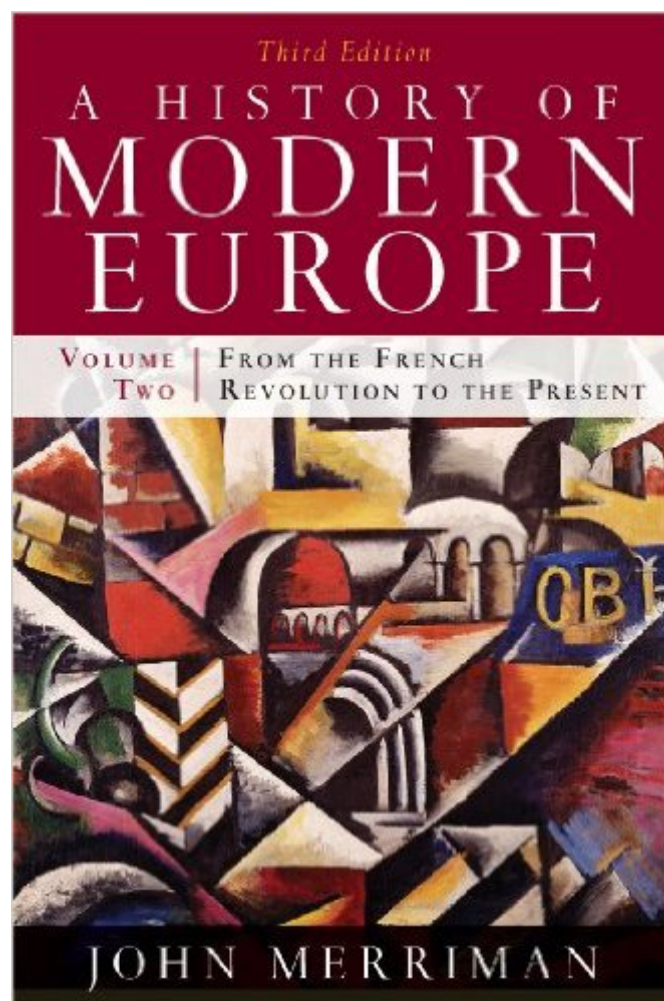


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# A History Of Modern Europe, Vol. 2: From The French Revolution To The Present, Third Edition



## Synopsis

A classic in its field, loved by instructors and students for its narrative flair, humor, authority, and comprehensive coverage. More than 100,000 copies sold! Available in both one-volume and two-volume paperback editions, *A History of Modern Europe* presents a panoramic survey of modern Europe from the Renaissance to the present day. A single author lends a unified approach and consistent style throughout, with an emphasis on the connections of events and people over time. The Third Edition, like the two before it, is authoritative and up-to-date. New to the Third Edition is the theme of empire. From the imperial rivalries between France and Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, through the rise and fall of the Ottoman Turkish empire, and on into the imperial history of the twentieth century—decolonization, the spread of the Soviet empire, and the imperial power of the United States—the theme of empire helps students find commonalities among the events of European history.

## Book Information

Series: History of Modern Europe (Book 2)

Paperback: 912 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 3rd edition (September 30, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393933857

ISBN-13: 978-0393933857

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (16 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #38,275 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #46 in [Books > History > Europe > France](#) #55 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Europe](#) #1143 in [Books > History > World](#)

## Customer Reviews

... I am giving John Merriman's *A HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE* (Vol. 2, French Revolution to Present) five stars because I think it offers a better survey of the topic than older books on the subject. While this book pretty much operates under a "big-man" theory of history, it does mention social and economic trends, along with a nod, via color plating, to changing trends in art. It would have been nicer to have more of the kind of history that doesn't fall under military/diplomatic lines, but at some point, had Merriman tried to discuss everything, we'd have left a comprehensive history

and begun a multi-volume encyclopedia! I also appreciated Merriman's well-measured and friendly prose style, which is discursive without being digressive. Contemporary political cartoons and made objects are pictured in A HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE, as well as the maps and portraits we would expect. If you can find a better comprehensive history, buy it. I myself can find none better.

Merriman, who is the author of several lucid histories on early modern France, has taken on the entire landscape of modern Europe. His treatment of industrial and imperialist developments in Western and Central Europe is especially noteworthy. (Volume I of his work covers the Renaissance to Napoleon.) I would have liked to see attention given to southern and eastern European social issues. But overall, the text is well done and well organized.

Wow. To say that this book packs a lot into one volume is an understatement. For all my fellow students at Georgetown, you will need reading glasses after finishing this book. I did learn a lot from it. One particular part of the book which has stuck with me and made a very emotional impression was the chapters on WW1 and WW2, especially the tables on the casualty counts from WW1 have haunted me ever since I read them. The numbers are mind-numbing and surreal. The photos of the firebombing at Dresden, Germany left me reeling with emotion. The burned bodies lying stacked like cordwood haunted my mind and heart for weeks, even months, after seeing the pictures. I am grateful that the authors of this book (and Georgetown University for selecting this text) do not sugar coat history. It is brutal, bloody, and deserves a proper airing so that we can take away a true appreciation of the sacrifices of the people that have come before us.

I've been using this work as the general text for an undergraduate survey course in modern European history for some time now. I've tried several others over the years for this same class and have found this one to be among the better options currently on the market for two reasons for which that I am particularly mindful. First, this is rather more affordable than many other texts at a time when prices for textbooks are going through the roof. It's been a very long time since I had to buy my own books but I haven't forgotten what a burden that can be for students. Secondly, this is not one of those general texts that has been watered down -- in reality dumbed down -- like so many others I've seen over the years. It's written on a reasonably high level, appropriate to first or second year undergraduates, which I would assume to be the target audience for the kind of classes that might employ this sort of work. It strikes a reasonable balance between a very broad treatment of the topics covered on the one hand and inclusion of too much minutia on the other. It covers all the

ground that you would expect from a general text on modern European history -- the French Revolution, industrialization, the major wars etc., while not neglecting currents in social and cultural history such as working class culture or Modernism in the arts. The author's treatment of these topics is also surprisingly nuanced and thorough on key issues as with his discussion of factors that facilitated industrialization in Britain and those that retarded it in Spain. There are a great many texts of this sort on the market these days with more appearing every year or two, but this particular one is the closest I've gotten to a "juste-milieu" that avoids problems of over-simplifications, omissions or gaps, or excessive cost.

This is the second volume of a two volume set on the history of Western Europe. After reading the first book I couldn't wait to get my hands on this one. Mr. Merriman has a way of making history come alive and relevant. I found myself making comparisons to America's present challenges to those of Europe in the 19th through 21st century. I highly recommend both volumes to anyone interested in learning where we have been and where we might be headed.

I bought Merriman's "A History of Modern Europe" as an adjunct to my studying Nineteenth European history in the Teaching Company's DVDs on the subject. I am particularly interested in the period between Bismark's unification of Germany and the beginnings of WW1. Altho the trigger on WW1 was pulled in the assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand, the national entanglements over the years preceding this set the stage for a world wide conflict - this text book surveys this period very well. I think Bismark's alliances are complex, and any text that can untangle these are a welcome source of information. If you are to have only one survey book on Modern European History this is the one.

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