

# THE ORIGINS OF NAZISM



**Prof. Anne Berg**

**M/W 12-1pm**

## **History 1280: Course Description**

Where did the Nazis come from? Was the Weimar Republic bound to fail? Did the Treaty of Versailles or the Great Depression catapult the Nazis into power? What was the role of racism, of antisemitism? How did the regime consolidate itself? What was the role of ordinary people? How do we explain the Holocaust and what kind of a war was the Second World War?

Grappling with these and more questions, the first half of the course focuses on Germany's first democracy, the Weimar Republic and its vibrant political culture. In the second half, we study the Nazi regime, how it consolidated its power and remade society based on the concepts of race and struggle. Discussions of *race* and *race-making* are crucial throughout the course. In the name of "racial purity," the Nazi state moved ruthlessly against Germany's Jewish population and cleansed German society of all "undesirable" elements. These ideas and practices didn't originate with the Nazis and they didn't operate in a geopolitical vacuum. Thinking about Nazi racism and genocide, their origins and trajectories, in both its particular specifics and in a larger global historical context is the main goal of this course.

**Please note that this syllabus is subject to change**

**Weekly preparation**

- reading: secondary and primary sources
- occasionally there will be recorded lectures to free up time for more interactive class activities
- required canvas quizzes on lectures and readings

**Weekly sessions (Monday/Wednesday)**

- We will meet twice a week as a large group for lecture+
- You will meet once for recitation with your TA

**Assignments**

- Participation 20%
- 4 canvas quizzes 20%
- 4 in-class journaling sessions (2 Weimar, 2 Nazi period) 40%
- unessay 20%

**Required Reading**

We will read the following books:

- Hans Fallada, *Little Man, What Now?* (online)
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996) (online)
- Hans Erich Nossack, *The End. Hamburg 1943*, translation and foreword by Joel Agee (University of Chicago Press paperback) (online)
- Robert G. Moeller, *The Nazi State and German Society. A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009)
- Eric Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise & Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018)
- Alan Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship: A History of Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023)

All other required texts (articles and primary sources) will be available on canvas.

**Contingencies & Accommodations**

Please be sure to communicate with your instructor as early and as forthrightly as you can, if you cannot attend class or require accommodations.

**Office hours**

Monday 1:30-2:30pm and by appointment.

# Schedule

**Wednesday Aug 30 Introduction**

Readings: none

## WEEK 2

**Monday Sep 4 No Class Labor Day**

**Wednesday Sep 6 Total War and Its Consequences**

Readings:

- Matthew Stibbe, "The War from Below," in Stibbe *Germany 1914-1933*, pp. 38-59

## WEEK 3

**Monday Sep 11 The Crisis of Defeat and Revolutionary Visions**

Readings:

- Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, pp. 189-208
- Ernst Simmel, "War Neuroses and 'Psychic Trauma,' (1918) in: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 7-8

**Wednesday Sep 13 Revolution to Republic**

Readings:

- Speech by Philipp Scheidemann, November 9, 1918
- "Spartacus Manifesto" (1918) and Heinrich Mann, "The Meaning and Idea of Revolution," in: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 37-40
- "What Is Dadaism and What Does It Want in Germany?" in: *Between Worlds. A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930*, p. 318
- Weitz, *Weimar*, Ch1

## WEEK 4

**Monday Sept 18 Trauma of War and the Price of Peace**

Readings:

- "The Constitution of the Weimar Republic" (1919) in: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 46-51
- "The Treaty of Versailles. The Reparation Clauses" (1919); "Speech of the German Delegation," (1919); and Ernst Troeltsch, "The Dogma of Guilt," (1919) in: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 8-15
- Weitz, *Weimar*, Ch3

**Wednesday Sep 20 Forging Compromises**

Readings:

- Paul von Hindenburg, "Stab in the Back" (1919) and Willi Wolfradt, "The Stab-in-the-Back Legend?" in: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 15-18
- Emil J. Gumbel, "Four Years of Political Murder" (1922) in: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 100-04
- Weitz, *Weimar*, Ch4

WEEK 5

**Monday      Sep 25      From Hyperinflation to the Politics of Stabilization**

Readings:

- "Das Tagebuch: On the Occupation of the Ruhr and Friedrich Kroner, "Overwrought Nerves" in: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 62-64
- Hans Ostwald, "A Moral History of the Inflation," in: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 77-78
- Hans Fallada, *Little Man, What Now?* pp.1-100
- Weitz, *Weimar*, Ch 2

**Wednesday      Sep 27      The Rise of National Socialism**

Readings:

- "The Party Program" and "The Beer Hall Putsch and Hitler's Trial," *Inside Hitler's Germany*, pp. 72-78
- Adolf Hitler "Mein Kampf" in *Sources in European History*, 155-158
- Robert Moeller, ed., *The Nazi State and German Society*, pp. 3-7, 29-31, 35-38
- Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship*, Intro and Ch1

WEEK 6

**Monday      Oct 2      Weimar Modernity**

Readings:

- Weimar Republic Source Book: Raoul Haussmann, "The German Philistine Gets Upset" pp. 482-483, Richard Huelsenbeck, "Dada Tours" pp.486-487, Ivan Goll, "The Negroes are Conquering Europe" pp. 559-560
- Continue Fallada, *Little Man, What Now?* pp.103-200
- Weitz, *Weimar*, Ch 6&7

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**Wednesday      Oct 4      Modern Mass Culture**

Readings:

- Elsa Herrmann, "This is the New Woman" (1929) in: Moeller, *The Nazi State and Society*, pp. 33-35.
- Thomas Wehring, "Berlin is Becoming a Whore," 1920, *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 721-23
- Weitz, *Weimar*, Ch 5&8

## WEEK 7

### **Monday      Oct 9              Economic Crisis and Dissolution of the Republic**

#### Readings:

- Albert Speer, "On Joining the Nazi Movement in 1931," in: Moeller, *The Nazi State and Society*, pp. 45-47
- John Heartfield, "Adolf the Superman: Swallows Gold and Spouts Tin," 1932 in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 51-52
- Finish Fallada, *Little Man, What Now?* pp. 200-325.

### **Wednesday      Oct 11              The Police State**

- Weitz, *Weimar*, Ch 9 & 10

Film Screening: *M* (Lang, 1931)

## WEEK 8

### **Monday      Oct 16              The Nazi Seizure of Power**

#### Readings:

- Melita Maschmann, "A German Teenager's Response to the Nazi Takeover in January 1933," in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 47-49
- New York Times, "Germany Ventures. January 31, 1933," in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 49-51
- Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship*, Ch2

Readings: none

### **Wednesday      Oct 18              Gleichschaltung and the Consolidation of Power**

#### Readings:

- Kershaw, "The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in The Third Reich," 197-215
- Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship*, Ch3

## WEEK 9

### **Monday                      Oct 23              The Volksgemeinschaft: Negotiating Consent**

#### Readings:

- Sax and Kuntz, "The Realities of 'Strength through Joy,'" pp. 297-301
- Sax and Kuntz, "The Four Year Plan," pp. 290-3
- Klaus Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul, "Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent? Gestapo, Society and Resistance," in: David F. Crew, *Nazism and German Society*, pp. 166-96
- Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship*, Ch4

**Wednesday    Oct 25                    The Racial State**

Readings:

- "Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring;" "Reports on the Introduction of Anti-Semitic Laws, 1935;" "Jewish Life after the Nazi Seizure of Power in 1933" and "Growing up Jewish in 1930s Germany," Documents 26, 30-32 in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 88-90, 97-105
- Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship*, Ch 5 and 6

WEEK 10

**Monday                    Oct 30                    Women, Family and Volk**

Readings:

- Hitler's "Speech to the National Socialist Women's Organization 1934;" "Healthy Parents-Healthy Children" Poster; "On the League of German Girls;" "Himmler "On the Question of Homosexuality," Documents 22-24, 28 in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 79-86, 93-95

**Wednesday    Nov 1                    The Politics of Entertainment**

Readings:

- Goebbels: "Tasks of the Ministry for Propaganda;" Shirer's "Description of the Nazi Party Rally;" Hitler's "Opening Address at the House of German Art;" "Degenerate Music" Brochure; and "A Jewish Teenager Remembers the 1936 Berlin Olympics," Documents 13-14, 17-18, 25 in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 57-61, 65-69, 86-88.

WEEK 11

**Monday                    Nov 6                    Race and Culture: Visions for War**

Readings:

- Sax and Kuntz, "Art and National Education," 234-237
- Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship*, Ch 7

**Wednesday    Nov 8                    Appeasement and the Invasion of Poland**

Readings:

- David Buffum, "Report on Kristallnacht;" Hitler's "Speech before the Reichstag Sept. 1, 1939;" "On the Re-Germanization of Lost German Blood;" "A German Colonizer of Poland;" Documents 34-36 in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 105-115

WEEK 12

**Monday                    Nov 13                    Hitler's Gamble and the Successes of Blitzkrieg**

Readings:

- Karl Fuchs, "A German Soldier's Letters from France, 1940"
- Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship* Ch 8 and 9

**Wednesday Nov 15 War of Extermination**

*Guidelines for Unessay handed out*

Readings:

- von Reichenau, "Conduct of Troops in Eastern Territories, 1941;" Karl Fuchs, "A German Soldier's Letters from the Eastern Front, 1941;" and "Total War: Cover Illustration," Documents 37-40 in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 115-126
- Sax and Kuntz, "Himmler and the SS," 367-379
- Hans Erich Nossack, *The End. Hamburg 1943*

WEEK 13

**Monday Nov 20 Race and Space**

Readings:

- Christopher Browning, "One Day in Josefow: Initiation to Mass Murder," in David F. Crew, *Nazism and German Society*, pp. 300-15
- Grabe, "Description of a Mass Execution of Jews in Ukraine in 1942;" Himmler, "Speech to SS Officers, 1943;" Glick, "Jewish Partisan Song;" Kluger, "A Young Girl's 'Lucky Accident;'" Levy-Hass, "The Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp;" Documents 45-46, 48-50 in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 135-38, 148-159

**Wednesday Nov 22 Friday Schedule**

*A Film Unfinished*

WEEK 14

**Monday Nov 27 Holocaust**

Readings:

- Rudolf Hoess, "Commandant of Auschwitz" in *Sources in European History*, 230-1
- Primo Levi, 1-100

**Wednesday Nov 29 Holocaust**

Readings:

- Primo Levi, 101-173

WEEK 15

**Monday      Dec 4      Endgame and Collapse**

Readings:

- Ricken, "Life under the Bombs, 1943;" Maschmann, "The Mobilization of Youth in the Winter of 1945;" Currivan, "Report on a Visit to a Nazi Concentration Camp;" Hitler, "My Political Testament," Documents 41, 56-59 in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, pp. 126-28, 174-83 War and Everyday Life
- Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship*, Ch 10

**Wednesday      Dec 6      Occupation and the Legacies of War**

- Grossmann, Atina. "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers." *October* 72 (1995): 42-63.
- Gerold Frank "The Tragedy of the DPs," *Sources of European History*, 268-270
- Steinweis, *People's Dictatorship*, Conclusion

WEEK 16

**Monday      Dec 11      History Lessons?**

**Due: Unessay 5:00PM**