

Towson University
Spring 2005
History of Modern Germany, 1870-1945 (Hist 441)

Professor Wendy Lower
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Office Hours: Mon/Weds 3:30-4:30 pm

Class Meetings: LI Room 0208
Mon/Weds, 2:00 pm-3:15 pm

Required Texts (available at bookstore)

A History of Modern Germany 1871 to Present by Dietrich Orlow

The Storm of Steel by Ernst Junger

The Nazi Seizure of Power by W.S. Allen (Franklin Watts Publisher)

Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany by Marion Kaplan (Oxford UP)

*Additional articles and primary source documents will be distributed in class and are identified below on the Schedule

Course Description

At the turn of the last century Germany rapidly ascended onto the world stage as an industrial, imperial power only to plummet into war and revolution during the Great War. Germany tried to erect one of the most experimental, liberal systems, known as the Weimar Republic in the wake of the First World War. But this proved unmanageable. Yet the triumph of fascism in Germany was not an inevitable outcome of the instability of the Weimar Republic.

How did a country in the heart of modern Europe end up embracing a dictatorial system that caused a world war and unleashed the Holocaust, resulting in the losses of tens of millions of innocent civilians? When compared with other European nations, did Germany somehow take a wrong turn on the road to a liberal democratic state? Did German traditions such as militarism, and autocracy, a high regard for order and duty make Nazism possible if not inevitable? Some scholars have argued that Germany's lack of a liberal middle class set it on a special path (Sonderweg) toward Nazism. Others have pointed out that Germany did possess a strong middle class (perhaps even more liberal-minded than other European nations at the time), and that WWI and weaknesses of the Weimar system were most responsible for the rise of Hitler.

In this course we will disentangle the various branches of Germany's political, social, cultural, economic and military history from its founding as a nation-state until its collapse in 1945. We will map out all the varied paths of Germany's development prior to Hitler as well as identify the root and immediate causes of Nazism.

The weekly sessions will offer a combination of lectures and alternating discussions of secondary readings, primary sources and interpretive debates. The lectures will expand

upon the textbook narrative (offered in the Tipton book) by highlighting particular themes, regional case studies, biographies, interpretive or historiographical trends, and controversies surrounding “The German Question” in Europe. The monographs as well as primary sources (documents, photographs, films, artifacts, video testimonies) will provide additional perspectives to include in our discussions and your written assignments.

Assignments

You will be required to write one research paper, 15-18 pages each. Your paper should delve into a topic of your choosing and demonstrate your ability to synthesize several primary and secondary sources on that topic. I can help you identify topics, such as an examination of German militarism, the origins of WWI, the collapse of Weimar, anti-Semitism and its varied forms in Germany, the women’s movement, or the origins of the Holocaust. You will submit a paper proposal and bibliography. In addition to the paper, you will have a mid term and final exam. The exams will contain ids and essay questions.

Grading

1 Paper	30%
Mid Term	30%
Final Exam	30%
Class Participation	10%

General Policies

Because half of the course will be conducted as a seminar, class participation and attendance are essential. And you must keep up with the reading in order to fully participate. Your participation will be factored into your final grade and can mean the difference between a C+ and B- or an A- and A. According to Towson’s attendance policy, students who do not attend the first two class meetings and fail to inform the department may be dropped from the class. I will take attendance at each class. Excused absences are permitted (e.g. illness, family emergency, religious observance, university event), but please inform me. It is impolite and unfair to your colleagues if you routinely arrive late to class and/or leave early. All cell phones must be turned off during class. Any student whose phone rings during class will be asked to leave the class that day and marked down with an unexcused absence. Students with multiple unexcused absences will fail the course. *Plagiarism is the taking of another’s ideas or writings as one’s own. Do not copy verbatim text from a published source, or cut and paste material from the Internet and then submit that copied text to me as your “masterpiece” in prose. This is intellectual theft, which is easily detectable to the reader and will not be tolerated. You must remember to acknowledge another author’s ideas if you include them in your written assignments. For more information on plagiarism see the university’s student academic integrity policy, appendix F of the university catalogue, part V.

Class Schedule of Lecture Topics,
Readings, Assignments

Jan 26 (Wed)	Introduction to the Course, What is the “German Question”?
Jan 31 (Mon)	Background to German History, pre 1870: Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Developments Orlow, 1-5
Feb 2 (Wed)	Visit to the Cook Library to Review Research Paper Sources
Feb 7 (Mon)	Revolution of 1848, The Turning Point where History failed to Turn? Handouts: Ernst Moritz Arndt, The War of Liberation, 1813; Carl Schurz, Observations of the Revolutions of 1848
Feb 9 (Wed)	Discussion: German Voelkisch Ideology, Romanticism, Nationalism and The Other. Mosse’s <i>The Crisis of German Ideology</i> : Introduction, From Romanticism to the Volk
Feb 14 (Mon)	The Unification of Germany: Bismarck’s Way Orlow, 5-41. Handout: Bismarck’s “Blood and Iron” Speech to the Prussian Budget Commission.
Feb 16 (Wed)	Discussion: Were Ordinary Germans Nationally Minded? How was Citizenship Defined and Understood? Alfred Kelly’s “Whose War? Whose Nation? Tensions in the Memory of the Franco-German War of 1870-1871”
Feb 21 (Mon)	Imperial Germany, 1870-1914: Review of Major Developments (Kulturkampf, class and labor conflicts, emancipation movements and treatment of minorities, emigration question) Orlow, Chapter 2 Handout: Bismarck’s “Promotion of the Workers’ Welfare”
Feb 23 (Wed)	*Paper Proposals and Bibliography Due 19 th century trends of German militarism, Clausewitz’s Vernichtungskrieg, ‘Final Solutions’ of the General Staff. Colonial Warfare and Social Darwinism. Handout: von Treitschke “On the Greatness of War”
Feb 28 (Mon)	Discussion: Was German militarism unique, and how pervasive was it? Readings: Irmgard Steinisch “Different Path to War: A Comparative Study of Militarism and Imperialism in the United States and Imperial Germany, 1871-1914” Jean Quataert’s “Mobilizing Philanthropy in the Service of War: The Female Rituals of Care in the New Germany, 1871-1914.”
Mar 2 (Wed)	Germany and the Origins of the Great War Orlow, Chapter 3. Handout: ADD WWI SOURCE, KAISER SPEECH?

- Mar 7 (Mon) **Discussion:** Junger’s *Storm of Steel* and Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*
Announce Mid Term Essay Questions and IDs. Review postcards from the trenches.
- Mar 9 (Wed) Germany Surrenders, the Collapse of the Kaiserreich and the Origins of the “Stab in the Back” Legend
From *The Weimar Republic Source Book*, Wolfradt’s “The Stab in the Back Legend?” Hindenberg’s testimony, 16-24.
- Mar 14 (Mon) **Mid Term**
- Mar 16 (Wed) The War Comes Home
Orlow, Chapter 4
From *the Weimar Republic Sourcebook* Ernst Simmel’s “War Neuroses and ‘Psychic Trauma’” 7-8.
- Mar 21 and Mar 23 – SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS*
- Mar 28 (Mon) Weimar Republic: An Overview of the Political System, Economic Crises and Diplomacy.
Orlow, Chapter 5. Handout: *Weimar Republic Source Book*, Friedrich Kroner, “Overwrought Nerves,” and B. Traven “Bank Failures,” Thomas Mann “The German Republic,” “Struggle Against Fascism”- essays by Ernst Bloch, Thomas Mann, Walter Benjamin, 145-174.
- Mar 30 (Wed) Weimar Culture. Handouts: Fritz Lang on Cinema, a Review of Metropolis
Film Excerpts: Berlin Symphony of a City, Metropolis,
- April 4 (Mon) Hitler and the Nazi Party, 1920s
In Class Review of Excerpts from Mein Kampf, “Nation and Race,” Propaganda Posters, German Worker’s Party 25 Points.
(Read Allen Text)
- April 6 (Wed) **Discussion:** Was Hitler’s rise to power inevitable? Who supported Hitler?
William Sheridan Allen text, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*
- April 11 (Mon)
April 13 (Wed) Hitler’s Germany- Consolidation of Power, “Aryanization” of Society
Discussion: How did the Nazi Party build its power base and increase its support, through terror alone? To what extent was the Reich a “racial state?”
Readings: Robert Gellately on the Gestapo and Denunciations (*Journal of Modern History* article).
- April 18 (Mon) Jews in Nazi Germany
Begin reading Kaplan text
- April 20 (Wed) **Discussion:** What were the obstacles to Jewish emigration? How did Jews respond to persecution?
Kaplan text, *Between Dignity and Despair*
- April 25 (Mon) WWII

- April 27 (Wed) Handout: The Hossbach Memorandum
Nazi Empire Building
Handout: Himmler's Generalplan Ost
- May 2 (Mon) ****Research Paper Due****
Nazi Decision Making and the Origins of the "Final Solution"
Discuss in Class- the July 1941 order, Himmler Dienstkalender Dec 1941, and the Wannsee Protocol
- May 4 (Wed) Lecture - The Holocaust: Victims, Perpetrators, Bystanders and the Machinery of Destruction
Handout: Himmler 1943 Posen Speech, Victor Klemperer's Diaries "I will Bear Witness"
- May 9 (Mon) **Discussion** on Nazism and Modernity: The Banality of Evil, Technology of Mass Murder and Post-war Pursuit of Justice
Handout: Excerpts from Gita Sereny's "Into that Darkness" Franz Stangl and his wife recall Treblinka
- May 11 (Wed) LAST CLASS- A "German Question" Today? Review of Course Themes and Discussion of Final Exam