

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, cleansed German society of all "undesirable" elements, and waged a brutal war of extermination that aimed to racially reorder all of Europe. Thinking about Nazi racism and genocide, their origins and trajectories, in both its particular specifics and in a larger 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 25%
- 3 canvas quizzes 15%
- Midterm 15%
- 3 in-class journaling sessions (2 Weimar, 2 Nazi period) 30%
- Final 15%

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)
- Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*

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

Contingencies & Accommodations

Please be sure to communicate with the teaching team 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.

Participation

Participating in class discussion is an essential part of learning. You are expected to contribute regular, thoughtful comments that reflect completion of the assigned readings and engagement with the material. Active participation will be an important component of your overall grade. Your comments may also draw upon your reading of the week's news or other material, as long as you can make clear the relationship of such material to the topic at hand. Feel free to raise questions about anything in the

reading that you didn't understand: such questions are also a valuable way of advancing the discussion. Note that attendance, while essential, is not equivalent to participation.

Reading

Note: in any given week, there may be more reading listed for one day than the other. You should check in advance and plan your time accordingly. We are reading materials from different disciplines.

Note-Taking and Questions.

You are expected to take notes during lectures, on field trips and as you read. Your notes are to capture the main argument or contribution of each text or presentation, help you remember important details, record your own reaction to the text or presentation (did you find the argument convincing? why? why not?) and help you understand the main basis of the evidence that arguments are based on. Please bring your notes to class. We will occasionally review notes or conduct activities that ask you to consult your notes.

Always also write down questions, There are different types of questions and they are all important. Basic I-didn't-understand-this-questions ensure that you get the explanations that help you grasp the material. Factual questions provide ask for more, better or related evidence about the details presented. Conceptual questions engage with the arguments presented, question the reasoning or evidence and allow you to formulate an original response to arguments encountered.

Formal Assessment

Three times over the course of the semester, you will respond to short prompts in three in-class journaling sessions that will focus on a source or a specific them or development.

Canvas quizzes test factual and conceptual knowledge, which you can then mobilize when writing your mid term and final essays.

The midterm and final essays give you the opportunity to to grapple with the thematic of the course in more depth. You will engage with a questions and formulate an argument based on the readings of the class. These essays should be carefully composed, analytical and evidence based. You should use these essays to deepen your engagement with class readings. Outside sources are not permitted. **The use of AI is not permitted.**

Schedule

Wednesday Aug 28 Introduction

Readings: none

WEEK 2

Monday Sep 2 No Class Labor Day

Wednesday Sep 4 Total War and Its Consequences

Readings:

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

WEEK 3

Monday Sep 9 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 11 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 16 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 18 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

Journaling session

WEEK 5

Monday Sep 23 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

Quiz

Wednesday Sep 25 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

WEEK 6

Monday Sep 30 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 2 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 7 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 9 The Police State

- Weitz, *Weimar*, Ch 9 & 10

Film Screening: *M* (Lang, 1931)

Midterm

WEEK 8

Monday Oct 14 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

Wednesday Oct 16 Gleichschaltung and the Consolidation of Power

Readings:

- Kershaw, "The Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in The Third Reich," 197-215

WEEK 9

Monday Oct 21 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

Wednesday Oct 23 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
- Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, pp. 1-53, 76-108

Quiz

WEEK 10

Monday Oct 28 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

Journaling Session

Wednesday Oct 30 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.
- Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, chap. 2, pp. 108-42

WEEK 11

Monday Nov 4 Race and Culture: Visions for War

Readings:

- Sax and Kuntz, “Art and National Education,” 234-237

Wednesday Nov 6 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
- Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, chap. 3, pp. 143-86

WEEK 12

Monday Nov 11 Hitler's Gamble and the Successes of Blitzkrieg

Readings:

- Karl Fuchs, "A German Soldier's Letters from France, 1940"
- Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, chap. 4, pp. 225-266

Wednesday Nov 13 War of Extermination

Guidelines for Final 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 18 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
- Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, chap. 4, pp. 266-307

Wednesday Nov 20 Holocaust

Readings:

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

A Film Unfinished

WEEK 14

Monday Nov 25 Holocaust

Readings:

- Primo Levi, 101-173

Journaling Session

Wednesday Nov 27 Friday Schedule

WEEK 15

Monday Dec 2 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

Quiz

Wednesday Dec 4 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

WEEK 16

Monday Dec 9 History Lessons?

Due: Final 5:00PM