Europe's 20th century saw the emergence of forms of violence unthinkable in a world without mass politics. To better understand the changes in European states and societies that gave rise to total war and the violence associated with totalizing ideologies such as fascism and communism, we will read Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler, Fanon and others who sought to interpret violence as an extension of ideology. We will also read selections from more recent works by state leaders, historians and cultural figures from Ukraine to France, from Turkey to Norway who have reinterpreted past violence for present political ends. Case studies are drawn from the Belgian Congo, the Ottoman Empire, interwar Spain, Nazi Germany, French Algeria, revolutionary Hungary and the Soviet Union, to name a few.

This course is suitable for all majors and years; no specific prior knowledge of European history is necessary.