

HISTORY 410: HISTORY OF MODERN GERMANY, 1870 TO THE PRESENT



Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, 1930



Potsdamer Platz, 1973, showing the Berlin Wall

Course Information

Instructor: Prof. Brandon Bloch

Semester: Spring 2021

Meeting Times: Tues. & Thurs. 1-2:15 p.m. (online)

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Office Hours: Wed. 1-3 p.m. (online)

Credits: 3

Course Description

This course surveys the turbulent history of modern Germany, Europe's dominant political power and the fourth largest economy in the world today. Beginning with the formation of the German nation-state in 1871, we will examine Germany in its many guises: the empire whose global ambitions helped spark World War I; the fledgling democracy of the interwar Weimar Republic; the Nazi dictatorship that laid ruin to Europe; the divided nation of the Cold War; and the bedrock of today's European Union. Throughout the course, we will consider what made

Germans' experience of modernity distinct, but also how German history reflects wider political, social, and economic forces that have transformed the modern world.

Three core themes will guide our journey. First, we will situate Germany in the wider world, asking how Germans shaped global patterns of trade, immigration, and warfare, and how German society has in turn been shaped by new waves of immigration from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Second, we will pay special attention to the experiences of women, Catholics, Jews, workers, immigrants, and Black Germans, exploring what histories of diverse and marginalized groups reveal about the transformations of dictatorship and democracy. Finally, we will ask what German history can tell us about the sources of solidarity, reconciliation, and political responsibility, questions that remain relevant in our own time. How did a country that orchestrated the murder of six million Jews and millions of other victims during the Second World War attempt to come to terms with its past and make restitution for its crimes?

This course does not presume any prior knowledge of the subject matter or experience in history courses. (History majors are, of course, welcome!) The premise is that history is not simply a static collection of facts but an evolving process of debate and interpretation. You will be introduced to the skills of historical analysis: reading critically, interpreting primary sources, evaluating competing arguments, and presenting your ideas in clear and compelling prose. Writing assignments build in complexity over the semester, and we will devote class time to practicing the skills you will need to succeed in these assignments. The purpose of the course is as much to introduce you to central themes of modern German history as to help you become a better reader, writer, communicator, and thinker.

Learning Goals

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Evaluate primary sources to answer questions about authorship, perspective, audience, context, and credibility
- Identify the major turning points in German history since 1871, as well as continuities across these ruptures
- Assess the significance of technological transformation, colonialism, immigration, war, economic crisis, and foreign occupation as agents of change in modern German history
- Analyze how first-person accounts of historical events by non-elites complicate narratives of high politics
- Conduct research in an online database to develop a historical argument based on primary sources

Course Books

Inge Deutschkron, *Outcast: A Jewish Girl in Wartime Berlin*, trans. Jean Steinberg (Lexington, MA: Plunkett Lake Press, 2017) [1978]. ISBN: 9780961469658.

Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*, trans. Oliver Pretzel (New York: Picador, 2002) [1939]. ISBN: 9781842126608.

You can purchase these book at the University Book Store or online. Unfortunately, the library does not have access to e-books, though print copies are available through the library or UBorrow. All other course readings are available online as pdf documents.

Course Requirements

*Further details on the assignments, including expectations, guidelines, and rubrics, are available on Canvas.

1. Class Participation (20%)

This class will include lecture, discussion, and small group work, and your attendance and active participation are expected in all components of the course. The most productive discussions happen when classmates engage respectfully and constructively with one another's ideas, and I will structure discussions and small group activities to facilitate this dialogue. Remember that the quality of your contributions to discussions is as important as the quantity, and that asking a well-informed question counts as participation. I recognize that participation may come more easily to some than others, and I am happy to meet if you would like to discuss strategies for speaking up in class. Short in-class writing exercises will also count toward your participation grade.

2. Two Response Papers (10%)

You will be asked to write two response papers of approximately 600 words (2 pages, double-spaced) on primary source readings. The first is due by Feb. 9, the second on March 9. Your response papers should not attempt to address every aspect of the readings, but should instead advance an argument in response to a specific question. Reading questions will be distributed in advance (though you are free to develop your own question as well).

3. Take-home midterm exam, due March 2 (20%)

The midterm will focus on material from through the First World War (lecture on Feb. 23). The exam is divided into two parts. In the first part (approx. 400 words), you will choose one short text or image, from a list of options, that we did not cover in class. Your response should address the purpose for which the text or image was produced, using clues from the source itself as well as your wider knowledge of the period. The second part is an essay of about 1000-1200 words that draws on the readings to address a prompt related to the course themes. You may consult the course materials and your notes, but collaboration with other students is not permitted. We will discuss the midterm further in the week before the exam.

4. Primary source essay, due April 1 (20%)

At the end of the second unit (“The Age of Catastrophe, 1914-1945”), you will be asked to submit an essay of approximately 5 (double-spaced) pages addressing our primary source readings on the Nazi era. Questions will be distributed two weeks in advance.

5. Final paper, due TBD during finals week (30%)

The final assignment is a paper of 6-8 (double-spaced) pages on a topic related to our third unit, covering the period from 1945 through the present. I will provide a list of topics to choose from, though you are welcome to write on a different topic if you prefer. For your chosen topic, you will be asked to find three primary sources in the online collection German History in Documents and Images (<http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/home.cfm>); one of these sources may be an image. Your essay should make an argument based on these sources, placing them in conversation with material from the lectures and one or two additional secondary readings that I will provide. We will discuss this paper further when we begin the third unit. You will be expected to select your topic by April 8; a one-paragraph description of your paper and a bibliography of three primary sources is due on April 15; and an analysis of one primary source (1-2 pages) is due on April 22. The preliminary assignments will count for 5% of your course grade, and the final paper for 25%.

Grading Scale

A: 93-100

AB: 88-92

B: 83-87

BC: 78-82

C: 70-77

D: 60-69

F: Below 60

Credit Hours

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit, or 9 hours per week). This includes regularly scheduled meeting times, reading, writing, group work, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus. Since each 75-minute meeting counts for 1.5 class hours (for a total of 3 class hours per week), you should plan to allot an average of 6 hours per week outside of class for course-related activities. The workload in particular weeks may amount to somewhat more or less, but assignment deadlines are designed to help you balance the work over the course of the semester.

Attendance

Given the extraordinary circumstances of this semester, I understand the importance of a flexible attendance policy. There will be no penalty for missing class due to illness or a family emergency; but do let me know in advance if you won't be present. If you need to miss a class, I will work with you to find alternative ways for you to fulfill the course learning goals (for instance, uploading PowerPoint slides and lecture notes to Canvas, meeting during alternative times, or using the Discussion Board to complete in-class exercises). I will not require additional "make-up" work, beyond the regular assignments, for excused absences. If you find that the stresses of COVID-19 are making it difficult for you to engage fully in the course, please let me know as soon as possible and we can arrange a time to talk. I am committed to ensuring a continuity of learning during these challenging times.

Late Work

The pandemic also requires a more flexible approach to late work. If you are unable to meet an assigned deadline due to illness, family obligations, or because pandemic-related circumstances have put you behind in this or other courses, please let me know as soon as possible and we can work out a plan for you to get caught up. In cases of repeated, unexcused late work, I reserve the right to apply a deduction to late assignments out of fairness to other class members. Typically this deduction will be 3 points (out of 100) per day late.

Please note that I am not able to accept any written work for this course after Friday, May 7, the final day of the exam period. Incomplete grades can only be granted to students who are unable to complete the final paper due to "illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond their control." For the university policy, see: <https://registrar.wisc.edu/incompletes/>.

Academic Integrity

The exchange of ideas is at the core of academic inquiry, and you are welcome to discuss the course material with your classmates (except the midterm exam). However, all work that you submit for a grade should reflect your own thinking and writing, and adhere to proper citation practices in the discipline of history. Passing off another person's words or ideas as your own is not only unfair to your peers; it is also theft of the author's intellectual work, shutting out their voice from the academic conversation.

In my experience, violations of academic integrity tend to have two causes: either a) lack of awareness about citation standards, or b) procrastination, followed by panic. I have designed the course to mitigate against both of these factors. We will have ongoing discussions about appropriate citation practices; if you're unsure in a particular case, don't hesitate to ask. I have also implemented scaffolding in the assignment due dates and a flexible policy on late work. If you are worried about not finishing an assignment as a deadline approaches, please email me! We can always work out solutions to help improve your organization, and it's much better to accept a late penalty (or turn in less than perfect work) than to cheat. If you plagiarize (and be assured that I will catch it—it's really not difficult), then I have to deal with the case as a disciplinary infraction rather than a learning opportunity. Serious academic misconduct must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards.¹

Accessibility

I am committed to ensuring that all students receive equal access to the course materials and equitable opportunities to achieve the course learning goals. If you experience or anticipate any challenges related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. I am happy to explore a range of options for removing barriers to your learning. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may also wish to work with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>) to discuss accessibility in this and other courses, including possibilities for official accommodations. All communications regarding accessibility will remain confidential.

¹ I have developed these thoughts on academic dishonesty with reference to: Kevin Gannon, "How to Create a Syllabus: Advice Guide," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, accessed July 14, 2020, <https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/advice-syllabus>.

A Note on Sources

Studying history involves discussion of complex themes including race, empire, gender, sexuality, class, religion, and national identity, among others. In class discussions, it is crucial that we remain respectful of one another's viewpoints and the wide range of backgrounds and experiences represented in the classroom. During the first class meetings, we will establish collective discussion norms that will guide us over the semester. In general, if you disagree with a classmate (and debate and disagreement are encouraged!), then be sure to direct your comments at the idea, not the person. It is often helpful to summarize a peer's idea before disagreeing, to ensure you have really understood it. Please do not hesitate to meet with me if you have concerns about particular aspects of the course content.

Additional Resources

UW-Madison and the History Department make available a wide range of resources to foster your academic success and personal wellbeing. It's a good idea to familiarize (or re-familiarize) yourself with the following, especially in light of the uncertainties we face this semester:

Writing Center

<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

Offers individual consultations, workshops, and online guides on all aspects of academic writing.

History Lab

<http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>

A resource center for undergraduates in history courses staffed by experienced graduate students, who are available to assist you with researching and writing history papers. You can sign up online for an individual consultation at any stage of the writing process.

Greater University Tutoring Services

<https://guts.wisc.edu/>

Study skills support and peer tutoring across academic subjects (now offered online).

McBurney Disability Resource Center

<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>

The McBurney Center has also compiled a helpful FAQ on accessibility in response to COVID-19:

<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/resources/faq-for-virtual-learning-and-accessibility-covid-19/>

Mental Health Services

<https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>

Resources on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

UW-Madison is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment and offers a variety of resources for students impacted by sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. The Dean of Students Office has compiled a comprehensive guide to resources on and off campus, including both confidential resources and options for reporting: <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/report-an-issue/sexual-assault-dating-and-domestic-violence/>.

Course Schedule

Assignments are due by the beginning of class on the date listed, unless otherwise indicated. Guidelines and rubrics for all assignments are available on Canvas (under the Assignments tab, as well as in the relevant Modules). Assignments should be uploaded (as .doc, .docx, or .pdf files) to Canvas.

All readings, except for Sebastian Haffner’s *Defying Hitler* and Inge Deutschkron’s *Outcast*, are available as pdf documents on Canvas. See the Modules tab for week-by-week links to readings and assignments.

DATE/THEME	READING	ASSIGNMENT
Jan. 26: Course Introduction		– Complete the Course Orientation Module
Jan. 28: Where was “Germany” before 1870?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ernst Moritz Arndt, “The German Fatherland” (1813) – Gustav von Struve, “Motion in the German Pre-Parliament” (1848) 	
UNIT I: RISE AND FALL OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE: 1870-1914		
Feb. 2: German Unification: The Paradoxes of Liberal Nationalism		
Feb. 4: Making an Imperial Nation-State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National Liberal Party, Founding Program (1867) – Social Democratic Workers’ Party, Eisenach Program (1869) – Association of German Catholics, Founding Manifesto (1872) – Hedwig Dohm, “Women’s Right to Vote” (1876) 	

Feb. 9: The Second Industrial Revolution		– Response paper #1 (due Feb. 2 or Feb. 9)
Feb. 11: German Colonialism: Race, Imperialism, and Colonial Genocides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Friedrich Fabri, “Does Germany Need Colonies?” (1879) – Bismarck on “Pragmatic” Colonization (1884) – Society for German Colonization, Founding Manifesto (1884) – Rosa Luxemburg, “Does Germany Need Colonies?” (1899) 	
Feb. 16: The Rise of “Mass Politics”: Socialism, Antisemitism, Pan-Germanism		
Feb. 18: Germany and the Origins of the First World War	– Helmut Walser Smith, “Konitz 1900: Ritual Murder and Antisemitic Violence” (2003)	
UNIT II: THE AGE OF CATASTROPHE: 1914-1945		
Feb. 23: The Great War: Trench Warfare, Occupations, and the Home Front	– Belinda J. Davis, <i>Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin</i> (2000), intro, chs. 4-5	– Take-home midterm distributed
Feb. 25: Making a Postwar Order: Revolution, Reform, Reaction		

March 2: Stabilization and its Discontents		– Take-home midterm due
March 4: Weimar Culture and the “New Woman”	– WATCH: Josef von Sternberg, dir., <i>The Blue Angel</i>	
March 9: The Fall of Weimar and Rise of the Nazis		– Response paper #2
March 11: Making the Nazi “Racial State”	– Sebastian Haffner, <i>Defying Hitler</i> , pp. 3-94	
March 16: Nazi Foreign Policy and the Origins of WWII		
March 18: Consent, Coercion, and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany	– Haffner, <i>Defying Hitler</i> , pp. 97-178 – Inge Deutschkron, <i>Outcast</i> , pp. 5-43	– Questions for primary source essay distributed
March 23: The Nazi Empire: Collaboration, Puppet States, Resistance		

March 25: Holocaust and Genocide in East and West	– Deutschkron, <i>Outcast</i> , pp. 44-153	
UNIT III: FROM POSTWAR TO POST-WALL: 1945-Present		
March 30: German Defeat and Allied Occupation		
April 1: Stabilization in West Germany	– Konrad Adenauer, “Christian Civilization at Stake” (1955) – Maria Weber, “Women in the DGB” (1960)	– Primary source essay due
April 6: Consent and Coercion in East Germany		
April 8: Two Germanies and the Global “Sixties”	– Rudi Dutschke, Interview with <i>Der Spiegel</i> (1967) – Ulrike Meinhof, “From Protest to Resistance” (1968)	– Topic selection for final paper
April 13: Social Movements Across the Iron Curtain		
April 15: The Emergence of “Multicultural” West Germany	– Heide Fehrenbach, “Black Occupation Children and the Devolution of the Nazi Racial State” (2009) – Helga Emde, “An ‘Occupation Baby’ in Postwar Germany” and Astrid Berger, “Aren’t You Glad You Can Stay Here?” in <i>Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out</i> (1986)	– One-paragraph description and bibliography of three primary sources for final paper

April 20: The East German Revolution and the Fall of Communism		
April 22: Challenges of Reunification		– Analysis of one primary source for final paper
April 27: Memory Wars: National Identities in Post-Reunification Germany		
April 29: Conclusion: Whither Germany Today?		

FINAL PAPER DUE DURING FINALS WEEK [MAY 2-7]