

Society, Politics, and Daily Life in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna

Richard Lein

February 3–14, 2025

4 ECTS

Course Description

The course covers the period from the 1860s to 1918 in the capital of the Habsburg Monarchy, Vienna. In the first part, the development of the Austro-Hungarian empire as well as the politics of the city of Vienna during this period (city expansion and improvement of infrastructure, administration of the city, political parties and their programs, etc.) are analyzed.

In the second part, the social system (dynasty, nobility, ennobled bourgeoisie, bourgeoisie, workers, and outsiders) as well as the various ethnic and religious groups living within the city of Vienna are presented and discussed.

The third part centers on exemplary aspects of everyday life in its social differentiation, such as education, housing and nutrition

Requirements: The grading is based on **participation** during class (20 %), a **short paper** (40 %) and the **written final exam** (essay type) (40 %).

Syllabus

1st week

Monday, February 3, 2025
8:30–10:30 am

Course introduction. Political and territorial structure of the Habsburg Monarchy
Reading: Taylor, The Habsburg Monarchy

Tuesday, February 4, 2025
8:30–10:30 am

Vienna becomes a metropolis. Development of territory, demography and population 1870-1918
Reading: Schorske, Fin-de-Siècle Vienna

Tuesday, February 4, 2025
2:00–4:00 pm

Excursion: Wien Museum

Wednesday, February 5, 2025
8:30–10:30 am

Excursion: Austrian parliament
Reading: Twain, Stirring times in Austria

Thursday, February 6, 2025
8:30–10:30 am

Administration and political parties in Vienna –the city in the fin-de-siècle period
Reading: Judson, The Habsburg Empire

Friday, February 7, 2025
8:30–10:30 am

The social structure of Vienna and its impact on (everyday) culture
Reading: Boyer, Austria 1867-1955

HAVE A NICE WEEKEND

2nd week

Monday, February 10, 2025
8:30–10:30 am

Vienna as a melting pot. Czechs, Jews, and other nationalities between integration and discrimination.
Reading: Bérenger, A History of the Habsburg Empire

Tuesday, February 11, 2025
8:30–10:30 am

A center of knowledge. Education and educational institutions in Vienna.
Reading: Coen, Vienna in the age of uncertainty

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 8:30–10:30 am	How to feed two million people. Food and (mal)nutrition in fin-de-siècle Vienna <i>Reading: Good, The economic rise of the Habsburg empire</i>
Thursday, February 13, 2025 8:30–10:30 am	From Schönbrunn palace to the “Brettlldorf”. Housing as a social phenomenon <i>Reading: Beller, Rethinking Vienna 1900</i>
Friday, February 14, 2024 8:30–10:30 am	Final Exam

Recommended Readings

Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria*, Cambridge 2006.
Jean Bérenger, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1700-1918*, London 1997.
John W. Boyer, *Austria 1867-1955*, Oxford 2022.
John W. Boyer, *Culture and political crisis in Vienna*, Chicago 1995.
Deborah R. Coen, *Vienna in the age of uncertainty*, Chicago 2007.
David F. Good, *The economic rise of the Habsburg empire, 1750-1914*, Berkeley 1984.
Barbara Jelavich, *Modern Austria. Empire and republic*, Cambridge 1987.
Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire. A new history*, Cambridge 2016.
Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918*, London 1974.
Nicolas Parsons, *Vienna. A cultural and literary history*, Oxford 2008.
Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna. Politics and culture*, Cambridge 1981.
J.P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918*, London 1955.

List of proposals for the final paper

Your essay should deal with one aspect of cultural life, preferably in comparison with the situation in your home country. The paper should be around two to three pages long.

Some suggestions for topics (you are of course invited to suggest a topic yourself):

Nature in the surroundings of the city
Gardens and parks
Family structure
Woman's role
Sexuality
Death and burial
Behaviors and courtesy
Clothes as a social indicator
Living and furnishings
Travel and holidays
Books and libraries
House music
Cultural life (concerts, opera, theater, balls)
Markets and their offer
Shops in Vienna
Piety