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21H.447 Nazi Germany and the Holocaust
Fall 2004

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21H.447
Spring, 2007
TR 9:00-10:30

Instructor: **David Ciarlo**

HISTORY OF NAZI GERMANY AND THE HOLOCAUST

Description:

The rise and fall of National Socialism is one of the most intensely-studied topics in European history. Nevertheless, after more than half a century, popular views of Nazism in the media and among the public remain very simplistic, and driven by equal parts fascination and horror. Adolf Hitler, for instance, is often portrayed as an evil genius of supernatural ability; while the Nazi state is similarly imagined to have held absolute power over every aspect of its subjects' lives. Such characterizations allow ordinary Germans to be portrayed as helpless victims of Nazism, ensnared or coerced into submission by forces beyond their control. Another popular characterization sees German culture itself as fundamentally flawed—that all Germans were basically Nazis at heart. This schema conveniently erases the manifestations of fascism in other Western nations, and allows Americans and other Westerners to reassure themselves that the horrors of Nazism could never emerge in their own enlightened national cultures.

In fact, most of the myths about Nazism can be traced directly back to images that the National Socialists themselves carefully constructed in their rise to power. (And post-1945 political concerns, like the need for a "new" Germany to distance itself from the crimes of the Nazi regime, or Cold War propaganda—reiterated these myths.) This class will peel away at the image of Nazism by investigating the rise of National Socialism as a political, social, and cultural phenomenon, and by placing its development firmly within the larger framework of German history.

About a third of the class will address the perpetration of the Holocaust, the nadir of Western civilization. We will grapple with the roots of the Holocaust in ideology, culture, prejudice, and even in some of the most mundane practices of modern life. One of the central aims for this course is to think about whether Nazism, and the crimes that it perpetrated, were part-and-parcel of what we think of as "modernity," or were a horrific deviation from it.

Requirements:

There will be an in-class, closed-book final exam.

In addition, there will be three 5-6 page papers: due **March 8, Apr. 10 and May. 10**

I want to emphasize here that the discussion of readings in class will be a significant part of this class. Participation in discussions will count for 20% of the final grade.

Papers: 20%, 20%, 20% respectively

Discussion: 20%

Final Exam: 20 %

Please note: plagiarism of any kind—that is taking another's words and/or ideas from a book, another student, or from the internet without full and complete citation—will not be tolerated regardless of the circumstances, and will result in an "F" for the final class grade.

Books for purchase:

Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale*

William S. Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

Wolfgang Benz *A Concise History of the Third Reich* (2006)

Longer articles, essays, and sources available on the course Website:

Ernst Jünger, *Storms of Steel* (excerpt)

Erich Maria Remarque, *All's Quiet on the Western Front* (excerpt)

Joachim Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich* (excerpts)

Nancy Nenno, "Femininity, the Primitive, and Modern Urban Space: Josephine Baker"

Ian Kershaw, *The "Hitler Myth"*

Detlev Peukert "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science"

On Reserve at Hayden Library: Each of the books for purchase (above), and also:

Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (DD221.E93 2003)

Class Outline

Week 1:

Feb. 6 (Tues.): Introduction to class and requirements: what is "fascism?" what is "nazism"?
(note: start reading Helmut Smith's "The Butcher's Tale" right away)

Feb. 8 (Thurs.): Imperial Germany and the Origins of the First World War
Discussion: short excerpt from Friedrich Fabri, *Does Germany Need Colonies?*

Week 2:

Feb. 13 (Tues.): Discussion: Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale* (216 pp.)

Feb. 15 (Thurs.): Total War, Total Defeat (?)
Read: Jünger, Remarque, letters from the front & home front

Week 3:

Feb. 20 (Tues.): NO CLASS (follow Monday schedule instead)

Feb. 22 (Thurs.): Revolution on the Left, and the Weimar Constitution
Read: Documents from the Weimar Sourcebook

Week 4:

Feb. 27 (Tues.): Reaction on the Right: Paramilitary Politics, the Treaty of Versailles, the Great Inflation of 1923, and the Beer Hall Putsch

Read: Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich*, 1-26 (Hitler); Kershaw *Hitler Myth*, pp. 14-24
On Hugo Stinnes & other documents from Weimar Sourcebook (see the course website)
Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, "The Third Reich" (1923)
Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (excerpt, 1927)

March 1 (Thurs.): The "Golden Years"

Weimar Culture I: Art and the Avant-Garde (Visual Presentation)

Week 5:

March 6 (Tues.) Weimar Culture II: The New Woman

Discussion: Gunter Berghaus, "Girlkultur: Feminism, Americanism, and Popular Entertainment in Weimar Germany" *Journal of Design History* (1988)

Nancy Nenno, "Feminity, the Primitive, and Modern Urban Space: Josephine Baker in Berlin"
Other documents from the *Weimar Republic Sourcebook* on the course website

March 8 (Thurs.) Film: "Metropolis" (1927) or perhaps "Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1920)

***5-6 page paper due Thursday, March 8**

Week 6:

March 13 (Tues.) The Rise of the National Socialists

March 15 (Thurs.) Discussion: William S. Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, 4-147

Week 7:

March 20 (Tues.) The Great Depression and the Polarization of Politics

Handout: Political Parties of Weimar
Benz, 20-48

March 22 (Thurs.) The Nazi Seizure of Power and *Gleichschaltung*

Read: Benz, 49-59

***Spring Break* (no class march 27 or March 29)**

Week 8:

Apr. 3 (Tues.) Discussion: Allen, *Nazi Seizure of Power*, pp. 152-279

Apr. 5 (Thurs.) National Socialist Propaganda and Aesthetics:

Excerpts from Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia*
Benz, 60-82; Fest, 83-97 (Goebbels)

Week 9:

Apr. 10 (Tues.) The Racial State I

Discussion: The films of Leni Riefenstahl
Read: Nuremberg Laws (September 1935)

***5-6 page paper due Thursday, Apr. 10**

Apr. 12 (Thurs.) Discussion: Detlev Peukert "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science"

Film excerpt from *Die Ewige Jüde*

Week 10:

Apr. 17 (Tues.) NO CLASS (Patriot's Day)

Apr. 19 (Thurs.) The Racial State II: The Rise of the SS State
Benz, 83-154

Week 11:

Apr. 24 (Tues.) Outbreak of the Second World War
Benz, 155-189

Apr. 26 (Thurs.) The Course of the War, and the Eastern Front
Begin reading Browning, *Ordinary Men*
Benz, 190-212

Week 12:

May 1 (Tues.) Origins of the "Final Solution" and the Machinery of Mass Murder
Benz, 213-233

Discussion:

Hitler's speech, & Anti-Semitic propaganda from 1941

Excerpt of Minutes of the Wannsee Conference (1942)

May 3 (Thurs.) Discussion: Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*
Fest, 276-287 (Höss)

Week 13:

May 8 (Tues.) Discussion: Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

May 10 (Thurs.) The Defeat of Germany and "*Götterdämmerung*"
Benz, 234-257

***5-6 page paper due**

Week 14:

May 15 (Tues.) "Zero Hour" and Denazification

Nazism in Myth and Memory in a Divided Germany

Discussion: Allen, 294-303; Benz, 269-281

May 17 (Thurs.) Film: *Germany Year Zero* (1947, 78 min.)

<or> *Somewhere in Berlin (Irgendwo in Berlin)* (1946, DEFA), 79 min.

Final Exam Week is May 21-25