

RELIGION IN THE AGE OF HITLER



Spring 2022
Tuesdays, 1:20-3:15 p.m.
5245 Mosse Humanities

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Course Description

The class explores the history of religion in Germany during the reign of Adolf Hitler and National Socialism, 1933-1945. We will be following the historical trajectories of Christianity, Judaism, and Aryan-Germanic paganism.

We will examine how Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians often sympathized with the new regime and helped legitimize Nazi ideology. Only a minority of Protestants and Catholics actively fought National Socialism, although interference in inner ecclesiastical affairs as well as government organized euthanasia initiated strong rebukes by the Christian churches and their leaders. We will explore Protestants' and Catholics' support of nationalistic ideas, their various efforts to either accommodate or challenge Nazi policies and ideology, and their involvement in the resistance to Hitler.

The course will also investigate how Jews were discriminated against beginning with the boycott of Jewish businesses and the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service. During the

November pogroms in 1938 synagogues in Germany were smashed and burned. Jews who didn't leave Germany were eventually sent to concentration camps. We will assess the nature and scope of antisemitism at the time while paying attention to institutional and individual Christian efforts to advocate for Jews (and other minorities) persecuted by the Nazis.

Although there was no official "Nazi Religion", Nazis often rejected traditional Christianity while they embraced ideas of Aryan-Germanic paganism. The class will provide opportunities to critically discuss texts like Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century* (1930) and ideas about an Aryan Christianity. We will assess the influence of Aryan-Germanic paganism for the consolidation and expansion of Nazism.

Towards the end of the class we will look at the ways Americans at that time interpreted the changes and events in Germany.

Course Objectives

As a 201 Historian's Craft class, a significant portion of it is dedicated to introducing students to the work and critical methods of historians. I hope you will enjoy learning and applying the skills of a historian while becoming more familiar with this fascinating, but also disturbing period of German history and its lessons for the present. It is my goal to excite you for history as an academic discipline as well as the important and gratifying work of historians. I want to teach you to:

- ask historical questions and start thinking like a historian
- read texts critically
- identify and assess a variety of historical sources
- distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- summarize and evaluate historical sources and texts
- construct historical arguments
- write a short research paper including proper documentation of your sources
- write a short, annotated bibliography
- present your own research ideas and approach in oral form

In order to acquire the abilities of a historian, you need to come prepared to our course sessions once a week. Over the course of the semester, you will write six short one-page (ca. 300 words) responses to some of the assigned readings, a one-page (ca. 300 words) research proposal, a ten-page (ca. 3,000 words) research paper on a topic you may choose, and make a short oral presentation of your research in class. I will also give you prompts in preparation of our class sessions, where we will discuss your summaries and analyses of the class readings.

Course Credit

This three-credit course is designed as a reading- and writing-intensive course during which students begin exploring their own research ideas. It fulfills the *Communications B* requirement and is taught in a seminar-style format. There are no exams during the semester. Attendance is mandatory. In case of sickness or family emergency you need to notify me immediately. The course meets for 115 minutes each week over the semester. Students are expected to spend ca. seven hours per week outside of each session reading, writing, and preparing for it, for a total of 135 hours over the course of the

semester including the final research assignment (= 45 hours per credit). The course is open to honors students.

Course Assignments

Grading will be determined as follows:

- Discussion/participation/attendance: You will be expected to attend all class sessions and engage actively in class discussions and group work = 30%
- Six short response papers (one-page, ca. 300 words, 5% each) that prepare you for writing your final research paper. You will need to summarize a text or argument, compare sources, and/or evaluate the historical evidence of a text. You will receive the assignments for each response paper one week before it is due = 30%
- One 5-7 minutes oral presentation on your research project = 10%
- A final 10 pages (ca. 3,000 words) research paper: You will submit your (one-page, ca. 300 words) research proposal that combines primary and secondary sources (that need to be presented in the form of an annotated bibliography) by **March 29**, a draft of your research paper by **April 26**, and the final version of the paper by **May 10** = 30%
- I will provide more details about these assignments over the course of the semester.

The grade scale is: A=100-93%; AB=92-88%; B=87-83%; BC=82-78%; C=77-70%; D=69-60%.

ALL PAPER ASSIGNMENTS NEED TO BE SUBMITTED AS HARDCOPIES AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS EXCEPT YOUR RESEARCH PAPER WHICH NEEDS TO BE PUT IN MY MAILBOX BY TUESDAY, MAY 10, AT 8:00 P.M.

Late Work Policy:

Assignments turned in late will be downgraded half a letter grade for every 24 hours unless a special agreement has been made with the instructor prior to the deadline of the assignment.

Meeting Your Instructor

I want to meet with each student on **Feb 2-4** to get a sense of who you are and what academic subjects you are interested in. I will meet again with each student on **March 31-April 1** to discuss your research proposal, and on **April 28-29** for feedback and comments on a draft of your final paper.

I am very approachable and usually respond within 24 hours to your emails. I hold regular office hours and encourage you to stop by. If you cannot come to my office hours on Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., I would be happy to arrange for a meeting outside of them.

The History Lab

The History Lab is a fabulous resource for students in HIS 201. At the Lab, doctoral students in History are ready to assist you while writing your papers. They can help you sharpen your argument, revise your drafts, correctly document your sources, etc. I strongly encourage all of you to make use of this extraordinary resource. The History Lab is located at 4255 Mosse Humanities.

<https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/>

Special Notes Regarding Covid-19

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 [symptoms](#) and get [tested](#) for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Students should reach out to me as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with me concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course. I will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

Students need to wear masks during class time unless they show written proof of exemption by the McBurney Center.

Academic Integrity

“By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review.” For more information, go to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement: “The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.” For more information on this issue, go to <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>

Diversity and Inclusion

UW-Madison’s Statement on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: “Diversity a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every

background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” For more information regarding UW-Madison’s diversity policy, go to <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

Books That Need to be Purchased

Wolfgang Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich* (University of California Press, 2006).

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 10th ed. (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2021).

ALL OTHER TEXTS WILL BE UPLOADED TO CANVAS, WHERE I WILL ALSO UPLOAD A COMPLETE LIST OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES. I STRONGLY SUGGEST PRINTING THE TEXTS SO YOU CAN DO YOUR READING FROM A HARDCOPY.

The assigned readings and the chapters from Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (the 2021 or any recent edition) need to be prepared by all students. We will divide the preparation of primary documents whenever there are more than three to four primary sources. You are of course welcome to read more than just the sources assigned to you.

Class Schedule and Readings

January 25

Introduction to Seminar

- Lecture by Prof. Emeritus Marc Silberman on the beginnings of National Socialism during the Weimar Republic
- Post a 1-2 min introductory video about yourself on Canvas Kaltura by **January 30** (your pronouns, how many years in college?, what do you study?, where are you from?, what do you want to do after college?, what is your favorite book?, your favorite movie? why this book and movie?, do you have hobbies? why did you choose this course?)

February 1

German History 1933-1945 AND Thinking Historically

- Read: Benz, *The Concise History of the Third Reich* (2006), 20-88, 113-154; Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Ch. 1.
- Primary Documents: Hitler’s First Radio Address as Chancellor (31 Jan 1933).
- Watch your classmates’ introductory videos before **February 8**

February 2-4

Individual Meetings with Instructor

February 8

The National Socialist Worldview AND Working with Primary and Secondary Sources

- Read: Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology* (1964), selections; Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (2006), 249-253; Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Ch. 2.
- Primary Documents: Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, (1930), selections; Adolf Hitler, “Speech at the NSDAP Congress on Culture” (1933); Program of the NSDAP (1920); *Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service* (1933).

February 15

Antisemitism and the Church

Read: Carroll, *Constantine's Sword* (2001), selections; Rosenhagen, "Lutheran antisemitism and Catholic racism," *Patterns of Prejudice* 48 (2014), 404-410; Ericksen & Heschel, eds., *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust* (1999), 14-18.

- Primary Documents: Excerpts from the New Testament and the Church Fathers.
- First Response Paper Due at Beginning of Class: Summarizing Content I

February 22

The Rise of the "German Christians" AND Writing Assignments (Textual Analysis and Comparing Sources)

- Read: Barnett, *For the Soul of the People* (1992), 30-44; Bergen, *Twisted Cross* (1996), 1-20; Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (2006), 223-238; Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Ch. 3.
- Primary Documents: Guiding Principles of the German Christians (1932); Radio Broadcast by Hitler on the Church Elections (July 1933); Reinhold Krause, "Speech at the Berlin Sports Palace" (13 November 1933); Declaration of the German Christians (1 December 1933).
- Second Response Paper Due at Beginning of Class: Summarizing Content II

March 1

Introduction to the Library and Its Resources at Memorial Library – Start Thinking About Your Own Research Project

March 8

The Confessing Church AND Writing Conventions (Thesis and Argument)

- Read: Barnett, *For the Soul of the People* (1992), 47-73; Baranowski, "The Confessing Church and Antisemitism," in Ericksen & Heschel, eds., *Betrayal: German Churches and the Holocaust* (1999), 90-109; Hockenos, *A Church Divided* (2004), 15-41; Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Ch. 4.
- Primary Documents: The Theological Declaration of Barmen (1934); Statement of the Confessing Church (1934); An Address on the Theological Declaration by Pastor Hans Asmussen (1934); Memorandum Submitted to Chancellor Hitler (4 June 1936); *The New York Herald Tribune*, "Reich Clergy Warn Hitler," (July 28, 1936); A Letter to the Times of London (1936).
- Third Response Paper Due at Beginning of Class: Comparing Different Sources I

March 15

Spring Break

March 22

The Catholic Church AND Writing a Research Paper

- Read: Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (1964), selections; Carroll, *Constantine's Sword* (2001), selections; Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (2006), 238-249 and 254-260; Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Ch. 5.

- Primary Documents: The Concordat between Germany and the Holy See (20 July, 1933); Encyclical: With Burning Concern (10 March, 1937); Michael Cardinal von Faulhaber, *Judaism, Christianity & Germany* (1933), selections.
- Bring a Draft of Your Research Proposal to Class for Peer Review
- Fourth Response Paper Due at Beginning of Class: Comparing Different Sources II

March 29

Euthanasia AND Quoting and Documenting Your Sources

- Read: Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (1964), 258-267; Bryant, *Confronting the "Good Death" - Nazi Euthanasia on Trial* (2005), 19-62; Griech-Poelle, *Bishop von Galen: German Catholicism and National Socialism* (2002), 59-95; Benz, *The Concise History of the Third Reich* (2006), 171-179; Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, Ch. 6 & 7.
- Primary Documents: *Law for the Protection against Hereditarily Diseased Offspring* (1933); Adolf Hitler, "Memorandum Authorizing Involuntary Euthanasia" (1939); Ferdinand von Neureither, *Body Type and Crime* (1940), selections; Bishop Clemens August Count von Galen, "Sermon on Euthanasia" (1941); "Secret Report of the SS on the Public Response to the Movie: I Accuse" (1942); Rudolf Frercks, *Christianity and Sterilization* (1942), selection.
- Research Proposal Due
- Fifth Response Paper Due at Beginning of Class: Making an Argument I

March 31 – April 1

Individual Meetings to Discuss Research Proposals

April 5

Jews, Judaism, and the Churches AND Integrating Your History Skills I

- Read: Heschel, "When Jesus was an Aryan," 68-90; Lewy, "Pius XII, the Jews, and the German Catholic Church, 129-148 (both in Ericksen & Heschel, eds., *Betrayal* [1999]); Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich* (2006), 213-233.
- Primary Documents: Bonhoeffer, "The Church and the Jewish Question" (1933); The Marburg Statement on the Aryan Paragraph (1933); Martin Buber, "An Open Letter to Gerhard Kittel" (1933); Gerhard Kittel, "Response to Martin Buber" (1934); *Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor* (1935), Reinhard Heydrich, "Instructions for Kristallnacht" (1938); Walter Grundmann, "Jesus of Nazareth and Jewry" (1940).
- Sixth Response Paper Due at Beginning of Class: Making an Argument II

April 12

Religious Resistance to Hitler – The Example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer AND Integrating Your History Skills II

- Read: Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich* (2006), 234-249; Encyclopedia Article on Dietrich Bonhoeffer; Rosenbaum, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Jewish View," *JES* 18 (1981), 301-307.

- Primary Documents: Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (1943-44), selections.
- Movie in Class: *Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace* (2000).
- Some Guidelines on Making Oral Presentations

April 19

Voices from America AND Integrating Your History Skills III

- Read: Tillich, *Radio Broadcasts into Nazi Germany* (1942-1944), selections; Warren, *Radio Priest. Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (1996), 129-160; Coppa, *The Papacy, the Jews, and the Holocaust* (2006), 142-179.
- Primary Documents: Selected Articles from American Newspapers and Journals.

April 26

Presentations of Research Projects

- Draft of Final Paper Due at Beginning of Class

April 28-29

Meet with the Instructor to Discuss Draft of Final Paper

May 3

Presentations of Research Projects AND The Question of German Guilt

- Read: Hockenos, *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past* (2004), 75-100.
- Primary Documents: Message to the Congregations at the Treysa Conference (August 1945); Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt (October 1945); Bishop Theophil Wurm, "To the Christians in England" (December 1945); Council of Brethren of the Evangelical Church of Germany, "Darmstadt Statement" (August 1947); Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt* (1947), selections.

May 10

REVISED FINAL PAPER DUE BY TUESDAY, MAY 10, AT 8:00 P.M. IN MY MAILBOX #5010 MOSSE HUMANITIES