

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Department of History & Art History

The European Civil War: 1900-1945
Spring 2017

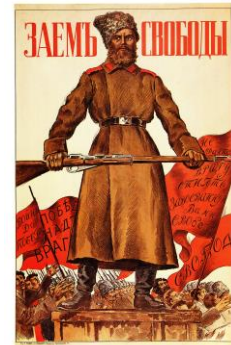
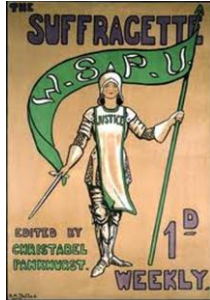
Course
HIST 635-004

Building/Hall
Research Hall

Room
402

Day
Thursdays

Time
4.30-7.10 p.m.



INSTRUCTOR:
OFFICE:
OFFICE HOURS:

TELEPHONE:
E-MAIL:

Dr Kevin Matthews
Robinson B 226 A
2.30-4.00 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, or by
appointment
703.993.1250 (History Department main number
cmathe2@gmu.edu

REQUIRED TEXT & MATERIALS:

1. Brendon, Piers. *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s*
2. Macmillan, Margaret. *Paris, 1919*
3. Overy, Richard. *Why the Allies Won*
4. Strachan, Hew. *The First World War*
5. Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style*

(**Note:** Additional readings will be supplied by the instructor to students via Blackboard & the internet.)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS (You are not required to purchase these books):

1. Beevor, Antony. *The Battle for Spain: the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (revised ed., 2006)
2. Figs, Orlando. *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924*
3. Kershaw, Ian. *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World, 1940-1941*
4. Paxton, Robert O. *The Anatomy of Fascism*

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

In 1900, the major powers of Europe dominated much of the globe. Within 45 years, much of the continent lay in ruins. Some have explained this catastrophe by arguing that Europe was convulsed by a “civil war” that began in 1914, was interrupted by a 20-year truce, and erupted again in 1939. By its end, the continent was dominated by Soviet and American armies so that, according to the historian Stephen Ambrose, “no European nation won the European Civil War”. The winners, Ambrose pointed out, “were in fact outsiders: the Russians and the Americans — most of all, the Americans”.

Others, notably, Winston Churchill described this period as a new “Thirty Years’ War”. However it is viewed, the men and women who lived through these decades witnessed one of the most tumultuous eras of human history — an era punctuated by war, revolution, economic dislocation and, finally, genocide. Yet the Europe that emerged from this “civil war”, though divided, proved to be remarkably stable. With the exception of the wars that resulted from the break up of former Yugoslavia (itself a product of World War I), Europe was free of any major conflict after 1945, until Russia’s recent belligerence against Ukraine — also a conflict that can be traced back to the upheaval of 1914-1918.

This seminar approaches these familiar events as a “civil war” waged by three competing ideologies: liberal democracy, Soviet-style communism, and fascism. Specifically, it will examine how this struggle affected the major European states: France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the United Kingdom, along with lesser powers such as Austria-Hungary and Spain. The course will first chart the causes and course of World War I (what American diplomat and historian George Kennan called “the seminal catastrophe of the 20th century”). It will then delve into the legacies of that conflict: the rise of Soviet-style communism and fascism, as well as the economic dislocations that made these violent ideologies attractive to many Europeans. After considering the “20-year truce” between 1919 and 1939, this seminar will then examine World War II as the climax of the “European Civil War”. Throughout, it will take into account the on-again, off-again influence of the United States in European affairs.

TEACHING TECHNIQUES & EXAMINATIONS:

Varied, although the emphasis will be on lectures, classroom discussions, and readings. As a starting point, discussions also will be supplemented with film presentations. Typically, I use what is called a “semi-Socratic” method of teaching. If you are prepared, your individual contributions to these discussions will lead to a more lively and interesting experience for everyone concerned. On a more prosaic level, your participation in class will benefit your final grade

You are **personally responsible** for ensuring that you know the time and date of all assignments. You are expected to take the final exam when it is given to the class; students are not allowed to take exams at a time of their choosing. Students who are permitted to take exams at the **testing center** must obtain the paperwork needed to do so **prior to** the final exam. If you fail to deliver your assignments on time or to attend the final exam without a **documented excuse** (usually medical in nature), you will **not** be **allowed** to hand in late work or take a make-up exam. You will, instead, be given a zero grade without appeal.

GRADING SCALE:

Bibliographical essay	15 percent
Research paper	30 percent
Final examination	35 percent
Classroom participation/attendance:	20 percent
Total:	<hr/> 100 percent

90-100	A - signifies remarkable, outstanding work showing complete mastery of the subject
	A+ 97 - 100
	A 93 - 96.9
	A- 90 - 92.9
80-89	B - signifies work that is above the average expectations for this course.
	B+ 87 - 89.9
	B 82 - 86.9
	B- 80 - 81.9
70-79	C - signifies work that meets average university standards.
	C+ 77 - 79.9
	C 72 - 76.9
	C- 70 - 71.9
60-69	D - signifies work that is far below average but which is passable.
59-below	F - signifies failure.

I do not grade on a curve. Nor is it possible to offer extra credit work - for any reason. Students should devote their energies to the assignments laid out in this syllabus. If a student merits an “A” that is the grade that he or she will receive. At the same time, I do not distribute grades based on some sort of percentage basis, meaning that only a certain number of students can earn an “A”, a certain number a “B”, and so forth. If every student earns an “A” that is the grade that each student will be given. That said, “A” work, as defined above, is genuinely outstanding and demonstrates complete mastery of the subject. I trust that each student will strive to meet this standard, but that is up to you.

ATTENDANCE:

Since lectures and discussions are the foundation of this seminar, **class attendance is mandatory**. Students should also be aware that they will be tested on material covered in class but which will not necessarily be found in the assigned readings - and vice versa. If a student **must** miss a class, (s)he should arrange to obtain class notes from a fellow student. Lecture notes **will not - under any circumstances - be provided** by the instructor.

It is important that each student stays ahead of the reading assignments to be prepared for class discussions. **Failure to attend class on a regular basis** will make it extremely difficult to keep abreast of the seminar as it develops and can only result in lowering the student’s final grade and, possibly, failure of the course. **Specifically**, the final course grades for students who fail to attend class on a **regular basis** (as determined by the instructor) will **drop an entire letter grade** - without exception. This is beyond the 20 percent part of your grade covered by “classroom participation/attendance”. Valid excuses for missed lectures (again, usually medical in nature) should be in **writing**; verbal explanations will not be accepted.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. You should see me about this matter immediately so that ODS can plan for the specific accommodation to assist you.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Cheating and plagiarism - **Either offense will constitute grounds for failing this course.** The university has a code governing academic ethics. Any student who is caught cheating on a quiz or exam or who plagiarizes will have his or her case sent to the Dean’s office for adjudication.

It is a **serious academic offense** to plagiarize, i.e., to present the ideas, particularly the use of direct quotes, as if they were your own. This is particularly important when writing the term paper for this course and students should take care to properly cite in footnotes work produced by others. More serious still is the **presentation of a paper which has been acquired via the internet**. Cases of this nature will be immediately submitted to the Dean’s office.

The Internet - The instructor's E-mail address is at the top of this syllabus & I will check messages on a regular basis. However, I prefer face-to-face communication. In other words, **do not abuse** the internet. If a student repeatedly sends unnecessary messages, I will simply decline to respond.

Classroom decorum - Students are expected to **show up for class on time** and, once in class, to **remain for the entire session**, except in case of emergency. Arriving late or leaving in the middle of a session is disruptive and disrespectful to your fellow students. Having said that, because this class lasts nearly three hours, there will be a break midway through each session.

Use of tape-recorders & laptop computers is permitted. However, you will be required to discontinue their use if they are disruptive to other students. Also, your use of laptop or other such devices will be banned if you use them to check social media, etc. Continued use of these devices after you have been told not to do so will result in a failing grade for this seminar - **without appeal**.

Cell phones are to be **turned off** at the beginning of each class. Failure to do so will adversely affect your course grade. Any attempt to use unauthorized devices during an examination will be grounds for failing the course. You are welcome to bring drinks to class. However, **eating** during lectures & exams is **forbidden**. Put another way — **I don't lecture in your kitchen; don't eat in my classroom**.

University resources - George Mason University offers a range of services to assist students in achieving their academic goals and you are encouraged to make use of them. Among the services that you may find beneficial are:

- * COUNSELING CENTER - 703-933-2380 <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/>
- * ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE (FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH) - 703.993.3664 http://eli.gmu.edu/gmu_comm/workshops.htm
- * WRITING CENTER - 703.993.1200 <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY & ANALYTICAL PAPER:

All students taking this course are required to write **two** papers: a **5- to 7-page** bibliographical essay, followed by an **18- to 20-page** analytical paper. Your assignment is to choose a person, policy or incident covered by this seminar and **analyze** your subject's impact or importance. As you will see from the list of suggestions below, you may investigate this question through the medium of biography.

Your analytical paper must be based on a mix of **at least** seven (7) separate sources, say, four (4) books and three (3) academic journal articles — though you may have a different mix. **NOTE:** Both papers may use the books and excerpts assigned for this seminar. But - they must be used **in addition** to the seven sources required for these assignments. Therefore, it will not necessarily be to your advantage to use the course texts. In any case, you should use them **only** if they are directly relevant to your topic.

The **bibliographical essay** is a brief summary of the sources you plan to use for your analytical paper. In some cases, this summary will include an explanation of how you believe this source will help advance the argument you intend to make in your later paper. In others you may find it necessary to refer

to one or more sources not because they advance your argument but because you plan to challenge their conclusions. You may wish to approach this assignment as a comparative book review. The aim is to get you to think about how you plan to approach the larger assignment; in other words, it should be the springboard for your **analytical paper**. To assist you, a sample bibliographical essay and comparative book review will be posted on Blackboard.

As for the **analytical paper**, it is critical that you bear in mind that it is **not** to be a simple **narrative paper**. Rather, your assignment is to **analyze** a policy, event, or particular incident by addressing questions such as: How or why did this particular policy come about; what were the ramifications of the incident being discussed; why did a particular person, or party, or other set of actors take the decision or action being analyzed? Were there other options? Were the results those expected or hoped for? Or, was the outcome unexpected, possibly even disastrous for those involved?

As well as avoiding the trap of writing a purely narrative paper, you should also be aware that this is **not** an exercise in writing counterfactual history. While your paper might consider alternatives to, say, a policy being considered, it is important that you only go so far as the evidence allows you to go when making these determinations. Put another way, your paper should **not** be an exercise in writing “what if” history.

This assignment affords a wide range of possibilities. For this reason, each student’s selection should be unlike those of his or her fellow students. At the same time, you should make sure that your topic can be examined within the 18-20 page requirement. It should not be so broad that it cannot be analyzed, but neither should it be so narrow that your paper is repetitive. For your benefit, I **require** that you **see me** during office hours, to discuss paper topic options. Your selection must then be submitted as a typed, one-page memorandum on 8" by 11" paper **no** later than **16 February**. I require **both** a hard copy and a copy sent via E-mail by that date. A sample memorandum is given here:

Paper Proposal for HIST 635/004

{STUDENT’S NAME}
{STUDENT’S E-MAIL ADDRESS}
{DATE}

Leni Riefenstahl created some of the most innovative and controversial films of the 20th century. As a woman film maker in a male dominated profession, her chances of success in this field were slim. One powerful man, however, promoted her career: Adolf Hitler. Young and in awe of the circumstances in which she found herself, Riefenstahl was at the center of the Nazi propaganda machine where she created films such as *Triumph of the Will*, *Olympia*, and *Day of Freedom - Our Armed Forces*. This paper will explore the turbulence surrounding Riefenstahl’s career to answer the following questions: What role did Riefenstahl play in promoting the Nazi regime? Should she be viewed as personally culpable in advancing Hitler’s policies? Or, can her work be considered from a purely artistic perspective?

Both the bibliographical essay and your analysis must be typed, paginated, with margins of **no more than one inch**, double-spaced and **footnoted**; other citations — e.g., endnotes, MLA style, etc. will **not be accepted**. Both assignments should also include a **complete bibliography** of all sources cited or referred to in your paper. If you use alternative citations or fail to include a bibliography, your papers will be returned to you ungraded, and your subsequent grade for the assignment will be lowered by a full letter grade. A guide on footnotes and bibliographies will be issued shortly.

I understand that students will use the **internet** to research papers. However, the use of internet sources **alone** is **insufficient** for these assignments, and I strongly **discourage** relying solely on such material. My reason for this is simple: While printed material typically passes in front of four or five pairs of eyes before it is published, material that appears on the internet is too often posted without any checking for accuracy. This occurs even on reputable sites.

For this reason, your paper should rely **mainly**, if not **exclusively**, on printed sources (e.g., books, academic articles). If you exclusively rely on internet sources, especially ones that are suspect or inaccurate, your grades will suffer accordingly. Having said that, **you are permitted** to use academic articles obtained via reputable sites such as **JSTOR**, as well as government documents, newspapers, etc.

Students may include **prints, charts**, etc., but **only** if they directly advance your argument. Nor should they be used as a substitute for your text. If you include a chart that takes up half a page, for instance, that half page will not count toward the 18-20 page requirement.

It is expected that your papers will be free of factual, spelling, and grammatical errors. For this reason, I require students to purchase and use Strunk & White's *Elements of Style*. This reliable, inexpensive guide will save you from numerous errors both now and in the future and is well worth having. Needless to say, it is the student's responsibility to submit a correct, legible copy of his or her paper. Unfortunately, some students are tempted to obtain research papers from the internet. To prevent that happening, and to protect other students who play by the rules, **I reserve the right** to ask students to **supply all notes, evidence of research, and drafts of their work** should a question of authorship arise.

As pointed out above, there are numerous topics to choose from for this assignment, some of which are listed below to use as a starting point in this process. **These suggestions are by no means complete and students are allowed - indeed, encouraged - to present alternative topics:**

The old world at sunset: 1900-1914 The Dreyfus Affair & French anti-Semitism; German *Weltpolitik* as a cause of World War I; Mensheviks v. Bolsheviks: the split of Russian Marxists; "King's Rebels": British Conservatives, Irish Home Rule, & the threat of Civil War; the rise of Europe's militant workers' movement; "Suffragists" and "Suffragettes" —the pre-war women's movement; Rasputin as a factor in the downfall of Russia's autocracy; European pre-war anti-Semitism; Viennese ultimatum: Austria-Hungary decides to smash Serbia; Plea for peace: the attempt of European socialists to prevent World War I; Russia's decision to back Serbia in the 1914 July Crisis; Germany's "blank check" to Austria & the origins of World War I; "Poor little Belgium": Britain declares war on Germany.

Armageddon: 1914-1918 “Miracle on the Marne”: Germany fails to knock out France in 1914; Stalemate: the impact of trench warfare; War on the periphery: the impact of World War I in Africa; Berlin to Baghdad: Ottoman Turkey allies itself with Germany; “Disaster at the Dardanelles”: the British empire attacks at Gallipoli; Arab Revolt & Allied war aims; Hidden genocide: the Armenian massacres; Supreme commander: Tsar Nicholas II; Rolling the dice: Germany’s decision to wage unrestricted submarine warfare; Provisional government v. the Soviets: the origins of Russia’s Civil War; “The Sealed Train” — Germany helps Lenin to return to Russia; Kerensky decides to keep Russia in the war; “July Days” — Prelude to the Bolshevik Revolution; Lenin’s coup: the October Revolution; “Over There”: the impact of America on Allied morale, 1917-1918; The German Navy rebels; False hopes? The impact of Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points on German democrats; “The man who won the war”: David Lloyd George as prime minister; “Peace too soon?” — the Allied decision to end the war in November 1918.

Ashes of war: 1919-1922 Peace by starvation: the Allied blockade of Germany after the Armistice; Rosa Luxemburg & Germany’s Spartacist rising: a revolution too soon?; Unholy alliance: Weimar & the *Freikorps*; Search for security: French aims at the Versailles Peace Conference; Bela Kun’s failed communist revolution in Hungary; Reds, Whites, & Greens — Russia’s Civil War; Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War; Thwarted desires: Italy at the Versailles Peace Conference; The “Savior”: Woodrow Wilson at Versailles; “White terror” in Hungary; Mustafa Kemal & the rise of modern Turkey; Ethnic cleansing: the expulsion of the Anatolian Greeks after World War I; Ukrainian nationalists v. the Bolsheviks; “Miracle on the Vistula”: Józef Piłsudski wins the Russo-Polish War; Fascist myth: Mussolini’s “March on Rome”.

A season of hope: 1922-1930 Lenin as capitalist: the impact of the New Economic Policy; Private diplomacy & public policy: the struggle over war debts & reparations; Ramsay MacDonald’s quest for a prosperous Europe; Weimar Germany’s struggle for stability; Erich Ludendorff & the Nazis; From empire to Commonwealth: the British empire in transition; Enabling a dictator: the rise of Josef Stalin; How “fascist” was Fascist Italy?; Sunset for the British Empire: Churchill returns Britain to the gold standard; the Vatican and the Duce; Trotsky as an “enemy of the state”; Modernizer or mass murderer: Stalin’s economic policies.

The dark valley: 1931-1939 Harvests of misery: Stalin’s Five Year Plans; Thwarting democracy: the formation of Britain’s 1931 “National Government”; Progression of hate: German anti-Semitism & the seeds of genocide; Monarchy and fascism — the Bulgarian example; “Safety First” - Stanley Baldwin & the origins of British appeasement; Austria’s 1934 civil war & the crushing of “Red Vienna”; Assassination — the murder of Engelbert Dollfus; Hungarian fascism: the rise of the Arrow Cross movement; Encouraging aggression: the League of Nations failure to stop Mussolini’s takeover of Ethiopia; Hitler’s game of bluff: the remilitarization of the Rhineland; Non-intervention”: the West & the Spanish Civil War; Guernica - portrait of an atrocity; Funding fascism: American aid to Franco, 1936-39; Fighting back: the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War; “Homage to Catalonia”: George Orwell in the Spanish Civil War; a “Catholic kind of fascism” — the origins of Croatia’s Ustasa movement; Alone — Winston Churchill’s battles appeasement; “Peace in our time”: Britain abandons Czechoslovakia, 1938; Stalin purges the Soviet military; Mission to Moscow — the Anglo-French failure to form an anti-Nazi alliance with the Soviet Union; The impact of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact; Overlooked success: the origins of the Scandinavian welfare state.

War & genocide: 1939-1945 Maginot mentality: the Allies try to re-fight World War I; “Strange Defeat”: Why France did not carry on the war in 1940; “Sea Lion”: Hitler fails to invade Britain; The lion roars: Britain destroys the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir, 1940; Collaboration at the top: Marshal Philippe Pétain & France’s Vichy regime; French resistance to Nazi occupation: fact or fantasy?; Uneasy partners: the Anglo-American alliance with the Soviet Union; Feminism at war: the mobilization of Britain’s women; Was the Allied bombing campaign of Germany justified?; FDR demands the Axis powers’ “unconditional surrender”; Allied betrayal? the Warsaw Uprising, 1944; Ignoring genocide: Could the Allies have stopped the Holocaust?; Was there a “sell out” at Yalta?; Beveridge & the creation of Britain’s welfare state; Answering the “German Question”: Allied occupation and partition.

IMPORTANT DATES & READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Week 1 23 - 27 January “The old world in sunset was fair to see”

[The world turned from a] ... *calm, innocent, measured way of living to blood and tears, to mass insanity, and to the savagery of daily, hourly, legalized, rewarded slaughter.*

- Boris Pasternak

26th - **First** meeting of HIST 635/004

Readings: Kershaw excerpt (on Blackboard); Strachan, Introduction, chp 1-2

Week 2 30 January - 3 February **Armageddon**

The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.

- Sir Edward Grey

31st - **Last day to add a course** or to **drop a course for a 100% refund**

Readings: Strachan, chp 3-6

Week 3 6 - 10 February **Toward exhaustion: The “Great War” ends**

If any question why we died / Tell them, because our fathers lied.

- Rudyard Kipling

Readings: Strachan, chp 7, 8 (omit sections on Russia: pp. 238-242, 260-265), 9-10; Brendon, Introduction, chp 1

Week 4 13 - 17 February **A new world order: the Treaty of Versailles**

They think they have got peace, when all they have got is a twenty-year truce.

- Attributed to French Field Marshal Ferdinand Foch

16th - **Last day** to submit an analytical paper proposal

Readings: Macmillan, chp 1-5, 7, 9-22, 30, Conclusion; (the following chapters are recommended but not required reading): chp 8, 23-29

Week 5 20 - 24 February **Red menace - Russia under Lenin & Stalin**

The dictatorship of the Communist Party is maintained by recourse to every form of violence.

- Leon Trotsky

Readings: Strachan, chp 8 (sections on Russia: pp. 238-242, 260-265); Macmillan, chp 6; Brendon, chp 10, 19

Week 6 27 February - 2 March **“Il Duce!” - Explaining fascism**

He is the greatest figure of our age. Mussolini ... will dominate the 20th century as Napoleon dominated the early 19th.

- Lord Rothermere

Readings: ; Brendon, chp 2, 6

Week 7 5 - 9 March **The challenge of the Great Depression**

[Asked if there was any historical parallel to the Great Depression:] *Yes. It was called the Dark Ages, and it lasted 400 years.*

- John Maynard Keynes

Readings: Brendon, chp 3, 4, 8, 11; (9 - recommended)

Week 8 12 - 16 March **Spring Break - no classes**

Week 9 19 - 23 March **Hitler's triumph: The Nazis in power**

This was but a prelude; where books are burnt, humans will be burnt in the end.
- Heinrich Heine

22nd - **Last day** to submit a **bibliographical essay**

Readings: ; Brendon, chp 5, 12

Week 10 26 - 30 March **France in despair**

No government can remain stable in an unstable society and an unstable world.
- Léon Blum

Readings: Brendon, chp 7, 14

Week 11 2 - 6 April **"Guilty men" - the origins of appeasement**

As the clever hopes expire / Of a low, dishonest decade.
- W.H. Auden

Readings: ; Brendon, chp 13, 17, 20–24; (18, 25 - recommended)

Week 12 9 - 13 April **Civil War in Spain**

It was in Spain that men learned that one can be right and yet be beaten, that force can defeat spirit, that there are times when courage is not its own reward. It is this, no doubt, which explains why so many men, the world over, feel the Spanish drama as a personal tragedy.
- Albert Camus

Readings: Brendon, chp 15-16, 26

Week 13 16 - 20 April

Triumph of evil: the early years of World War II

Never give in.— never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.

- Winston Churchill

Readings: Brendon, Conclusion; Overy, Preface, Author's Note, chp 1-3

Week 14 23 - 27 April

A “close-run thing”: Victory in Europe

The refusal of the British and Russian peoples to accept what appeared to be inevitable defeat was the great factor in the salvage of our civilization.

- US General George C. Marshall

26th - **Last day** to submit an **analytical paper** (NOTE: Papers may be submitted earlier than this date - but **no papers will be accepted after this date for any reason whatsoever.**)

Readings: Overy, chp 4-9

Week 15 30 April - 4 May

End? No, beginning ...

You make progress slowly. And nothing is won forever unless you fight for it.

- Ruth Davidow, American nurse in the Spanish Civil War

3rd - **Last** session for HIST 635/004

Readings: Overy, chp 10, Epilogue; Judt excerpt (on Blackboard)

Week 16 8 - 17 May

Final exam period 4.30 p.m. - 7.15 p.m.

8 - 9 Reading Days

11th - Final exam for HIST 635/004

PLEASE NOTE: ALL DATES AND ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO SLIGHT MODIFICATION DEPENDING UPON UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES.