

AP European History Thematic Course Outline

(Edited by Mr. Watson)

Introduction to the Outline

It is neither an “official” list of the terms and specific events that students should know, nor is it a product of the Development Committee. Rather, it is a collection of themes that are both taught in typical college introductory survey courses in modern European history and covered on the AP European History Exam.

Because time constraints are a reality in attempting to cover course material, you will have to choose which themes in the outline to emphasize over others. There may even be some areas that you will choose not to cover at all. Moreover, teachers vary in their knowledge of different historical periods and themes; some cover social history extensively while others prefer to emphasize political and diplomatic history. It should be noted that the two thematic essay, or free-response, questions the AP Exam requires students to answer are written with the goal of providing a broad selection of themes. Thus, students are not expected to be knowledgeable to the same degree in every theme of the course.

You will notice that the outline begins with the later Middle Ages even though the official beginning of the AP European History course is 1450. Multiple-choice questions on the AP Exam do not deal with the pre-1450 period, nor do the free-response questions require students to use information from this period. Strong student essays, however, frequently refer to pre-1450 material to draw a contrast between the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance or use the intellectual or artistic foundation provided by the early Renaissance for an analysis of the later Renaissance. Many experienced teachers briefly review the later Middle Ages and early Renaissance periods with their students at the beginning of the course. Pre-1450 material in the outline is denoted with an asterisk.

Thematic Course Outline

(Pre-1450 material is denoted with an asterisk.)

I. Later Middle Ages*

- A. Hundred Years’ War (1337–1453)*
- B. Black Death (1347)*
- C. Peasant revolts*
- D. Vernacular literature*
- E. Crisis in the Catholic Church*
- F. Life in the later Middle Ages*

II. The Renaissance

Note: The number of significant Renaissance artists and writers is great. Artists like Brunelleschi, Donatello, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Holbein, and Durer are only a small sample of possible examples. You are encouraged to select several major artists and their works and demonstrate how these works reflect Renaissance ideals and society.

- A. Contrast with the later Middle Ages
- B. Italian Renaissance
 - 1. Rise of the Italian city-states: Florence and selected other city-states
 - 2. Decline of the Italian city-states
 - 3. Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1513)
- C. Italian humanism: revival of Classical learning and civic humanism (e.g., Boccaccio, Castiglione, Mirandola)
- D. Northern Renaissance: Christian humanism (e.g., Erasmus and Sir Thomas More)

- E. Women in the Renaissance
- F. Italian Renaissance art
 1. Architecture
 2. Sculpture
 3. Painting
 4. Quattrocento in Florence
 5. High Renaissance in Rome: sixteenth century (cinquecento)
 6. Patronage and the arts
- G. Northern Renaissance
 1. Art in the Low Countries
 2. Writers (e.g., Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare)
 3. Patronage and the arts

III. New Monarchs

- A. Characteristics and methods
- B. France
- C. England
- D. Spain
 1. Ferdinand of Aragon (1479–1516) and Isabella of Castile (1474–1504)
 2. Hapsburg Empire

IV. Age of Exploration

Note: It is not necessary for students to master an exhaustive list of explorers and technologies. For a thematic essay question on exploration, for example, students would be expected to analyze the significance of a few major explorers (e.g., Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Magellan) and technological developments. The multiple-choice section of the AP Exam does not emphasize minute details regarding exploration.

- A. Advances in learning
- B. Advances in technology
- C. Portuguese exploration
- D. Spanish exploration
- E. “Old Imperialism”
 1. Portuguese outposts in Africa, India, and Asia
 2. Spain and Portugal in the New World
 3. Dutch East Indies
 4. French colonies in North America
 5. English colonies in North America

V. Commercial Revolution

- A. Causes
- B. Impact
 1. “Price Revolution”
 2. Rise in capitalism
 3. New industries: cloth production, mining, printing, shipbuilding, cannons and muskets
 4. New consumer goods: sugar, tea, rice, tobacco, cocoa
 5. Mercantilism
 6. Enclosure movement in England

VI. Life in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

- A. Hierarchy in the countryside and in the cities

- B. Demographics
- C. Family
- D. Slavery introduced by the Portuguese (plantation economy)
- E. Witch hunts

VII. Protestant Reformation

- A. Causes of the Protestant Reformation
 - 1. Declining prestige of the papacy*
 - 2. Early critics of the Church*
 - 3. Corrupt church practices (e.g., simony, pluralism, absenteeism, clerical ignorance)
 - 4. Renaissance humanism (e.g., Erasmus)
- B. Martin Luther (1483–1546)
 - 1. 95 Theses (1517)
 - 2. Impact of Lutheranism on women
 - 3. Luther's views on new sects and peasantry
- C. Calvinism
 - 1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536)
 - 2. Tenets: predestination, the elect, Protestant work ethic
 - 3. Strict theocracy in Geneva
 - 4. Spread of Calvinism
- D. Anabaptists (the “left wing” of the Protestant Reformation)
- E. Reformation in England
 - 1. John Wycliffe, the Lollards*
 - 2. Henry VIII and the creation of the Church of England
 - 3. Mary Tudor (“Bloody Mary”) (1553-58)
 - 4. Elizabeth I (1558–1603)

VIII. Catholic Reformation

- A. Causes
- B. Council of Trent (1545-63)
- C. New religious orders
- D. Peace of Augsburg (1555)

IX. Religious Wars

- A. Catholic crusade against Protestantism: Philip II of Spain (1556-98)
- B. French civil wars of the late sixteenth century
- C. The Netherlands
- D. Spain versus England
- E. Thirty Years' War (1618-48)
 - 1. Causes
 - 2. Course of the war
 - 3. Treaty of Westphalia (1648) and results of the war

X. Age of Absolutism

- A. Philosophy of absolutism
- B. England (c. 1600-60)
- C. France (c. 1600–1715) (e.g., Richelieu, Mazarin, Louis XIV)
- D. Absolutism in Eastern Europe
 - 1. Characteristics
 - 2. Contrasts with Western Europe: serfdom, powerful nobility
 - 3. Austrian Empire (c. 1650–1780) (Hapsburgs)

4. Prussia (c. 1600–1740) (Hohenzollerns)
5. Russia (c. 1400–1725)
6. Decline of the Ottoman Empire, the Polish Kingdom, and the Holy Roman Empire

XI. The Baroque

- A. Characteristics
- B. Reflection of the age of absolutism in architecture (e.g., Versailles)
- C. Painting and sculpture (e.g., Poussin, Rembrandt, Bernini)
- D. Music

XII. Constitutionalism in Western Europe, Seventeenth Century

- A. England
 1. Parliament versus James I and Charles I
 2. English Civil War (Puritan Revolution) (1642-49)
 3. Oliver Cromwell (1653-58)
 4. The Restoration (1660-68)
 5. The Glorious Revolution (1688) and its political aftermath
 6. Public policy responses
- B. The United Provinces of the Netherlands (Dutch Republic)
 1. Struggle for independence against Spain
 2. Impact of the Commercial Revolution
 3. Religious toleration
 4. Lack of centralization: stadtholders
 5. Economic decline

XIII. The Scientific Revolution

- A. Sixteenth century (e.g., Copernicus)
- B. Seventeenth century
 1. Astronomy
 2. Bacon, inductive method
 3. Descartes, deductive method
- C. Effects
 1. Science and religion
 2. International scientific community (e.g., the Royal Society)
 3. Practical results (e.g., improved navigation)

XIV. The Enlightenment

Note: As with the numerous personalities of the Renaissance, an official list of notable Enlightenment figures is too exhaustive for the purposes of this outline. The names included in the outline represent only a small number of possible examples. You are encouraged to select several major Enlightenment figures and their works and demonstrate how they reflect Enlightenment ideals and society.

- A. Secular worldview: natural science and reason
- B. Impact of the Enlightenment on European society
- C. John Locke (1632–1704)
- D. The philosophes (e.g., Diderot, Voltaire)
- E. Economic theory (e.g., Smith)
- F. Gender

XV. Enlightened Despotism

- A. Characteristics and beliefs
- B. Frederick the Great of Prussia (1740-86)
- C. Catherine the Great of Russia (1762-96)
- D. Maria Theresa (1740-80) and Joseph II (1765-90) of Austria
- E. Napoleon of France (1799–1815)

XVI. European Expansion and Change in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

- A. Agricultural Revolution

- B. Atlantic economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
- C. Changing society in the eighteenth century
 - 1. Causes and impact of population growth
 - 2. Marriage, divorce, family life
 - 3. Formal education
 - 4. Health
 - 5. Religious reform

XVII. The French Revolution

- A. French social hierarchy prior to the Revolution
- B. Long-term and short-term causes
- C. National Assembly (1789-91)
- D. The role of women
- E. The Revolution and the rest of Europe
- F. Legislative Assembly (1791-92)
- G. National Convention, the Terror, the Directory (1792-99)
- H. Napoleon Bonaparte (1799–1814)
- I. Congress of Vienna and the Restoration (1814-15)

XVIII. The Industrial Revolution/Industrialization

- A. Roots of the Industrial Revolution
- B. Conditions favorable to the Industrial Revolution in England
- C. Important inventions
- D. Transportation Revolution
- E. Continental Europe industrializes after 1815
- F. Social implications of the Industrial Revolution
 - 1. Urbanization
 - 2. Struggle between labor and capital
 - 3. Working conditions
 - 4. Economics: the “dismal science”
 - 5. Liberal reforms to address the plight of industrial workers
 - 6. Eventual rise in the standard of living

XIX. Conservatism, Nationalism, Liberalism, and Socialism in Politics

- A. Congress of Vienna (1814-15) and the Concert of Europe (1815-48)
- B. Conservatism throughout Europe (e.g., Carlsbad Decrees, Peterloo Massacre)
 - 1. Characteristics
 - 2. Responses to revolutions between 1815 and 1848
- C. Nationalism
 - 1. Nationalist philosophy

2. National revolutionary movements (1815-48)
3. German unification (1871)
4. Italian unification (1870)
5. Austria-Hungary

D. Liberalism

1. The Enlightenment: Classical liberalism (e.g., Mill)
2. France (Revolutions of 1830, 1848), Louis Napoleon
3. England: 1832 Reform Bill, labor reform, Corn Laws repeal, Chartists
4. Italy
5. Germany
6. Austria
7. Russia: emancipation of the serfs (1861)

E. Socialism

1. Utopian
2. Marxist
3. 1848

XX. Romanticism

- A. Characteristics
- B. Early German Romantics (e.g., Goethe)
- C. English Romantic poetry (e.g., Wordsworth, Shelley)
- D. French literature (e.g., Hugo)
- E. Art (e.g., Delacroix)
- F. Music (e.g., Beethoven, Chopin)

XXI. Urbanization and Life in the Late Nineteenth Century

- A. Living conditions
- B. Improvement in health (e.g., Pasteur)
- C. Urban planning and public transportation
- D. Social structure: classes and the changing family

XXII. Intellectual Movements in the Late Nineteenth Century

- A. Science (e.g., Darwin, Freud)
- B. Realism (e.g., Zola, Eliot, Tolstoy, Millet)
- C. Impressionism (e.g., Monet)
- D. Postimpressionism (e.g., Van Gogh, Cezanne)
- E. Religion (e.g., *Rerum Novarum* [1891])

XXIII. The Age of Mass Politics

- A. German Empire
 1. Prince Otto von Bismarck (1871-90)
 2. Wilhelm I (1871-88) and Wilhelm II (1888–1918)
 3. Social Democratic Party (SPD)
 4. First welfare state
- B. Third French Republic
 1. Paris Commune (1871)
 2. National Assembly: political parties and leaders
 3. Challenges to the republic (e.g., Dreyfus Affair)
- C. Great Britain
 1. Political parties and leaders (e.g., Disraeli, Gladstone)
 2. Political reforms (e.g., Reform Bill of 1867)

- 3. The Irish Question
- D. Austrian Empire
 - 1. Dual Monarchy (Ausgleich)
 - 2. Nationalities
 - 3. Reforms
- E. The Eastern Question
 - 1. Russia versus the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans
 - 2. Pan-Slavism
 - 3. Other European rivals in the Balkans
 - 4. Congress of Berlin (1878)
- F. Russia
 - 1. Defeat in the Crimean War, impulse for modernization
 - 2. Alexander II (1855-81): emancipation of the serfs (1861)
 - 3. Slavophiles, Nihilists, Westernizers
 - 4. Economic development
 - 5. Nicholas II (1894-1917)
 - a. Russo–Japanese War (1904-5)
 - b. Revolution of 1905, “Bloody Sunday”
 - c. Duma
- G. Impact of Marxism in the age of mass politics

XXIV. Women’s Suffrage

- A. Britain
- B. Russia
- C. Scandinavia

XXV. Imperialism

- A. Major causes for the imperialist impulse
- B. Mid-nineteenth-century economic penetration of non-European regions
 - 1. China
 - 2. Japan
 - 3. Egypt
- C. European emigration
- D. Causes of the new imperialism (1880–1914), contrast with the old imperialism
 - 1. New imperialism in Africa
 - 2. New imperialism in Asia
- E. Critics of imperialism (e.g., Hobson, Lenin)

XXVI. World War I

Note: The thematic essay question section of the AP European History Exam does not focus on military history. While students may be required to understand the significance of a few of the major battles in twentieth-century warfare for the purposes of the exam’s multiple-choice section, the emphasis of the thematic essays has traditionally been on the areas of diplomacy and social consequences.

- A. Long-term causes
- B. Immediate causes
- C. Western Front
- D. Eastern Front
- E. Naval war

- F. Mobilization for “total war”
- G. Wilson’s Fourteen Points (1918)
- H. Revolutions in Germany and Austria
- I. Peace settlements (1919–1923)
- J. Results

XXVII. Russian Revolution

- A. 1905 Revolution
- B. Impact of World War I on Russian society
- C. February Revolution (1917)
- D. Bolshevik leadership: October Revolution (1917)
- E. Treaty of Best-Litovsk (1917)
- F. Russian Civil War
- G. Role of women during and after the war
- H. Results of the Russian Revolution

XXVIII. Age of Anxiety in the Interwar Years

- A. Modern philosophy and criticism of society (e.g., Nietzsche, Eliot, the Lost Generation)
- B. Impact of science on the common mind
 - 1. “New Physics”
 - 2. Freudian psychology
- C. Modern art in the twentieth century (e.g., Picasso, Dada, surrealism)
- D. Modern music

XXIX. Politics in the Interwar Period

- A. Weimar Republic (1919-33)
 - 1. Communist attempts to take control (e.g., Spartacists) (1919)
 - 2. Impact of Versailles Treaty
 - 3. Runaway inflation
 - 4. Rise of Hitler and the Nazis
- B. Great Britain
 - 1. Unemployment
 - 2. General Strike (1926)
 - 3. Growth of the Labour Party
- C. Great Depression
 - 1. Causes
 - 2. Impact on Europe
- D. Spanish Civil War (1936-39)

XXX. Totalitarianism

- A. Contrast totalitarianism with conservative authoritarianism
- B. Tools of dictatorship
- C. Russia
 - 1. Lenin (1917-24)
 - 2. Stalin (1924-53)
 - 3. Life in the Soviet Union
- D. Italy
 - 1. Rise of Mussolini and fascism
 - 2. Life in fascist Italy
- E. Nazi Germany
 - 1. Rise of Hitler, Nazi ideology (e.g., *Mein Kampf*)

2. Impact of the Great Depression
3. Nuremberg Laws (1935-38)
4. Role of the SS and Gestapo
5. Life in Nazi Germany
6. Holocaust

XXXI. World War II

- A. Failure of collective security
 1. League of Nations
 2. Hitler's repudiation of the Versailles Treaty
 3. Spanish Civil War (1936-39)
 4. Appeasement
 5. German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (1939)
- B. Nazi Empire in Europe
 1. Partition of Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union (1939)
 2. Conquest of Western Europe; failure to invade Great Britain
 3. Vichy France
 4. The "Final Solution"
 5. Invasion of the Soviet Union (June 1941)
- C. Turning points (e.g., Stalingrad)
- D. Diplomacy during the war (e.g., Atlantic Charter, Yalta)
- E. Results of World War II

XXXII. The Cold War

- A. Roots of the Cold War
- B. Containment
 1. Marshall Plan (1948)
 2. Berlin Crisis (1948-49)
 3. NATO
 4. Nuclear arms race
 5. Korean War (1950-53)
- C. 1950s
 1. Khrushchev: "peaceful coexistence"
 2. Warsaw Pact (1955)
 3. Suez Crisis (1956)
 4. Sputnik
 5. U-2 incident
- D. 1960s
 1. Berlin Wall (1961)
 2. Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)
 3. Vietnam War (1954-75)
- E. 1970s
 1. Willy Brandt, Ostpolitik
 2. Detente
 3. Helsinki Conference (1975)
 4. Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979)
- F. 1980s
 1. Gorbachev: glasnost and perestroika
 2. INF Treaty (1987)
 3. Revolutions of 1989
- G. Fall of the Soviet Union

XXXIII. Soviet Empire

- A. Stalin's final years
- B. The Iron Curtain: Soviet satellites
- C. Challenges to Soviet authority within the Eastern European Empire
- D. Khrushchev (1958-64): de-Stalinization and the thaw
- E. The Brezhnev Era (1964-81)
- F. Gorbachev (1985-91)
- G. Fall of the Soviet Union

XXXIV. Western European Economic Recovery and Unity

- A. Liberal democratic governments
 - 1. West Germany
 - 2. France
 - 3. Great Britain
 - 4. Italy
- B. "Economic Miracle"
 - 1. Marshall Plan (1948)
 - 2. Impact of economic recovery on politics
 - 3. Consumerism
 - 4. End to economic growth in the 1970s: oil crisis
- C. European Unity
- D. Society
 - 1. Welfare state
 - 2. Education: science technology
 - 3. Growth of the middle class
 - 4. Family
 - 5. Women's rights movement
 - 6. Counterculture in 1960s (including student revolts)
- E. Science

XXXV. Decolonization

- A. Causes
- B. British Empire
 - 1. India
 - 2. Egypt
- C. French Empire
 - 1. Vietnam
 - 2. Algeria
- D. Middle East
 - 1. End of mandates
 - 2. Birth of Israel
- E. Indonesia
- F. Sub-Saharan Africa
- G. Cultural imperialism

XXXVI. Post-1991 Issues

- A. Russian challenges in transitioning to capitalism and democracy
- B. Eastern European challenges in transitioning to capitalism and democracy
- C. Unification of Germany: challenges integrating East Germany

- D. Yugoslavia
- E. Unified Europe—how far?
- F. Immigration, “guest workers”

Dates and Periods in European History

Students often have difficulty keeping track of the parallel timelines of politics, culture, and economics. Give them a guide like this to help keep them from getting lost and also to remind them of important connections.

Later Middle Ages (c. 1300–1450) and the Renaissance (c. 1400–1550)

| Political Dates and Periods |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Later Middle Ages Hundred Years' War begins (1337) Black Death (1347) Fall of Constantinople (1453) |
| Art Dates |
| Late Gothic, Renaissance |
| Economic Dates |
| Commercial Revolution funds the Renaissance Decline of feudalism |

First Half of the Early Modern Period (c. 1450–1648)

| Political Dates and Periods |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| New Monarchies Hundred Years' War ends (1453) Marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella (1469) End of the War of the Roses (1485) The Reformation/Religious Wars/The Counter Reformation Martin Luther's 95 Theses (1517) Charles V becomes Holy Roman Emperor (1519) Diet of Worms (1521) Peasants' War (1524-26) Council of Trent (1545-63) Peace of Augsburg (1555) St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572) French Wars of Religion (1559-89) Edict of Nantes (1598) Hapsburg Hegemony and Golden Age of Spain (1550-1650) Christopher Columbus sails the ocean blue (1492) Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) Opening of Potosí mines (1545) Invincible Armada sinks (1588) Thirty Years' War (1618-48) End of the war between France and Spain (1656) |

Imperialism in the Western Hemisphere

Art Dates

Renaissance, mannerism

Economic Dates

Rise of the domestic system

First enclosure movement in England

Price Revolution

Bullionism leads to mercantilism, rise of monopolies, imperialism

Dutch and English trade via East India Companies (1601)

Second Half of the Early Modern Period (1648–1789)

Political Dates and Periods

Rise of Constitutionalism

English Civil War (1642-49)

Restoration (1660-68)

Glorious Revolution (1688)

English Bill of Rights (1689)

Ancien Régime (1648–1789)

Age of Absolutism (c. 1650–1750) and the Wars of Louis XIV (1660–1714), Louis XIV (1643–1715), Peter the Great (1682–1725), Frederick William the Great Elector (1640-88), and Frederick William I (1713-40)

Art Dates

Baroque, rococo

Economic Dates

Bank of England (1694)

England and France experience “Bubbles” (1720)

England pays debt from the War of Spanish Succession while France repudiates it

The Enlightenment (c. Eighteenth Century)

Political Dates and Periods

Enlightened Despotism

Frederick the Great (1740-86)

Recovery of the Hapsburgs (Joseph II, 1780-90)

Catherine the Great (1762-96)

Economic Dates

Agricultural Revolution (“the Enlightenment comes to the farm”)

Second enclosure movement in England

More food

Population explosion

Adam Smith publishes The Wealth of Nations, the bible of capitalism (1776)

Industrial Revolution (c. 1750–1850)

Beginning of the Modern Period (1789–1871)

Political Dates and Periods

French Revolution and Age of Napoleon (1789–1815)

Age of Montesquieu: National Assembly (1789-91), Legislative Assembly (1791-92)

Age of Rousseau: National Convention (1792-95), Directory (1795-99)

Age of Voltaire

Napoleonic era: Consulate (1799–1804)

Empire (1804-15)

Congress of Vienna (1814-15)

Age of Metternich (1815-48)

Nationalism

Conservatism

July Monarchy (1830)

Second Republic (1848-52)

Age of Realpolitik (1848-71)

France has Second Empire (1852-70), Alexander II frees the serfs (1861), Italy becomes a unified kingdom (1870), Prussia becomes Germany after the Franco–Prussian War (1871)

Art Dates

Neoclassicism, romanticism (a reaction to the Industrial Revolution in England and the French Revolution on the continent), realism in art (naturalism in literature)

Economic Dates

Rise of liberalism in England; Manchester School

Utopian Socialism: Claude Saint-Simon, Robert Owen, Charles Fourier

Scientific Socialism: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels publish The Communist Manifesto (1848)

Second Part of the Modern Period (1871–1991)

Political Dates and Periods

Second Industrial Revolution (steel, oil, electricity, chemicals)

Age of Imperialism

Berlin Congress of 1878, Berlin Conference of 1884-85

Mass Politics (1871–1914)

Third Republic in France (1870–1940)

World War I (1914-18)

Russian Revolution (1917)

Interwar Period (1918-39)

Age of Anxiety

Rise of Fascism and Nazism

World War II (1939-45)

Cold War (1945-91)

Decolonization (1940s–1970s)

European Union

Marshall Plan (1948)

Treaty of Rome (1957)

Treaty of Maastricht (1991)

Fall of the Soviet Union (1991)

Art Dates

Impressionism, neoimpressionism, pointillism, cubism, expressionism, futurism, art nouveau, La Belle Époque, fin de siècle, surrealism, realism, Dada, Bauhaus, expressionism, Socialist realism, abstract expressionism, miscellaneous modernisms, theater of the absurd

Economic Dates

Beginning of social legislation and entitlements
Managed economies
Beginning of the postindustrial age