

Humanities 2588: Nazism and German Society, 1914–1945

Fall 2018
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30–5:50pm
Rm 2407

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Course Description

This course surveys German history from 1914 to 1945, with a focus on the rise, rule, and destruction of National Socialism. Topics to be covered include the First World War, the Weimar Republic, the emergence of the National Socialist movement, consent and coercion in the Third Reich, the racial state, Hitler's leadership, the Second World War, and the Holocaust. In addition to mastering historical concepts and narratives, students will sharpen their abilities to read sources and write analytical essays. One class meeting a week will consist of a lecture, while the second class meeting will be devoted to stimulating in-class discussion of assigned primary and secondary sources. The class discussions will prepare students for completing two writings assignments that engage synthetically with the course readings. The ultimate goal of the course is to encourage students to reflect on some general themes with broader resonance beyond the historical parameters of Nazi Germany: the nature of consent and coercion in authoritarian regimes, the consequences of prejudice in modern societies, and the role of "ordinary people" in enabling terror and atrocities. It does not presuppose any prior background in German or European history.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Master the concepts and narratives necessary for understanding the history of Nazi Germany.
2. Be able to read and discuss challenging historical texts with an eye towards argument and evidence.
3. Write analytically about textual sources, frame a thesis statement, and marshal evidence to make a point.

Assessments

1. Participation (attendance and participation in group activities): 15%
 - Attendance is mandatory and will be checked randomly at 10 intervals during the course of the semester. For each absence without a legitimate excuse (e.g. illness, etc.), 1% of course grade will be subtracted. After add/drop period has ended, students will be assigned to small groups to facilitate in-class discussion. All students are required to meet with the course instructor after receiving their graded midterm paper. The purpose of the meeting is to review the comments and discuss strategies for improvement. Failure to attend this meeting will lead to a loss of 5% of course grade.

2. Midterm examination (**Oct. 11**): 20%
 - Multiple-choice and short answer questions covering the lectures and assigned readings.
3. Mid-term paper (due **Oct. 23**): 20%
 - 7 pp. analytical paper based on assigned readings; topic announced in advance
4. Final paper (due **Dec. 7**): 25%
 - 7 pp. analytical paper based on assigned readings; topic announced in advance
5. Final examination (**date TBA**): 20%
 - Multiple-choice and short answer questions covering the lectures and assigned readings.

Assigned Texts

1. All readings are available as PDFs from the course Canvas website. I highly encourage you to print out the readings so that you can annotate them and study them carefully. Swiping through long texts on a computer screen, tablet, or phone is not conducive to careful reading or remembering.
2. There are on average 60 pp. of reading per week. One class meeting per week is devoted to the discussion of the reading; the day on which it will be discussed is indicated on the syllabus. Please complete this reading before that date and be prepared to discuss it in class. The midterm and final examinations will test your comprehension of this reading. The midterm and final papers will ask you to analyze and synthesize the readings to write an argumentative essay.

Expectations

1. If you are forced to miss an exam or paper deadline due to illness or other emergency, you must provide a doctor's note or equivalent; otherwise a make-up test or extension cannot be arranged. Make-ups will not be arranged to accommodate travel or tourism. Without a legitimate excuse, late papers will be docked 5 points (out of a total 100) per day they are late.
2. The internet is a wonderful resource; it contains an endless amount of information. Some of it is accurate. Much of it is dubious. A lot is plain wrong. Most of it will be *irrelevant* for the purposes of this class. Looking things up on the web can be at most a supplement to—but not a substitute for—attending the lectures and doing the readings.
3. Once the paper topics are announced, we will discuss proper practices for academic citation, quotation, and paraphrasing. You are not expected to do any outside reading for either the exams or the papers, which test your understanding of the assigned readings and your ability to interpret and synthesize them. Any additional sources that you consult for the papers must be acknowledged in the form of footnotes.
4. All examinations are closed book. This course enforces a zero-tolerance policy on cheating and plagiarism. If a student is found to have cheated on an exam or committed plagiarism on a paper, the case will be immediately referred to the head of the Humanities Division for further investigation.

Course Outline and Schedule

Week 1:

Sept. 4: Introduction and orientation

Sept. 6: The First World War as “seminal catastrophe”

Week 2:

Sept. 11: Hitler in Vienna and Munich

Sept. 13: Hitler’s world-view

- Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Mariner, 1998), pp. 131–44, 288–329, 659–64, 679–81.

Week 3:

Sept. 18: The Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazi Party

Sept. 20: Who were the early-adopters of National Socialism?

- Theodore Abel, *Why Hitler Came Into Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 1–9, 203–301.

Week 4:

Sept. 25: **No class**

Sept. 27: Experiencing the rise of National Socialism at the grass roots

- William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town 1922–1945*, rev. ed. (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), pp. xii–xix, 4–68.

Week 5:

Oct. 2: Hitler’s ascension to power

Oct. 4: The successes and limits of Nazi electioneering

- Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, 70–147.

Week 6:

Oct. 9: The establishment of the Nazi dictatorship [**No class; recorded lecture**]

Oct. 11: **Midterm Examination**

Week 7:

Oct. 16: The Nazi “coordination” of Germany

Oct. 18: The seizure of power at the local level

- Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, pp. 152–200.

Week 8:

Oct. 23: The racial state [**Midterm Paper Due**]

Oct. 25: Collaboration and resistance

- Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, pp. 202–48.

Week 9:

Oct. 30: Economy and society in the Third Reich

Nov. 1: Enthusiasm and collusion

- Allen, *The Seizure of Power*, pp. 250–303.

Week 10:

Nov. 6: Life under surveillance

- Robert Gellately, "Surveillance and Disobedience: Aspects of the Political Policing of Nazi Germany," in *The Third Reich: The Essential Readings*, ed. Christian Leitz (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 181–203.

Nov. 8: Foreign policy, 1933–1939

Week 11:

Nov. 13: Hitler as charismatic leader

- Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 83–147.

Nov. 15: The Second World War, 1939–1941

Week 12:

Nov. 20: Operation Barbarossa

- Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth,'* pp. 169–99.

Nov. 22: The Holocaust

Week 13:

Nov. 27: "Ordinary men" and the persecution of the Jews

- Ian Kershaw, "The Persecution of the Jews and German Popular Opinion in the Third Reich," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 26, no. 1 (1981): 261–89.
- Victor Klemperer, "The Klemperer Diaries," *New Yorker*, April 27–May 4, 1998, 120–135.
- Christopher Browning, "One Day in Józefów: Initiation to Mass Murder," in *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 169–183.

Nov. 29: The defeat of Nazi Germany

Dec. 7: **Final Paper Due**