Course Title

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

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

Spring 2020

Syllabus last updated on: [10-12-2019]

Lecturer Contact Information
Dr. Björn Hofmeister

Course Details

Class meeting: Thursdays, 3:30pm to 6:15pm

Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class. Please double check whether your class takes place at the Academic Center (BLAC – Schönhauser Allee 36, 10435 Berlin) or at St. Agnes (SNTA – Alexandrinenstraße 118–121, 10969 Berlin).

Prerequisites
None

Units earned
4

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce undergraduate students to the major events and principal problems in German history in the twentieth century. Through lectures, readings, and discussions, the weekly classes will familiarize students with the conceptual narratives and methodological interpretations of twentieth century German history. Germany’s path to nation-building in 1871, the challenges of modernization in Imperial Germany, Weimar’s struggle between liberal-democratic and conservative-authoritarian forces, Germany’s politics in the two world wars in 1914/18 and 1939/45, and the construction of two Germanys after 1945 will be contextualized within the broader frameworks of European development. Political, social, and cultural turning points will be discussed alongside key events in European history, such as diplomatic conflict prior to 1914, the crisis of democracy in Interwar-Europe, the rise of Fascism, the Second World War, the Cold War, the protest movements of 1968, Eastern
European Dissident Movements and the final collapse of communism in 1989, as well as the current challenges in European politics.

Course Objective
The course will present an introduction to political, social, and cultural developments in 20th century-German history and use the study of German history to develop skills in the discipline of historical analysis.

Assessment Components
Students enrolled in this class should 1) attend all class meetings; 2) participate actively in the class discussions; 3) submit a short response paper (due in class 6); 4) take a mid-term exam (in class 7); 5) submit a short book review (due in class 13); 6) give a 15-20 minute presentation in one of the classes (topic to be discussed with the professor); 7) take a final exam (in class 15)

  Class Participation: counting 10% of total grade
  One Presentation in Class: one presentation of 15-20 minutes (respective session TBA) counting 10% of total grade
  One Response Paper: 5 pages (in session 6) counting 15% of total grade
  Mid-Term Exam: 80-minute written exam (in session 7) counting 25% of total grade
  One Essay Book Review: 5 pages (due in session 13) counting 15% of total grade
  Final Exam: 80-minute written exam (in session 15) counting 25% of total grade

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)
Electronic Resources (via NYU Classes / NYU Library)


Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic. The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993 [1987]) (No need to purchase this book; your professor will provide you with a used loan copy. Please be aware that these books may contain markings from previous students. You may of course always purchase your own copy.)

Wolfgang Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2006) (No need to purchase this book; your professor will provide you with a used loan copy. Please be aware that these books may contain markings from previous students. You may of course always purchase your own copy.)

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

**Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)**


**Internet Research Guidelines**

As an internet gateway to important documents, maps, and pictures of German history from 1500 to 2000 please consult:

GERMAN HISTORY IN DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES

“German History in Documents and Images (GHDI) is a comprehensive collection of primary source materials documenting Germany's political, social, and cultural history from 1500 to the present. It comprises original German texts, all of which are accompanied by new English
translations, and a wide range of visual imagery. The materials are presented in ten sections, which have been compiled by leading scholars. All of the materials can be used free of charge for teaching, research, and related purposes; the site is strictly intended for individual, non-commercial use.

German History in Documents and Images (GHDI) comprises ten sections, each of which addresses a discrete period in Germany's history. Each section has been compiled by one or two leading scholars and includes:

- an introduction to key developments in Germany’s social, political, and cultural history during the period;
- a selection of primary source documents (in German and English) originating from the period;
- a selection of images originating from or relating to the period;
- a selection of relevant maps.

Each section addresses the following subjects: Government and Administration; Parties and Organizations; Military and War; Economy and Labor; Nature and Environment; Gender, Family, and Generations; Region, City, and Countryside; Religion; Literature, Art, and Music; Elite and Popular Cultures; and Science and Education.

All of the materials can be accessed through keyword and author searches. Advanced options also allow searches to be limited and refined.

Many of the documents included in this project are difficult to locate in print publications, especially outside of Germany. All of the German-language documents included in GHDI are accompanied by contemporary English translations, almost all of which were commissioned for the project. GHDI also offers new access to a range of historically significant visual images, many of which will be unfamiliar to viewers.”

http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/

**Additional Required Equipment**

None

**Session 1 – 6 Feb 2020**

**Introduction: Before the Nation State: Antagonism, Wars, and Revolutions in German Central Europe 1700-1871**

Supplemental texts:


**Session 2 – 13 Feb 2020**

**Nation-Building, Empire, and Conflict: Imperial Germany, 1871-1914**


- Friedrich Fabri: Does Germany Need Colonies? (1879)

**Supplemental texts (not required readings):**

James Retallack, Introduction, in James Retallack (Ed.), *Imperial Germany, 1871-1918* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 1-17


**Session 3 – 20 Feb 2020**

**The End of the 19th Century: The First World War, 1914-1918**


Wolfgang U. Eckart, “The Most Extensive Experiment that the Imagination Can Conceive”: War, Emotional Stress, and German Medicine, 1914-1918, in Roger Chickering/Stig Förster (Eds), *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 133-149

- Soldiers Describe Combat III: Hans Stegemann (1914)

**Supplemental texts (not required readings):**


**Session 4 – 27 Feb 2020**

**Post-War I: Weimar Democracy and Its Challenges**


- Adolf Hitler on the November Revolution (1925)

**Supplemental texts (not required readings):**

Anthony McElligott, Political Culture, in Idem (Ed.): Weimar Germany (Oxford: OUP 2009), 26-49

Session 5 – 5 Mar 2020
Post-War I: Weimar Culture and Its Challenges


DOCUMENTS (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/):
- Hannes Meyer: The New World (1926)

Supplemental texts (not required readings):

Bernhard Fulda, Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009), 13-44


The response paper is due at the beginning of session 6 on 12 March 2020.

The response paper is designed to engage students in a critical assessment of the normative concepts of democracy and civil society in the historical context of Weimar politics as a specific case study.


Session 6 – 12 Mar 2020
National Socialism, Racism, and Opposition (Field Trip to the Topography of Terror Site)

- Topography of Terror Exhibition:
  Dokumentationszentrum Topographie des Terrors
  Niederkirchner Straße 8
  10963 Berlin
tel.: 030-254509-50
  http://www.topographie.de/

Wolfgang Benz, A Concise History of the Third Reich (Berkeley/Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press, 2006), 113-154 and 234-249

Supplemental texts (not required readings):


Session 7 – 19 Mar 2020
Midterm Exam

26 Mar 2020 Spring/Fall Break – No Class

Session 8 – 2 Apr 2020
National Socialism and the Propaganda of “Volksgemeinschaft”

The response paper is due at the beginning of class.

Wolfgang Benz, A Concise History of the Third Reich (Berkeley/Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press, 2006), 20-112

Jill Stephensen, Inclusion: Building the National Community in Propaganda and Practice, in Jane Caplan (Ed.), Nazi Germany (New York/Oxford 2008), 99-121

DOCUMENTS (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/):

- Program of the German Workers Party (1920)

Supplemental texts (not required readings):


Session 9 – 9 Apr 2020
The Second World War, the Holocaust, and 1945 (Field Trip to Museum Karlshorst) TBA

- Museum Karlshorst:

**DOCUMENTS (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/):**

- Joseph Goebbels’ Speech: Total War (1943)

**Supplemental texts (not required readings):**


**Session 10 – 16 Apr 2020**

**Post-War: Defeat, Occupation, and Division**


**DOCUMENTS (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/):**

- OMGUS Survey: National Socialism (1945-1947)
- OMGUS Survey: Choice between National Socialism and Communism (1946-1949)

**Supplemental texts (not required readings):**


**Session 11 – 23 Apr 2020**

(Re-)Constructing West Germany. Politics, Society, and Culture in the FDR 1945/49-
1980s

Mary Fulbrook, *History of Germany 1918-2014: The Divided Nation* (Chichester, Wiley, 2015), 164-199

Mary Fulbrook, Overcoming the Past in Practice? Trials and Tribulations, in Idem, *German National identity after the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), 48-78

DOCUMENTS (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/):
- Election Results to the Bundestag (1949-2009)

Supplemental texts (not required readings):


Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: UCP, 2000), 31-70


Session 12 – 30 Apr 2020

**Constructing East Germany. Politics, Society, and Culture in the GDR 1945/49-1980s**

Mary Fulbrook, *History of Germany 1918-2014: The Divided Nation* (Chichester, Wiley, 2015), 183-216


DOCUMENTS (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/):
- Proclamation Central Committee of the German Communist Party (1945)
- Recommendation for Promoting Women’s Work in East German Enterprises (1949)
- Statistical Report on Development of the Standard of Living in the GDR and the FDR (1956)

Supplemental texts (not required readings):


Dorothee Wierling, Youth as Internal Enemy, in Katherine Pence/Paul Betts (Eds), *Socialist Modern* (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 2008), 157-182

***Tuesday, 5 May 2020***

75th Anniversary of World War II, lunchtime seminar
Required co-curricular activity

Session 13 – 7 May 2020
The STASI and Cultures of Privacy in the GDR (Field Trip to Stasi Archiv Normannenstrasse/Ruschestraße Berlin-Lichtenberg) TBA

Book review is due at the beginning of class.

- Stasi-Archiv Exhibition:
  Ruschestraße 107
  Haus 3
  10365 Berlin
tel.: 030 2324-6699
  https://www.bstu.de/archiv/fuehrungen/


Session 14 – 14 May 2020
The Fall of the Wall in 1989 in German and European History

Mary Fulbrook, *History of Germany 1918-2014: The Divided Nation* (Chichester, 2015), 217-280

DOCUMENTS (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/):
- The Fall of the Wall – Tageszeitung (9 November 1989)

Supplemental texts (not required readings):


Session 15 – 22 May 2020
Final Exam

(Note: Thursday 21 May 2020 is a public holiday and exams take place this Friday, May 22 2020, 10:00am to 12:45pm)

Classroom Etiquette
No food, no cell phones, and no online social media while class is in session.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities
Please look out for the following NYU Berlin events:
- Guided visit of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp memorial, 14 March 2020.
Learning Journey to Potsdam (Cecilienhof), 24 April 2020.

Your Lecturer
Dr. Björn Hofmeister studied History, Political Science, and Sociology at Humboldt University Berlin, the University of Sussex, and Duke University. He defended his dissertation at Georgetown University in early 2012 and is finishing the revisions of the manuscript "Architects of Empire and Dictatorship. Social and Political Mobilization of the Pan-German League 1914-1939" for publication. He is a postdoctoral fellow teaching at the history department at Free University Berlin. He has co-edited the volumes Deutsche Geschichte in Quellen und Darstellung. Kaiserreich und Erster Weltkrieg, 1871-1918, 7th ed. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2017), Gelehrtenpolitik, Sozialwissenschaften und akademische Diskurse in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006), and has submitted the manuscript of Heinrich Claß. Politische Erinnerungen des Vorsitzenden des Alldutschen Verbandes 1915-1933/36, (Deutsche Geschichtsquellen zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, ed. by the Historische Kommission München at the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften), Berlin/Munich: Duncker&Humblot 2020 as well as the monograph manuscript Anwalt für die Diktatur. Heinrich Claß und der Alldutsche Verband 1900-1939 (Schriftenreihe der Historischen Kommission München at the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht 2020. He is currently working on a new project "Diplomats and Diplomacy of the GDR 1949-1990".
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, Moses Center accommodations, 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.

Note that some assignments in the course may be checked for plagiarism by using TurnItIn or other another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

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 please follow the link to NYU Global's academic policies.