History 845: Whither German Histories?
Spring 2015, M 11:00-12:55, 2611 Mosse Humanities
Instructor: R. Koshar (rjkoshar@wisc.edu)
Office hours: 4101 Mosse Humanities, MW 4-5

This seminar examines recent trends in the historiography of Germanophone Europe, placing emphasis on the question of how we study modern German histories in the twenty-first century. In an era of neo-liberal economics, Europeanization, and “transnationalism,” the limitations of national historiographies have become clearer than ever. Most historians of the German experience no longer rely on a univocal narrative of “German history.” But what combination of narratives might replace older, notionally more coherent story lines? How do multiplicity and complexity also raise questions of narrative strategies? Does German history consist of fragmented and discontinuous pasts? Or are there broader continuities and coherences—cultural, economic, political, social—that demand historical attention? Where should we look for the global in the national, and the national in the global? How do such questions interplay with the study of other social identities—class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, locale, region, generation? We approach these issues largely from the perspective of periodical literature, though we do concentrate on an important recent book-length study, Timothy Snyder’s Bloodlands, at one point in the course.

Requirements:
Discussion—Each week students discuss a common set of readings designed to highlight key historiographical and methodological issues. All students are responsible for all the readings listed for weekly meetings.

Discussion questions—Each week students will have a specific article or articles assigned to them. Their job is to provide a summary overview (not a blow-by-blow account of each selection) and raise questions or point to problems. At least 24 hours before class, i.e., by 11am on Sundays, students will circulate via e-mail two discussion questions pertaining to their assignment. These questions may be open-ended or they may deal with more specific aspects of the problem in question. The key is to formulate questions that engage and provoke.

Book reviews—Students are responsible for six brief (~750 word) reviews of books suggested by the course reading. Students have broad latitude in choosing their books for review. If in doubt about your selection, check with me via email. The review should point to the relevance of the book with respect to weekly topics, and suggest how it addresses (or fails to address) major historiographical issues. Please submit the reviews in class on the following dates: February 2, 16; March 2, 16; April 6, 20.

Historiographical essay—Students are required to submit a historiographical essay of 18-20 pages in length that builds on our weekly readings and discussion. Students will
preview their end-of-semester project in a brief presentation in seminar on May 4. Papers are due May 11; electronic copies only.

For those students who would like to extra background reading on the basics of modern German & European history, I can suggest the following very abbreviated list:

David Blackbourn, *History of Germany 1780-1918: The Long Nineteenth Century*
Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism, 1919-1933*
Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*
Idem., *The Third Reich in Power*
Idem., *The Third Reich at War*
Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*
William W. Hagen, *German History in Modern Times: Four Lives of the Nation*
Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing Germany Histories*
Matthew Jefferies, *Imperial Culture in Germany, 1871-1918*
Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*
Martin Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany*
Michael Mann, *Fascists*
Hans Mommsen, *The Rise & Fall of Weimar Democracy*
Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Imperial Germany 1867-1918: Politics, Culture, and Society in an Authoritarian State*
Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe*
Frank B. Tipton, *A History of Modern Germany since 1815*
Eric Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*

**Jan 26: Sonderweg, ever and always...**

Feb 2: Large Themes, Long Continuities

Book review #1 due


Feb 9: The Spatial Turn, I


**Feb 16: The Spatial Turn, II: Berlin’s Longue Durée**

**Book review #2 due**


**Feb 23: Wilhelmine Germany**


**Mar 2: Weimar Republic: Culture of Politics-Politics of Culture, I**

**Book review #3 due**


**Mar 9: Weimar: Culture of Politics-Politics of Culture, II**


**Mar 16: Policing, Law, Violence (From Wilhelmine to Nazi Germany)**

**Book review #4 due**


**Mar 23: Nazism, I**

**Spring Recess Mar 28-Apr 5**

**Apr 6: Nazism, II: Bloodlands**

**Book review #5 due**

**Apr 13: Postwar Occupations: Displacements and Transitions**

**Book review #4 due**


**Apr 20: West Germany**

**Book review #6 due**


**Apr 27: East Germany**


**May 4: Student Presentations**

**May 11: Final papers due**