Course Title

Comparative Modern Societies: Politics and Society in 20th Century German History

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Course Number
HIST-UA.9133D01; POL-UA.9133D01; SOC-UA.9133D01

Lecturer Contact Information
Dr. Sasha Disko
sasha.disko@nyu.edu

Course Details
Thursdays, 3:00pm to 5:45pm

Location
Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class. Please double check whether your class takes place at the Academic Center (BLAC) or at St. Agnes (SNTA).

Prerequisites
none

Units earned
4

Course Description
The history of Germany in the twentieth century offers rich material to explore various approaches to organizing modern society. Beginning with Imperial Germany in 1900 and moving forward to today’s reunited Germany, we will look at the different ways in which the relationship between the state and the individual, and the relationship among politics, economy, and society have developed over five different political systems. We will interrogate how these institutional arrangements were envisioned and structured and how they were experienced in everyday negotiations. In this course, principle narratives and events will be situated in a European and global context, allowing us to place the concept of German modernity in a comparative framework. Lectures will provide an overview of Germany in the twentieth century; readings and in-class discussions and debates will explore different approaches to analyzing German history and society. During museum visits and walking tours, we will analyze contestations over the various attempts to integrate – both in concerted efforts
to memorialize as well as to forget and erase – Germany’s oft-problematic pasts within the narrative of Germany’s present.

Course Objective
The aim of this course is for students to gain a better understanding of “modernity” through exploring different approaches to German history. Students will engage with a variety of sources, from literature to social theory, music and film, advertising, art, architecture, and political pamphlets and news media. In doing so, students will learn to pay close attention to the economic, social and political contexts in which sources were produced. Students will hone their analytic skills through role-playing and discussions and will practice clearly and concisely articulating arguments and analyses in written assignments.

Assessment Components

Class Participation, counting 15% of the total grade, includes one mandatory session of office hours, to be held in Week 9.

4 Reading Response Papers between 750-1250 words, counting 25% of the total grade. Your response should not be a simple summary of the readings, but should instead identify ideas and arguments in the readings and address issues that surprised, perplexed or inspired you. You should use a combination of required and recommended readings to back up your observations. Try to synthesize the ideas you got from the readings into your own argument. Prompts, which should be reviewed prior to reading the texts, will be posted in the “Assignments” area on NYU Classes. The prompts are only there to get you thinking about the issues at stake. You should not attempt to answer all the questions raised in the prompts.

You should upload your response papers as a Word document. You must upload your response to the NYU classes page. The first response is due by Session 3 (20 Sep 2018), the second response by Session 6 (11 Oct. 2018), the third response by Session 10 (15 Nov 2018) and the fourth response by Session 14 (13 Dec 2018).

I will accept drafts to review by the Tuesday morning at 10 am before the due date of the assignment, for example, if you would like comments back on a draft of Response Paper 1, you need to send me a draft by email by 10 am on Tuesday 18 October 2018. You are not required to send drafts of any assignment.

If you turn in more than 4 Response Papers, I will drop the lowest grade/s. Extra response papers are your ONLY opportunity to improve your grade beyond excelling at the regular assignments and participating actively. Additional response papers must be submitted by the day of the final exam, 20 Dec 2018, to be taken into consideration.

8 Response Questions on issues raised in the readings, counting 10% of the total grade. You must email me a question by 9 am of the day of class, posing a question about the readings or the topic we will be discussing in class that day. I will incorporate your questions into the discussions. You may choose in which weeks you would like to submit questions, but to receive full credit you must submit at least 8 response questions.

1 Exhibit Response (at least 2 paragraphs), counting 5% of the grade. This response should address issues raised during your visit to the Deutsches Technikmuseum
exhibit on 40 years of Germans in outer space. Your short response should incorporate your observations on the exhibit and refer to at least one of the readings assigned for the week. Due 29. Nov 2018

One Take-Home Midterm, counting 30% of the total grade. The midterm is divided into two sections. Section 1: Identifications: Identify a term, event, or person and Section 2: Two short (750-1000 word) essays. The midterm is due on Thursday, 18 Oct 2018 at 3:00pm. You should upload your midterm as a Word document.

One Take-Home Final Exam, counting 15% of total grade, consisting of 3 IDs (identify images and relate the images to relevant terms, events, and persons). Please submit your printed final exam in class on 20 Dec 2018 at 10:00 am.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments

Required Text(s)

All required reading is on NYU classes. Most recommended texts are available through the Bobst system in journal databases or as e-books through the Bobst Ebook Central system, or are in the Reading Room on the second floor of the Academic Center.

Electronic Resources (via NYU Classes / NYU Library)

One copy of each book is kept in the Reading Room of NYU Berlin’s Academic Center, for you to read in the center but not to take out.

NYU Berlin Library Catalogue or follow the link on NYU Berlin’s website (Academics/Facilities & Services).

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)


Internet Research Guidelines

To be discussed in class

Additional Required Equipment

None.
Session 1 – 06 Sep 2018  
Germany’s Political, Social, and Cultural History – A Compass for Understanding German society today?

Introductions, Syllabus Review, Keywords/Concepts

Session 2 – 13 Sep 2018  
Imperial Germany in the World – Visit to German Historical Museum, Meet at AC

Required Reading:


* Bernhard von Bülow on Germany's "Place in the Sun" (1897) (GHI-German History Document)


Recommended Reading:


* Lora Wildenthal, “Race, Gender and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire,” in Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler (eds.) Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World, University of California (Berkeley: 1997), 263-283.


* Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903)


Session 3 – 20 Sep 2018 (First Response Paper Due)
The First World War and Its Aftermath

Required Reading


Recommended Reading/Viewing


Mark Mazower, “Empires, Nations, Minorities” in *Dark Continent*, 40-76.

* Film – *All Quiet on the Western Front* – Lewis Milestone (dir.), screenplay based on the novel by Eric Maria Remarque – 1930.

Session 4 – 27 Sep 2018
“Berlin Modernity”: Social and Cultural Transformations in the “Roaring Twenties”

Presentation and discussion of group work on museum artifact.

Required Reading:


* Elsa Herrmann, “This is the New Woman” (1928); Stefan Zweig, “The Monotonization of the World” (1925); Friedrich von Gottl-Ottlilienfeld, “Fordism”; Curt Morek, “We Will Show You Berlin” (1930); Fritz Wildung, “Sport is the Will to Culture” (1926); Ernst Priess, “Physical

*The Frankfurt Kitchen* – Documentary Film – To watch in class:

Recommended Reading/Viewing


* Eric Weitz, “Walking the City,” in *Weimar Germany; Promise and Tragedy*, 40-79.


* Film – *Menschen am Sonntag* (People on Sunday) – Billy Wilder (dir.) – 1930

* Film – *Metropolis* – Fritz Lang (dir.) – 1927.

**Session 5 – 4 Oct 2018**

“Berlin Modernity” - The Political Body and World Economic Crisis

Required Reading:


* Minutes of the Reichstag, Debates on § 218, 1922-1930

* Film – *Kuhle Wampe* (or To Whom Does the World Belong?) – Slatan Dudow (dir.)/ Bertolt Brecht (screenplay) – 1932 (In class excerpts)

Recommended reading/viewing


* Eric Weitz, “Bodies and Sex,” in *Weimar Germany; Promise and Tragedy*, 297-330.


* Mark Mazower, “The Crisis of Capitalism,” in *Dark Continent*, 106-139

Film – Mädchen in Uniform – Leontine Sagan (dir) – 1931

Session 6 – 11 Oct 2018 – Last day to turn in Response Paper 2
“Everyday Life” in Nazi Germany

Required Reading:


* Wolfgang Benz, “Exclusion as a Stage in Persecution, The Jewish Situation in Germany 1933-1941,” in David Bankier and Israel Gutman (ed.), Nazi Europe and the Final Solution, Yad Vashem (Jerusalem: 2003), 40-52.


* Film – Triumph of the Will – Leni Riefenstahl (dir.) – 1935 (In class excerpts)

Recommended Reading/Viewing:


Session 7 – 18 Oct 2018
* Take-Home Midterm Due at 3 pm, Thursday 18 Oct 2018
Hitler’s Empire: World War II and The Holocaust

Required Reading:


* Gudrun Schwarz, “‘During Total War, We Girls Want to Be Where We Can Really Accomplish Something’; What Women Do in Wartime,” in Omer Bartov, Atina Grossmann and Mary Nolan (eds.), * Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century*, New Books (New York: 2002), 123-137.

* Primary Sources from the Holocaust Reader: Heinrich Himmler, Otto Ohlendorf, and Etty Hillesum

Recommended Reading:


25 Oct 2018: NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Session 8 – 1 Nov 2018
Postwar Arrangements: Two Germanys and Two Superpowers
** EXCURSION – Meet at S-Bahn Station “Treptower Park” at 3:30 pm

Required Reading:


* Instructions for British Servicemen in Germany 1944. (Excerpts)

* Heinrich Böll, “My Expensive Leg”; “When the War was Over”; in *The Stories of Heinrich Böll*, Translated by Leila Vennewitz, 1986: 31-33; 582-596.

Recommended Reading/Viewing:

Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 205-212.


Film – Murderers Among Us – Wolfgang Staude (dir.) – 1946

Session 9 – 8 Nov 2018
Economic “Miracles” – Building Socialism in the East and Building Social Consensus in the West

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading/Viewing:


Mary Fulbrook, A Concise History of Germany, 212-243.


Mary Nolan, “Culture Wars,” in The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890-2010, 230-266.

Film – Berlin, Schönhauser Corner – Gerhard Klein (dir.) – 1961

Film – Die Halbstarken – Georg Tressler (dir.) – 1956
Film – *One, Two, Three* – Billy Wilder (dir.) – 1961

**Session 10 – 15 Nov 2018 – Last Day to turn in Response Paper 3**

**Questioning Society: Before and Beyond 1968**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading/Viewing**


Film – *Die Legende von Paul and Paula* – Heiner Carow (dir.) – 1972

* Film – *Marianne and Juliane (Die bleierne Zeit)* – Margarethe von Trotta (dir.) – 1981 (available on Youtube)

**Session 11 – 22 Nov 2018**

**40 years of Germans in Space**

Group or individual visit to Special Exhibit "Zwei Staaten, elf Raumfahrer, einhundert Objekte" at the Deutsches Technikmuseum, Trebinnerstraße 9
Required Reading


Recommended Reading:


**Session 12 – 29 Nov 2018 – Outerspace Exhibit Response Due**

Social Shifts: Stagnation and Mobility


Recommended Reading/Viewing:


Film – *Short Sharp Shock* (dir. Fatih Akin), 1998
Session 13 – 06 Dec 2018
“Berlin Modernity: Politics of Dissent”
** Walking Tour: Kreuzberg – Meet at Kotbusser Tor inside Bistro “Südblock” (Admiralstraße 1-2)
Required Reading:


Tobias Morowski, *Making Room: Cultural Production in Occupied Spaces*.


Recommended Reading/Viewing:


* Film – Wir sind jung, wir sind stark – Burhan Qurbani (dir.) – Martin Benke (screenwriter) – 2014.

Session 14 – 13 Dec 2018– Last day to turn in Response Paper 4
“Berlin Modernity”: Challenges of the Young Berlin Republic

Required Reading


Film – Die Leere Mitte – Hito Steyerl (dir.) – 1998 (in class excerpts)

Recommended Reading


**Session 15 – 20 Dec 2018–10am-12:45pm (Note different class time)**
**Take Home Final Due (Printed)!!**
**Who are “the Germans” at the Beginning of the 21st Century?**

Turn in Final Exam
Wrap-up debate

**Classroom Etiquette**
**No cell phone use, no online social networking.** Please be in class on time. Habitual tardiness will negatively affect your participation grade.

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**
Berlin has many museums and just walking around Berlin is often like being in a living museum that is always changing. If you would like tips on interesting sites to visit, please let me know.

**Your Instructor**
Not untypical of many Americans, I moved around a lot in my life. I went to school on both coasts, finishing a BA in History and German Studies at UC Santa Cruz and completing a Ph.D. in Modern European History at NYU in 2008. I later held a postdoc and taught at the TU Berlin in the Urban Studies Department and have taught at NYU Berlin since Spring 2014. I recently worked as researcher at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and as a freelance scholar on a project for the VW-Auto-Uni Institute for Work and Human Resources (IFAP) in Wolfsburg on a history of the assembly line in automotive production. My monograph, *The Devil's Wheels* (Berghahn Books, 2016) is an economic, social and cultural history of the practice of motorcycling during the Weimar Republic. It explores shifts in constructions of gender through the lens of consumption and technology. I currently live in Hamburg and have a “day job” as an archivist/historian at the local gas company. My hobbies are reading, writing, playing the piano and the guitarlele, dancing, drawing, painting, and, especially in the autumn, hunting for wild mushrooms in the forest.
Academic Policies

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in their work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and their work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

Grade B: The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

Grade C: The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

Grade D: The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

Grade F: The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

Grade Conversion

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A = 94-100 or 4.0
A- = 90-93 or 3.7
B+ = 87-89 or 3.3
B = 84-86 or 3.0
B- = 80-83 or 2.7
C+ = 77-79 or 2.3
C = 74-76 or 2.0
C- = 70-73 or 1.7
D+ = 67-69 or 1.3
D = 65-66 or 1.0
F = below 65 or 0

Attendance Policy

Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in courses that meet only once per week. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or NYU Berlin's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Academics Office, who will inform your professors. Doctor's notes need to be from a local doctor and carry a signature and a stamp. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially, please approach NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor.
Unexcused absences affect students' grades: In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week's worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Three unexcused absences in one content course and five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Please note that for classes involving a field trip, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive in time at the announced meeting point.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Academics Office; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

**Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays**

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#).

**Late Submission of Work**

(1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

(2) Late work should be submitted in person to the lecturer or to the Academics Office, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

(3) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays) following the submission date receives an F.

(5) End of semester essays must be submitted on time.
(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

**Provisions for Students with Disabilities**
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website for further information.

**Plagiarism Policy**
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles.

NYU Berlin takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary of NYU Global's academic policies.