

History 410: Modern Germany, 1870 to the Present

Fall Semester, 2015

TR 4:00-5:15, 2637 Humanities

Instructor:

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Department Website:

http://history.wisc.edu/faculty_rk.htm

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4101 Humanities, Thursdays, 2-3:30 & by appt.



Course Rationale

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the philosopher and poet Friedrich von Schiller was said to ask “Germany? But where is it? I cannot find any such country.” The premise of this course is that such questions were applicable for the entire period we are studying. We will spend the course exploring how the existence of “Germany,” as aspiration or accomplishment, entailed a search for identity and meaning in an age in which national states were thought to be the natural form of political community. This search gave rise to great prosperity and not a little political success; but also to unprecedented violence in the form of war and genocide. Moreover, it led to questions about social inclusion and exclusion. If “Germany” could be imagined, or given territorial concreteness, then who belonged? How did class, race, gender, religion, age, education, and region figure into the answers given to this question?

The pedagogical goals of the course are: to deepen your knowledge of the history of Europe’s most powerful and influential country; to build your expository and critical skills through writing and discussion; to advance your abilities to analyze secondary and primary sources with reference to larger historical narratives and problems; and to relate past and present (e.g., has contemporary Germany solved its “identity problem”?) through rigorous comparison and analogy.

The History Lab: New this semester, the History Lab is a resource center where experts (PhD students) will assist you with your history papers. No matter your stage in the writing process—choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts—the History Lab staff is here, along with your professors and teaching assistants, to help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Sign up for a one-on-one consultation online: <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>

Course Requirements

All Undergrads: One four-page essay (9/24), a midterm (10/22), one ten-page (minimum) research paper (11/19), a cumulative final (12/19), and discussion.

Graduate Students: a seminar-length research paper (25-30 pgs.), midterm, and final.

All students are urged to familiarize themselves with the rules and guidelines concerning plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism or cheating will be dealt with severely. (University policy on plagiarism is available at:

<http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>).

Grades

Short essay (15%); Long essay (25%); Midterm (20%); Final (25%); Discussion (15%)

Required Reading

All required reading (save for the Blackbourn essay) is available for purchase at area bookstores and on reserve at Helen C. White.

David Blackbourn, "Germany and the Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1820," pdf article on course website

Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany, 1918-2014*. Wiley Blackwell.

Heinrich Mann, *Man of Straw*. Penguin Classics.

Hans Fallada, *Little Man What Now?* Melville House.

Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*. Picador.

Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Stig Dagerman, *German Autumn*. University of Minnesota Press.

Ulrich Plenzdorf, *The New Sufferings of Young W.* Waveland Press.

Timothy Garton Ash, *The File: A Personal History*. Vintage.

Course Schedule

(Lecture topics are approximate)

9/3 Course Introduction

9/8 The Long Road to German Unification

9/10 Bismarckian Anxieties

9/10 Discussion of Fulbrook & Blackbourn

Reading: Fulbrook, ch. 1; Blackbourn

9/15 Wilhelmine Germany, Economy & Society

9/17 Wilhelmine Germany, Politics & Culture

Reading: Mann, entire

9/22 Discussion: Heinrich Mann, *Man of Straw*

9/24 World War I: Origins, Evolution, Experience

9/24 First essay due

9/29 Weimar Republic: Origins

10/1 Weimar Republic: Success and Failure
Reading: Fulbrook, ch. 2-3; start Fallada

10/6 Nazi Movement
10/8 Did Nazism Build a National Community?
Reading: Fulbrook, ch 4; finish Fallada

10/13 Discuss Hans Fallada, *Little Man What Now?*
10/15 War, Extermination, Resistance, Defeat
Reading: Fulbrook, ch. 5; start Haffner

10/20 **Discuss Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler***
10/22 **Midterm**
Reading: Haffner; start Bergen

10/27 Discuss Bergen
10/29 Postwar Germany: Trauma and Recovery
Reading: finish Bergen; Fulbrook, ch. 6; start Dagerman

11/3 Discuss Stig Dagerman, *German Autumn*
11/5 Economic and Society in West Germany, I
Reading: Dagerman; Fulbrook, ch., 7

11/10 Economy and Society in West Germany, II
11/12 Real Existing Socialism, I
Reading: Fulbrook, ch. 8-12; start Plenzdorf

11/17 Real Existing Socialism, II
11/19 Real Existing Socialism, III
11/19 Second Essay Due

11/24 No Class
11/26-29 Thanksgiving Recess

12/1 Discuss Ulrich Plenzdorf
12/3 East Germany Falls, but Lives On...
Reading: Fulbrook, ch. 13; Plenzdorf; start Garton Ash

12/8 Germany in 1990s and Beyond
12/10 Discuss Ash, *The File*
Reading: Ash; Fulbrook, ch. 14-15

12/15 Conclusions and Review

12/19 Final Exam 12:25-2:25 Room TBA