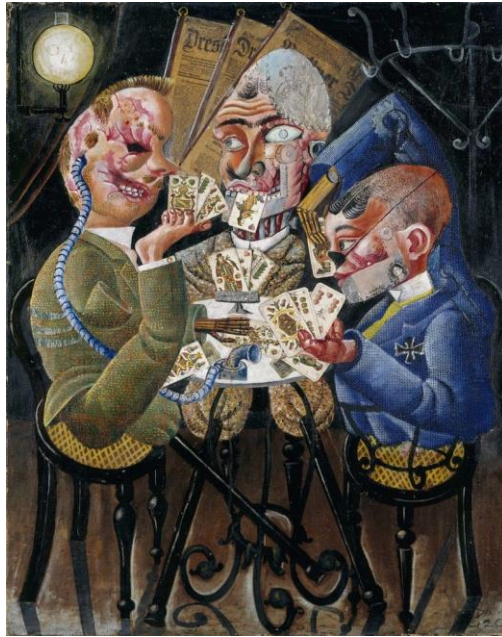


HISTORY 201 (001): THE HISTORIAN'S CRAFT: THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC AND THE RISE OF NAZISM



Otto Dix, "The Scat Players – Card Playing War Invalids" (1920)

Course Information

Instructor: Prof. Brandon Bloch

Semester: Spring 2021

Meeting Times: Tues. & Thurs. 4-5:15 p.m. (Zoom)

E-Mail: bjbloch@wisc.edu

Office Hours: Wed. 1-3 p.m. or by appointment (Zoom)

Credits: 3

Instructional Modality: remote/online

Requisites: none

Course Designations: This course fulfills the COMM-B requirement in General Education. Not open to students who have taken HISTORY 201.

Canvas Site: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/242826>

Course Description

The collapse of Germany's Weimar Republic (1918-1933) is perhaps the most recognizable case of democratic failure in modern history. Journalists, scholars, and pundits debate whether the U.S. and Europe are experiencing a "Weimar moment" today. But is it fair to evaluate the Weimar Republic only in light of its disastrous endpoint? Why did the Nazis come to power in 1933, and could the Nazi rise have been prevented? This seminar dives deep into the culture, society, and politics of this short-lived but momentous period in modern European history. We will explore not only the seedbeds of fascism and authoritarianism in 1920s Germany, but also reform movements that sought democratic transformations in artistic production, gender and sexuality, and the built environment. Our sources will range widely across Weimar's vibrant cultural landscape, including literature, film, fashion, journalism, music, architecture, and propaganda. One key theme will be the *contingency* of the Weimar Republic's rise and fall—understanding how the Republic's history was shaped by individuals and groups who could not fully anticipate consequences that appear evident to us in hindsight. By examining a wide range of perspectives on this complex period, we will sharpen our skills in historical thinking and communication.

Learning Outcomes

As a "Historian's Craft" seminar, this course focuses as much on historical content as on the skills of creative research, incisive analysis, persuasive writing, and engaging speaking. These skills are foundational to the history major, but also applicable to your other college courses and the world beyond the university. Writing assignments will build in complexity over the semester, beginning with brief analyses of assigned readings and culminating in an original research paper. You will also be asked to give several presentations. A significant portion of our class time will be devoted to practicing the skills critical to success in the writing and speaking assignments.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Develop your own definition of historical thinking that accounts for the importance of research, analysis, and interpretation
- Craft analytical papers that assess the authorship, perspective, audience, context, and credibility of primary sources
- Apply the tools of primary source analysis to a range of media (including propaganda, journalism, film, literature, and memoir) and compare the challenges of working with each

- Analyze works of historical scholarship to explain how historians reach their interpretations through evidence and argument
- Identify the attributes of an effective historical research question, and develop a research question related to the course themes
- Apply skills of historical research, including navigating online databases; assessing the reliability and relevance of sources; and properly using citations
- Present, both in writing and orally, an original, persuasive, and evidence-based historical argument

For a complete description of learning goals in the “Historian’s Craft” seminars, see the “Goals for HIST 201” appended at the end of the syllabus.

Course Book

Irmgard Keun, *The Artificial Silk Girl*, trans. Kathie von Ankum (New York: Other Press, 2002) [1932]. ISBN: 9781892746818.

This book is available for purchase at the University Book Store or online. It is also available as an e-book through the library catalog, but can only be downloaded by three users at once.

Course Requirements

*Further details on the assignments, including expectations, guidelines, and rubrics, are available on Canvas.

1. Class Participation (25%)

Discussion Participation [20%]: Because this is a discussion-based seminar, your regular attendance and engaged participation are crucial to the seminar’s success. The most productive discussions occur when classmates engage respectfully and constructively with one another’s ideas. I will structure discussions to facilitate this dialogue.

Remember that the quality of your contributions to discussions is as important as the quantity, and that asking a well-informed question counts as participation. I recognize that participation may come more easily to some than others, and am happy to meet if you would like to discuss strategies for speaking up in class. Short in-class writing exercises, including responses to your classmates’ work, will also count toward your discussion participation grade.

Group Presentation [5%]: At the beginning of the semester, we will divide into five groups, which will work together on several activities over the semester. During the seminar meetings on Feb. 16, Feb. 23, March 2, March 9, and March 16, one group will open the class with a presentation of no more than 10 minutes introducing the week's reading. Each group member should be allotted approximately equal speaking time. Presentations should not simply summarize the reading. Rather, you should aim to analyze overarching themes; relate the reading to previous weeks of the seminar; and raise some questions for discussion. Reading questions, which can help guide your presentation, will be distributed in advance.

2. Short Assignments (10%)

During the first part of the course, you will be asked to complete several short writing assignments of approximately one paragraph, each focusing on a discrete task (imagining the context of a primary source, summarizing and evaluating a secondary source, preparing for an in-class debate). These exercises will form the building blocks for later assignments.

3. Primary Source Responses (25%)

Discussion Board Posts [5%]: During two out of the five weeks when we discuss extended primary source readings, you will be asked to post a one-paragraph response to the Canvas discussion board by noon on the day of class. These posts will help prepare you for class discussion, and can form the basis for your response papers. The first discussion post is due by March 2.

Response Papers [20%]: During the middle portion of the course, you will also be asked to write two primary source response papers of approximately 2 double-spaced pages each. You are welcome to use your discussion board posts as a basis for these papers. You will have five opportunities to complete this assignment, and will pick two out of five weeks to turn in your papers. The first response paper should be submitted by March 9. (See the course schedule for specific deadlines.) If you choose, you may revise one of these papers for a higher grade after receiving my feedback; the revision is due one week after the original paper.

I would recommend that you decide well in advance the two weeks in which you will submit your papers. You might take several factors into consideration: deadlines for other courses; the sources and themes that interest you most; and the value of receiving early feedback.

4. Research Paper (40%)

During the final part of the course, we will shift from shared readings and discussions to individual work on a capstone assignment: a research paper of 6-7 double-spaced pages that draws on at least two primary and two secondary sources. You will have a choice of one of four topic areas, based on themes we've covered in class. For each topic area, I will provide a bibliography of online primary and secondary sources from which you can draw your research. (You are welcome to use other sources, but given the time constraints, the bibliographies I provide will help focus your research and allow you to devote more time to developing your argument and analysis.) The final paper will be due at noon on Thursday, May 6.

We will discuss expectations for this assignment at length in class. There are also multiple intermediate assignments, which are designed to keep you on track and provide you with ongoing feedback. These include:

- One-page paper proposal and annotated bibliography (due March 30)
- Provisional thesis statement (due April 1)
- Outline and introductory paragraph (due April 6)
- First draft (due April 18)
- Peer review (due April 20)
- In-class presentation, 5 mins. (April 27 or 29)

Completion of the intermediate assignments will count for 5% of your course grade; the in-class presentation will count for 5%; and the final paper will count for 30%.

Grading Scale

A: 93-100

AB: 88-92

B: 83-87

BC: 78-82

C: 70-77

D: 60-69

F: Below 60

Credit Hours

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit, or 9 hours per week). This includes regularly scheduled meeting times, reading, writing, group work, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus. Since each 75-minute meeting counts for 1.5 class hours (for a total of **3 hours of direct instruction per week**), you should plan to allot an average of 6 hours per week outside of class for course-related activities.

Please note that while your work outside of class should average to 6 hours per week, the workload in particular weeks may amount to somewhat more or less. The schedule of response papers allows you to choose which weeks will have the heavier workload.

Attendance

Given the extraordinary circumstances of this semester, I understand the importance of a flexible attendance policy. There will be no penalty for missing class due to illness or a family emergency; but do let me know in advance if you won't be present. Every effort will be made to accommodate absences due to religious observance. If you need to miss a class, I will work with you to find alternative ways for you to fulfill the course learning goals (for instance, uploading PowerPoint slides and lecture notes to Canvas, meeting during alternative times, or using the Discussion Board to complete in-class exercises). I will not require additional "make-up" work, beyond the regular assignments, for excused absences. If you find that the stresses of COVID-19 are making it difficult for you to engage fully in the course, please let me know as soon as possible and we can arrange a time to talk. I am committed to ensuring a continuity of learning during these challenging times.

Late Work

The pandemic also forces us to rethink our approach to deadlines and late work. With this in mind, the following policy will apply:

If you are unable to meet an assigned deadline due to illness, family obligations, or because pandemic-related circumstances have put you behind in this or other courses, please let me know as soon as possible and we can work out a plan for you to get caught up. The schedule of group presentations and response papers is designed to allow you to choose in advance which weeks will require more work. Keeping this in mind as you plan out your semester can help you stay on track.

In cases of repeated, unexcused late work, I reserve the right to apply a deduction to late assignments out of fairness to other class members. Typically this deduction will be 3 points (out of 100) per day late.

Please note that I am not able to accept any written work for this course after Friday, May 7, the final day of the exam period. Incomplete grades can only be granted to students who are unable to complete the coursework due to “illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond their control.” For the university policy, see: <https://registrar.wisc.edu/incompletes/>.

Academic Integrity

The exchange of ideas is at the core of academic inquiry, and you are welcome to discuss the course material with your classmates. However, all work that you submit for a grade should reflect your own thinking and writing, and adhere to proper citation practices in the discipline of history. Passing off another person’s words or ideas as your own is not only unfair to your peers; it is also theft of the author’s intellectual work, shutting out their voice from the academic conversation.

In my experience, violations of academic integrity tend to have two causes: either a) lack of awareness about citation standards, or b) procrastination, followed by panic. I have designed the course to mitigate against both of these factors. We will have ongoing discussions about appropriate citation practices; if you’re unsure in a particular case, don’t hesitate to ask. I have also implemented flexibility and scaffolding in the assignment due dates. If you are worried about not finishing an assignment as a deadline approaches, please email me! We can always work out solutions to help improve your organization, and it’s much better to accept a late penalty (or turn in less than perfect work) than to cheat. If you plagiarize (and be assured that I will catch it—it’s really not difficult), then I have to deal with the case as a disciplinary infraction rather than a learning opportunity. Serious academic misconduct must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards.¹

Accessibility

I am committed to ensuring that all students receive equal access to the course materials and equitable opportunities to achieve the course learning goals. If you experience or anticipate any challenges related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. I am happy to explore a range of options for removing barriers to your

¹ I have developed these thoughts on academic dishonesty with reference to Kevin Gannon, “How to Create a Syllabus: Advice Guide,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, accessed July 14, 2020, <https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/advice-syllabus>.

learning. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may also wish to work with the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>) to discuss accessibility in this and other courses, including possibilities for official accommodations. All communications regarding accessibility will remain confidential.

A Note on Sources

Studying history involves discussion of complex themes including race, empire, gender, sexuality, class, religion, and national identity, among others. In class discussions, it is crucial that we remain respectful of one another's viewpoints and the wide range of backgrounds and experiences represented in the classroom. During the first class meetings, we will establish collective discussion norms that will guide us over the semester. In general, if you disagree with a classmate (and debate and disagreement are encouraged!), then be sure to direct your comments at the idea, not the person. It is often helpful to summarize a peer's idea before disagreeing, to ensure you have really understood it. Please do not hesitate to meet with me if you have concerns about particular aspects of the course content.

Additional Resources

UW-Madison and the History Department make available a wide range of resources to foster your academic success and personal wellbeing. It's a good idea to familiarize (or re-familiarize) yourself with the following, especially in light of the uncertainties we face this semester:

Writing Center

<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

Offers individual consultations, workshops, and online guides on all aspects of academic writing.

History Lab

<http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>

A resource center for undergraduates in history courses staffed by experienced graduate students, who are available to assist you with researching and writing history papers. You can sign up online for an individual consultation at any stage of the writing process.

Greater University Tutoring Services

<https://guts.wisc.edu/>

Study skills support and peer tutoring across academic subjects (now offered online).

McBurney Disability Resource Center

<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>

The McBurney Center has also compiled a helpful FAQ on accessibility in response to COVID-19:

<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/resources/faq-for-virtual-learning-and-accessibility-covid-19/>

Mental Health Services

<https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>

Resources on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

UW-Madison is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment and offers a variety of resources for students impacted by sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. The Dean of Students Office has compiled a comprehensive guide to resources on and off campus, including both confidential resources and options for reporting: <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/report-an-issue/sexual-assault-dating-and-domestic-violence/>.

Course Schedule

Assignments are due by the beginning of class on the date listed, unless otherwise indicated. Guidelines and rubrics for all assignments are available on Canvas (under the Assignments tab, as well as in the relevant Modules). Assignments should be uploaded (as .doc, .docx, or .pdf files) to Canvas.

All readings are available as pdf documents on Canvas, or as online library resources. See the Modules tab for week-by-week links to readings and assignments.

DATE/THEME	READING	ASSIGNMENT
Jan. 26: Course Introduction		– Complete the Course Orientation Module
UNIT I: CREATING THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC		
Jan. 28: World War I & the German Revolution	– “Spartacus Manifesto” (1918)	– Short assignment #1: Primary Source Identification: due at noon
Feb. 2: Legacies of Defeat	– Richard Bessel, “The Legacy of the First World War and Weimar Politics” (1993)	– Individual meetings on Feb. 2-3 to discuss learning and writing goals
Feb. 4: Forging Democracy	– “The Constitution of the German Republic” (1918) – Excerpts from Party Platforms (1919-22)	– Short assignment #2: Rhetorical Précis (Bessel)
Feb. 9: National Assembly: Debate		– Short assignment #3: Opening Statements for Debate

Feb. 11: Weimar as a Post-Imperial Society	– Julia Roos, “‘Huns’ and Other ‘Barbarians’: A Movie Ban and the Dilemmas of 1920s German Propaganda against French Colonial Troops” (2014)	– Short assignment #4: Rhetorical Précis and Evaluation (Roos)
Feb. 16: Political Violence in the Early Weimar Republic	– Adolf Hitler, “Reestablishing the National Socialist German Workers Party” (1925)	– Discussion Board Post due at noon [COMPLETE 2/5] – Group #1 Presentation
UNIT II: WEIMAR MODERNITIES		
Feb. 18: The Avant-Garde and Modernist Culture		– Revision of short assignment #4
Feb. 23: Life in the Metropolis	– Josef Roth, <i>What I Saw: Reports from Berlin, 1920-1933</i> , pp. 23-27, 31-39, 63-68, 97-103, 119-123, 171-175, 189-198	– Response Paper (Hitler) [COMPLETE 2/5] – Discussion Board Post due at noon [COMPLETE 2/5] – Group #2 Presentation
Feb. 25: Honing your Research Skills		
March 2: Cinema and Mass Culture	– WATCH: G. W. Pabst, dir., <i>The Threepenny Opera</i> (1931)	– Response Paper (Roth) [COMPLETE 2/5] – Discussion Board Post due at noon [COMPLETE 2/5]— one discussion post due by March 2 – Group #3 Presentation

March 4: Bodies, Sexualities, and the “New Woman”		
March 9: The “New Woman” in Literature	– Irmgard Keun, <i>The Artificial Silk Girl</i> (1932), chs. 1-2	– Response Paper (<i>Threepenny Opera</i>) [COMPLETE 2/5] — one response paper due by March 9 – Discussion Board Post due at noon [COMPLETE 2/5] – Group #4 Presentation
UNIT III: REVOLUTION FROM THE RIGHT		
March 11: The Depression and the Rise of the Nazis		
March 16: German Society and the Nazi “Seizure of Power”	– Sebastian Haffner, <i>Defying Hitler: A Memoir</i> (1939), pp. 3-71, 85-94	– Response Paper (Keun) [COMPLETE 2/5] – Discussion Board Post due at noon [COMPLETE 2/5] – Group #5 Presentation
March 18: Crafting an Effective Research Proposal and Bibliography		– Come to class prepared with an idea for a research question (no submission)
March 23: Debate: (Why) did Weimar Fail?		– Response Paper (Haffner) [COMPLETE 2/5]

UNIT IV: RESEARCH PAPERS

March 25: Individual Meetings	NO CLASS; sign up for a time to meet with me on March 25 or 26 to discuss your paper ideas	
March 30: Peer Workshop		– Proposal (1 p.) and annotated bibliography for final paper
April 1: Writing Workshop (Intros & Outlines)		– Bring provisional thesis statement to class
April 6: Peer Workshop		– Outline and draft of introductory paragraph for final paper
April 8: Writing Workshop (Source Analysis)		
April 13: Concluding Discussion		
April 15: Writing Workshop (Revisions)		– First draft of final paper due Sun. April 18 at 5 p.m.
April 20: Peer Workshop		– Read your group members' drafts in advance – Peer review worksheet (in class)

April 22: Individual Meetings	NO CLASS; sign up for a time to meet with me on April 22 or 23 to discuss your draft	
April 27: Project Presentations		– In class: 5-minute presentations on final papers
April 29: Project Presentations		– In class: 5-minute presentations on final papers

FINAL PAPER DUE THURS. MAY 6 AT 12 P.M.

APPENDIX: Goals for HIST 201 – “The Historian’s Craft”

Approved by Undergraduate Council, December 8, 2010

The “Historian’s Craft” courses offer an opportunity to experience the excitement and rewards of doing original historical research and conveying the results of that work to others. Through engagement with locally available or on-line archival materials, the courses encourage undergraduates to become historical detectives who can define important historical questions, collect and analyze evidence, present original conclusions, and contribute to ongoing discussions—the skills we have defined as central to the history major.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be prepared to undertake substantial historical research and writing in a variety of courses, including the HIST 600 seminar. Specific goals for this course include learning to:

1. Ask Questions: develop the habit of asking questions, including questions that may generate new directions for historical research.

- Develop historical questions through engagement with primary sources, secondary literature, and/or broader ethical, theoretical, or political questions.
- Ask historical questions to guide individual research.
- Pose questions to prompt productive group discussion.

2. Find Sources: learn the logic of footnotes, bibliographies, search engines, libraries, and archives, and consult them to identify and locate source materials.

- Identify the purposes, limitations, authorities, and parameters of various search engines available both through the library and on the world-wide web.
- Take advantage of the range of library resources, including personnel.
- Locate printed materials, digital materials, and other objects.
- Be aware of, and able to use, interlibrary loan.

3. Evaluate Sources: determine the perspective, credibility, and utility of source materials.

- Distinguish between primary and secondary material for a particular topic.
- Determine, to the extent possible, conditions of production and preservation.
- Consider the placement of sources in relation to other kinds of documents and objects.
- Identify the perspective or authorial stance of a source.
- Summarize an argument presented in a text.
- Distinguish between the content of a source and its meaning in relation to a particular question.

4. Develop and Present an Argument: use sources appropriately to create, modify, and support tentative conclusions and new questions.

- Write a strong, clear thesis statement.
- Revise and rewrite a thesis statement based on additional research or analysis.
- Identify the parts of an argument necessary to support a thesis convincingly.
- Cite, paraphrase, and quote evidence appropriately to support each part of an argument.

5. Plan Further Research: draw upon preliminary research to develop a plan for further investigation.

- Write a research proposal, including a tentative argument, plan for research, annotated bibliography, and abstract.
- Identify the contribution of an argument to existing scholarship.

6. Communicate Findings Effectively: make formal and informal, written and oral presentations tailored to specific audiences.

- Write a clearly argued, formal academic paper, using appropriate style and bibliographic apparatus.
- Deliver a concise, effective, formal verbal presentation with appropriate supporting material.
- Contribute constructively to discussion, whether proposing or responding to an idea