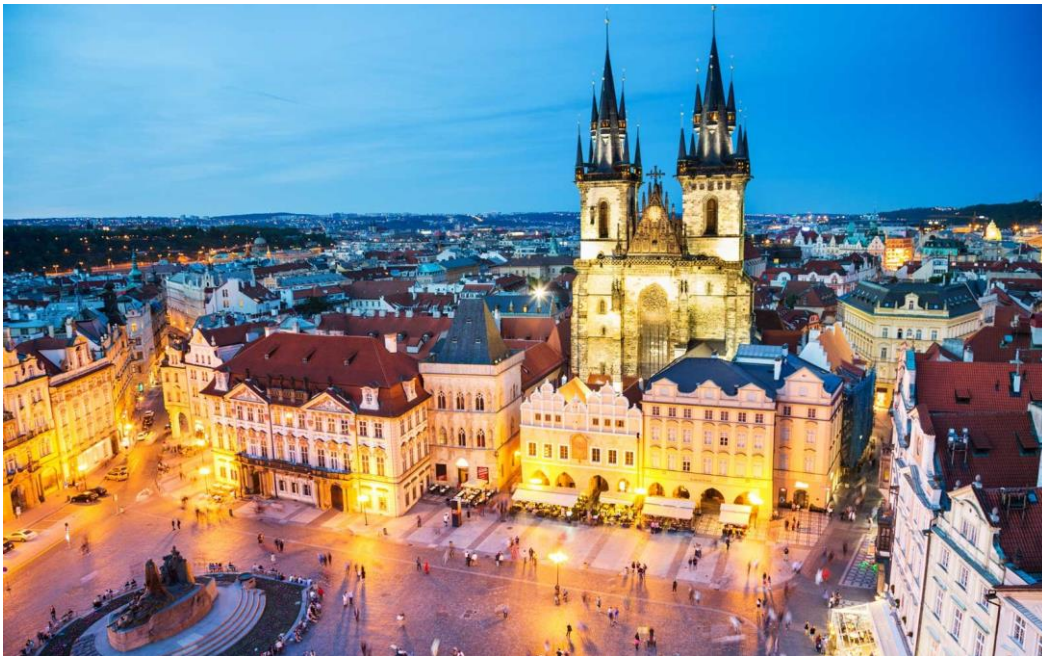
Day 2, Tuesday, May 17th: Prague Old Town and Jewish Quarter

- Breakfast
- Walking tour of central Prague's Stare Mesto (Old Town) focused on Habsburg and Jewish history. The Habsburgs dominated the Holy Roman Empire for much of its millennium and were one of the great dynasties in European history.
 - Old Town Square – a market since the 11th century and scene of incredible bustle today. The fabulous 500 year old Astronomical Clock, the memorial to Jan Hus (an early Catholic dissident) and the Czech people, and in incredible array of architectural styles will astound all.
 - Church of our Lady before Tyn – grandly Gothic across from the musical Church of St Nicholas.
 - Eastern end of the fabulous Charles Bridge at sunset, the iconic view of Prague.
- Lunch on your own in Old Town Prague.
- Afternoon walking tour of the Jewish Quarter, one of Europe's largest and most important, is also worth an extended visit. Over 120,000 lived here in 1939; 10,000 survived the war:
 - Old Jewish Cemetery – a beautiful, haunting site, with 12,000 graves and more than 100,000 burials.
 - Old-New Synagogue – since 1270, Europe's oldest active synagogue, heart and soul of the community.
 - Spanish Synagogue – Prague's most beautiful and a museum to Jewish history.
- Dinner on your own.
- Group classical musical performance at one of the extraordinary venues, some of the finest in all of Europe. Mandatory for students; optional for alumni/friends. Prague is well known for its classical music; in the 17th and 18th centuries it was known as the conservatory of Europe.
- Prague hotel: Residence Agnes



Day 3, Wednesday, May 18th: Prague in WWII and the Cold War

- Breakfast
- Morning walking tour of Prague's Nove Mesto (New Town) and its role in WWII and the Cold War, focused on the revolutions of 1968 and 1989.
 - Wenceslas Square – the “heart” of modern Prague, this is where the people celebrated the creation of the state in 1918, the Soviets crushed the Prague Spring of Alexander Dubcek in 1968, and 300,000 Czechs marched for freedom with Vaclav Havel in 1989! The statue of the “Good King” Wenceslas dominates the square.
 - The Memorial to the Victims of Communism on the spot where philosophy student Jan Palach self-immolated in protest against the state in 1969.
 - Walk along Narodni Trida, the street where the students of 1989 began their fight, literally with the police, for freedom. This was the beginning of the Velvet Revolution.
 - National Theatre – the Cradle of Czech Culture.
 - Walk along the Vitava River to the Dancing House and Greek Church where Czech's most famous WWII soldiers were finally run down and killed by the Nazis but only after they had assassinated the notorious German Reinhard Heydrich.
- Group lunch in central Prague.
- In the afternoon, time for you to explore on your own the incredible array of museums and sites in the gorgeous old city, including crossing the fabulous Charles Bridge that connects the city and Castle Quarter, Lennon Wall (gathering place for dissidents and poets and lovers since 1980), Prague Castle (home to Bohemian kings for centuries) and its gorgeous St Vitus Cathedral, and more.
- Dinner on your own.
- Prague Hotel: Residence Agnes



Day 4, Thursday, May 19th: Prague to Nuremberg

- Breakfast
- Check out of hotel and load luggage on bus.
- Drive to Nuremberg.
- Afternoon visit at the Nazi Rally Grounds, where 150,000 screaming supporters cheered Hitler's every word. We will also visit the Nazi Documentation Center Museum, located in the Congress Hall.
- Group lunch near the Rally Grounds at the lakeside Restaurant Gutmann.
- Arrive at hotel and check-in.
- Evening walking tour of Old Town Nuremberg with sites to include places important to both the First Reich (Holy Roman Empire) and Third Reich (Nazi) – the Konigstrasse, Monument to German WWII Refugees, St Lawrence Church, Hauptmarkt (Main Market), Imperial Castle and Albrecht Durer House.
- Dinner on your own in Old Town.
- Nuremberg hotel: Le Meridien Grand Hotel (Marriott)



Day 5, Friday, May 20th: Nuremberg to Jena and Dresden

- Breakfast
- Load luggage and depart hotel
- Visit the Nuremberg Trials Courtroom & Museum, where the Allies tried the most senior Nazis in 1945-46 for crimes against humanity. If court is not in session, we will have the opportunity to sit in the actual courtroom where the trials were held. If court is in session, we can still view the room from the same vantage point used by the press during the trials.
- Drive to Jena.
- A famed university town in Thuringia, Jena was a focal point of the German intellectual revolution of the first half of the 19th century, including the student liberal and unification movement and German Romanticism. Notable persons were Friedrich Schiller, Alexander von Humboldt, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Novalis and August Wilhelm Schlegel.
- Group lunch on the battlefield at Gasthaus zur Linde.
- In the afternoon we will visit the battlefield of Jena, one of Napoleon's twin victories on October 14, 1806, that enabled the French to destroy the Prussian Empire and brought them to the borders of Russia. Usually

described as one of Napoleon's most impressive battles, this examination will allow us to consider how the ideas of the French Revolution and Napoleon impacted future warfare and politics.

- Drive to Dresden.
- Entering the city, stop by the site of the horrific February 13, 1945, WWII fire-bombing, that American POW Kurt Vonnegut survived to write about in his classic novel *Slaughterhouse Five*. Twenty-five thousand Dresdeners perished that single night.
- Check-in to central Dresden lodgings.
- Dinner at Altmarktkeller in Old Town.
- Dresden hotel: Hilton Dresden or Gewandhaus Marriott Autograph, or similar



Day 6, Saturday, May 21st: Dresden

- Breakfast
- On our morning walking tour of central Dresden we will discuss the old Saxony of the Wettin dynasty that ruled much of eastern Germany until the end of the Great War in 1918; along with the August 1813 Napoleonic campaign (the French Emperor's last victory in Germany) that gave us our first Allied commander-in-chief, the Austrian Field Marshal Karl Philipp, Prince of Schwarzenberg.
- Lunch on your own in Dresden.
- Afternoon on your own to explore the sights of Old Town Dresden, including: the Zwinger art museums, Theatreplatz, the Frauenkirche cathedral, Parade of Nobles, among other notable sites. (An uber drive away is the world-famous Meissen Dresden China factory for those who would like to shop.)
- Dinner on your own in central Dresden.
- Dresden hotel: Hilton Dresden or Gewandhaus Marriott Autograph, or similar



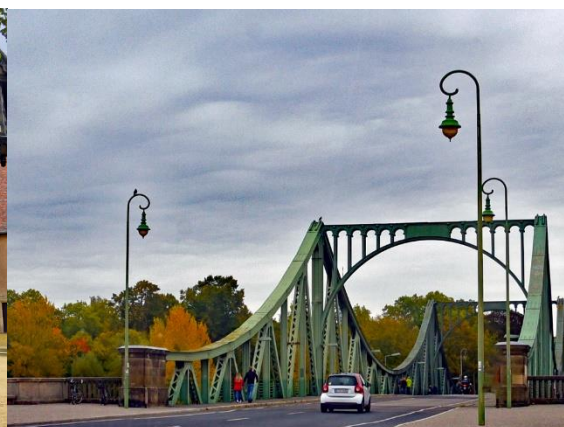
Day 7, Sunday, May 22nd: Leipzig

- Breakfast and check-out of lodgings.
- Drive by the KGB headquarters where, in November 1989, Lt Col Vladimir Putin frantically destroyed records and files as the Berlin Wall fell.
- Drive to Leipzig.
- Visit the grand memorial, one of Europe's biggest, commemorating the pivotal October 1813 Battle of Leipzig, known as the Battle of Nations and the largest European battle until WWI, in which the weight of the combined allies defeated Napoleon's army and drove it back to the gates of France.
- Group lunch in Leipzig at Auerbachkeller or ThuringiaHof.
- Visit Cold War sites of this city that was the epicenter for German resistance to the Soviet Union and DDR in the 1980s – Augustusplatz, St Nicholas Church (where a decade-long prayer movement was the central focus of the Peaceful Revolution that brought down the DDR) and the Stasi Museum (detailing the Cold War East German secret police).
- Visit Johan Sebastian Bach sites in St Thomas Church (and Bach museum is nearby). Bach is one of the world's greatest and most important composers.
- Dinner on your own in the Old Town.
- Leipzig hotel: Leipzig Marriott or similar



Day 8, Monday, May 23rd: Leipzig to Berlin

- Breakfast
- Load luggage and depart hotel.
- Begin drive to Berlin with stop in Torgau to see where Americans and Soviets first joined hands in April 1945, encircling the Nazi forces in the Berlin region and signaling the regime's approaching end.
- Continue drive with stop in Wittenberg to view the Castle Church, upon the door of which Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on October 31, 1517. This act brought the Protestant Reformation into full bloom and the western world has not been the same since.
- Lunch on your own in Wittenberg's charming old Market Square.
- Continue drive with a stop in Potsdam, just outside of Berlin and the capital of the Brandenburg state. It was also the home of Prussian monarchs for 200 years.
- In Potsdam, we will first visit the Cecilienhof palace to discuss 18th century King Frederick II (The Great) who made modern Prussia a state to be reckoned with as well as the final WWII Allied Conference in July 1945 in the where Harry Truman, Churchill, Atlee and Stalin made final plans to defeat Japan all the while setting the course of the Cold War.
- Next, we will drive over the Bridge of Spies where the Soviets and the Allies exchanged prisoners (made famous in the Tom Hanks movie of the same name) to visit the estate on Wannsee lake where the Nazis developed the Final Solution plans.
- Drive to Tempelhof Airport where the AirBridge Memorial commemorates the brave pilots of the 1948-49 Airlift that kept West Berlin supplied under the Soviet noose.
- Continue drive to check-in to lodgings in central Berlin.
- Group dinner at hotel or nearby restaurant.
- Berlin Hotel: Berlin Hilton or similar



Day 9, Tuesday, May 24th: Historic Western Berlin

- Breakfast
- Morning walking tour of western Berlin, “the Mitte,” from Prussian days through the Wilhelmine Empire and WWI and on through the heady cabaret days of Weimar and beyond. From its days as capital of the Third Reich to the final battles of World War Two, and then on through the Cold War – the Airlift, the Wall going up in 1961 and coming down in 1989.
- Highlights on our walk include: Checkpoint Charlie, the Topography of Terror (SS Museum), the Reichstag, Brandenburg Gate, the Tiergarten, Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, site of Hitler’s Bunker, Wilhelmstrasse government buildings and embassies, and more.
- Lunch on your own.
- Dinner on your own.
- Berlin Hotel: Berlin Hilton or similar



Day 10, Wednesday, May 25th: East Berlin in the Cold War

- Breakfast
- We’ll start the morning with a walking tour of Eastern Berlin, down famed Unter den Linden, from Pariserplatz to Friedrichstrasse, Bebelplatz, Museum Island (in the Spree River), the Berlin Cathedral to Alexanderplatz where in November 1989 half a million East Berliners demanded their freedom.
- Lunch on your own and additional afternoon time to explore the plethora of Berlin’s wonders on your own.
- Tonight, we will enjoy a farewell group dinner and wrap-up lecture with SMU’s own Dr. Jeffrey Engel.
- Berlin Hotel: Berlin Hilton or similar



Day 11, Thursday, May 26th: Departure and Onward Journeys

- Breakfast
- Check-out of lodgings and begin onward journeys.



Important Information for Your Upcoming Trip to Czech & Germany

Initial Contact Information

- Sheryl Shafer: phone 303.517.9676; email sheryl@historyexp.com
- Dr. Brian DeToy: phone 253.468.7374; email brian@historyexp.com

Lodging: Our lodging is as follows:

Alumni/Friend	Student
Prague	
Residence Agnes	
Nuremberg	
Le Meridien Grand Hotel or similar	TBD
Dresden	
Hilton Dresden or Dresden Gewandhaus Marriott or similar	TBD
Leipzig	
Leipzig Marriott or similar	TBD
Berlin	
Berlin Hilton or similar	TBD

Tour dates: Our tour officially begins with dinner on Monday, May 16th in Prague, and concludes the morning of Thursday, May 26th, in Berlin. Your payment includes your lodging for May 16th through to the final check-out the morning of May 26th.

Accommodations: Please let us know if you have any medical, dietary or mobility limitations or issues so we can make every effort to accommodate you and provide the best experience. If you have dietary restrictions, I can ensure restaurants can accommodate you if I know in advance. Please also let me know if you require a walk-in shower rather than a tub/shower.

Mentoring Component: We have established a mentoring component for the students to learn from the alumni/friends. *This has been a wonderful success on past trips from both the alumni/friend as well as student perspective.* Please respond with two pieces of information: 1. Are you willing to talk with students who may be interested in your professional or life experiences at some point during the trip? 2. If so, please send me a short bio, including your professional background or other life experiences you'd be willing to share with students, so that we can match up interests. If you'd prefer not to take on a mentoring role, that's absolutely fine, too. Thank you!

Additional Hotel Nights: If you would like to extend your stay in Prague before the tour or in Berlin after the tour, I would be happy to make hotel reservations at the same hotels at the pass-through rate from the hotel (no mark up). Please email me sheryl@historyexp.com if you are interested in extending your stay and I will provide information on rates.

Arrival and Departure: Our hotel in Prague offers transfer service from the airport and train station. I will provide more information in a future update. In Berlin, if you prefer to have a car

hire service rather than take public transportation or a taxi, we highly recommend Blacklane (<https://www.blacklane.com/en>). We have worked with them in multiple cities in England and France in the past and the service has always been reliable and highly professional. When organizing transportation, you have the option to select the type of car you prefer, such as Mercedes, BMW, Tesla, Audi or similar.

Concert in Prague: Prague is well known for its classical music; in the 17th and 18th centuries it was known as the conservatory of Europe. We will select a classical concert in one of the many elaborate concert halls or churches in the Old Town. For alumni/friends, you may opt to attend the concert on the 17th (cost of the concert will be included in the final invoice), or you may choose to bypass this event. For students, the concert is included.

Earbuds: We will use audio units to ensure everyone can hear Drs Engel and DeToy clearly. We will have earbuds available but if you have pair you prefer, please be sure to bring them.

Power Converter: You will need a power converter for both Czech and Germany. If you will have multiple devices to charge each evening, we also recommend bringing a splitter (like a mini extension cord without the cord) so that you can plug in more items into one outlet.

In the Czech Republic the power plugs and sockets are of type E. The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz.

Type E: This socket also works with plug C. Plug F will work if it has an additional pinhole.



In Germany the power plugs and sockets are of type F. The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz.

Type F: also known as "Schuko". This socket also works with plug C and plug E.



Transportation During Tour: We will have a bus for the transportation during the tour. The bus will include one bottle of water per person per day.

Packing: Bring layered clothing for warmth, a rain jacket, an umbrella and good walking shoes. The weather in our locations in late May can run the gamut from postcard-perfect to overcast with wind and rain. (Note: Layering is key and we can always remove layers as necessary. If you have a small duffel bag, you can roll/fold it up empty in your suitcase and then bring it with extra clothing items in the bus each day of the touring). Remember, good walking shoes are important!

Luggage: There are no hard limits on luggage. The bus stowage will be sufficient for the size of bus as compared to our group size.

Family Connection: As we prepare for this trip, could you let us know if you had any relatives with ties to WWII or the Cold War in Czech and Germany? Perhaps a parent or grandparent who served at that time. Or a family member who survived the camps or fled the Germans or Russians. Brian had four uncles serve in Europe in WWII and he served in Germany during the fraught period in the two years after the Wall came down. If you can give us the name and unit or organization or location, we will identify a time/place we can include that story in the touring.

Participation: Brian has developed a list of roles for people to portray. For the students, this is a mandatory exercise; for the remainder of you, this is entirely voluntary and optional but highly encouraged! For those who would like to do this, it will make the trip even more worthwhile as you dig into understanding a person who was critical to the history. Here's how it works: Brian will let you know at what location(s) he will ask you to speak to the group and for how long. He will give you a short list of possible talking points and questions you may want to address. No worries, at all – Brian is prepared to speak and lead the entire thing. But we are confident it will be more enjoyable if we hear some other voices. For some others of you, he will provide a short reading that he will call on you to read at a specific point. There's no preparation required at all for those. Here is an initial list of possible characters and topics; if you have another that you would like to add, do not hesitate to suggest them:

- Winston Churchill
- Harry S Truman
- Josef Stalin
- Vaclav Havel
- Alexander Dubcik
- Martin Luther
- Jan Hus
- Jan Palach
- Albert Speer
- Leni Riefenstahl
- Marlene Dietrich
- King Wenceslas
- Napoleon
- Field Marshal Karl, Prince Schwarzenberg
- Czar Alexander I

- Rudolf Hess
- Mikhail Gorbachev
- Lt Col Vladimir Putin
- Erich Honecker
- Lt Col Harald Jaeger
- Jesse Owens
- Kaiser Wilhelm II
- King Frederick II “The Great”
- And more to come

If you would like to participate, please respond to this email with your character/topic choice.

Movies: Some films to watch:

- *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*
- *The Bridge of Spies*
- *Operation Daybreak*
- *Funeral in Berlin*
- *Torn Curtain*
- *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*
- *The Trial*
- *Immortal Beloved*
- *Slaughterhouse Five*
- *Kafka*
- *Mission Impossible*
- *Mission Impossible III*
- *The Bourne Supremacy*
- *Wings of Desire*
- *Run, Lola, Run*
- *Goodbye, Lenin*
- *Octopussy*
- *Spy Game*
- *The Man From U.N.C.L.E*
- *Homeland (5th season)*
- *The Innocent*

Reading: If you want to do some reading beforehand, we recommend:

Nonfiction:

- Jeffrey Engel, *When the World Seemed New: George HW Bush and the End of the Cold War*
- David Chandler, *Campaigns of Napoleon*

- Jorn Leonhard, *Pandora's Box* (WWI and impact on Europe, including Czech and Germany)
- Cornelius Ryan, *The Last Battle* (Berlin 1945)
- Charles Mee, *Meeting at Potsdam*
- Marshall Dill, *Germany: A Modern History*
- Elie Wiesel, *Night*
- Sax/Kuntz, *Inside Hitler's Germany* (a documentary history)
- There are countless biographies of Adolf Hitler. A short version is Ian Kershaw's *Hitler*; an early longer one is Konrad Heiden's *The Fuhrer*; and still others are John Toland's *Adolf Hitler* and Robert Payne's *Life and Death of Adolf Hitler*
- Andrei Cherny, *The Candy Bombers*
- John Lewis Gaddes, *The Cold War: A New History* (and all of his other books)
- Joseph Shattan, *Architects of Victory: Six Heroes of the Cold War*

Novels:

- All John LeCarre novels
- All Franz Kafka novels and short stories
- Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*
- Gunter Grass, *The Tin Drum*
- Hans Fallada, *Alone in Berlin*
- Ian McEwan, *The Innocent*
- Anna Funder, *Stasiland*
- Peter Schneider, *The Wall Jumper*
- Alfred Doblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*
- Christopher Isherwood, *Goodbye to Berlin*
- Kelly Rimmer, *The Warsaw Orphan*

We will provide assigned student reading as well as additional shorter reading suggestions in the coming months.

Available at the SMU bookstore

- Frank Costigliola, *Roosevelt's Lost Alliances: How Personal Politics Helped Start the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012)
- Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997)
- Norman Rich, *Hitler's War Aims: Ideology, The Nazi State, and the Course of Expansion* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992)

On-Line Texts: Canvas

- Andrew Preston, "Monsters Everywhere: A Genealogy of National Security," *Diplomatic History*, 38:3 (June 2014).

- Mark Stoler, "George C. Marshall and the 'Europe-First Strategy, 1939-1951: A Study in Diplomatic as well as Military History," *The Journal of Military History*, 79:2 (April 2015).

Monthly Historical Update: Here is the timeline of World War II and Cold War events from 1938 leading to the Fall of the Berlin Wall. This iteration takes us up through 1940, showing the context of what was going on in Europe at-large and also the background of the anti-semitic laws.

1938

March 13: Anschluss (incorporation of Austria): All anti-Semitic decrees immediately applied in Austria

April 26: Mandatory registration of all property held by Jews inside the Reich

August 1: Adolf Eichmann establishes the Office of Jewish Emigration in Vienna to increase the pace of forced emigration

September 29-30: Leaders of Britain, France, Nazi Germany, and Italy meet at the Munich Convention. In an act of capitulation, the delegates deliver the Sudetenland (the German-speaking province of Czechoslovakia) into Adolf Hitler's hands. Neither Russia nor Czechoslovakia are invited to Munich. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returns to England following his role in the Munich Agreement claiming to have achieved "peace in our time."

October 1, 1938: Nazi German troops march into the Sudetenland. Without the support of their alleged allies, France and Britain, the Czechoslovakians are powerless against Adolf Hitler's army.

October 5: Following request by Swiss authorities, Germans mark all Jewish passports with a large letter "J" to restrict Jews from immigrating to Switzerland

November 9-10: Nazi-led mobs engage in a night of terror against Nazi Germany's and Austria's Jewish population, destroying more than 1,000 shops and 200 synagogues, arresting 30,000 and deporting to camps at Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen, and killing nearly 40. The action will become known as *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass).

November 12: Decree forcing all Jews to transfer retail businesses to Aryan hands

November 15: All Jewish pupils expelled from German schools

December 12: One billion mark fine levied against German Jews for the destruction of property during Kristallnacht

1939

March 15: Germans occupy the remainder of Czechoslovakia

September 1: Beginning of World War II in Europe with Germany invading Poland

October 28: First Polish ghetto established in Piotrkow

November 23: Jews in German-occupied Poland (the General Government) forced to wear an arm band or yellow star

1940

April 9: Germans occupy Denmark and southern Norway

May 7: Establishment of Lodz Ghetto

May 10: Germany invades the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France (France surrenders on June 22)

May 20: Concentration camp established at Auschwitz

November 16: Establishment of Warsaw Ghetto