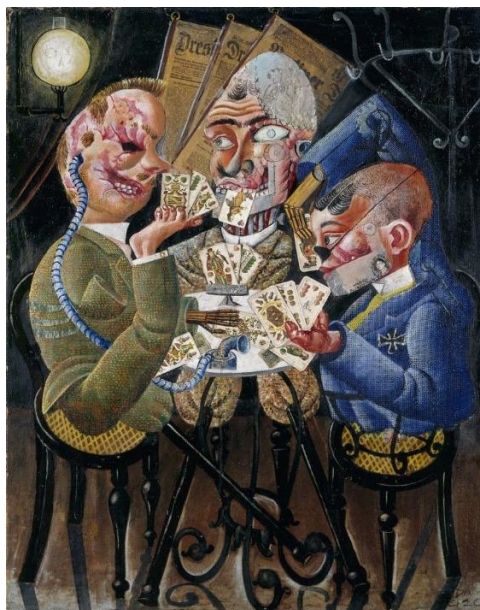


HISTORY 201 (008): THE HISTORIAN'S CRAFT: THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC AND THE RISE OF NAZISM



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

Course Information

Instructor:	Prof. Brandon Bloch (bjbloch@wisc.edu)
Office Hours:	Wed. 1-3 p.m. or by appointment (Humanities 5118 or online)
Semester:	Fall 2023
Class meetings:	Mon./Wed. 4-5:15 p.m. (Humanities 2261)
Modality:	In-person
Credits:	3
Requisites:	Satisfied Communication Part A requirement
Course Designations:	Gen Ed – Communication Part B Breadth – Humanities Level – Intermediate L&S Credit – Counts as Liberal Arts and Sciences credit in L&S
Canvas site:	https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/374501

Course Description

Germany's Weimar Republic (1918-1933) is perhaps the most notorious case of democratic failure in modern history. Its collapse remains a reference point in discussions about challenges to democracy today. But is it fair to evaluate the Weimar Republic only in light of its disastrous end? 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 the arts, gender, sexuality, and the built environment. Our sources will range widely across the Republic's vibrant cultural landscape, including film, journalism, painting, literature, architecture, and propaganda. One key theme will be the *contingency* of the Weimar Republic's rise and fall. We will aim to understand how the Republic's history was shaped by the decisions of individuals and groups who could not anticipate consequences that appear evident to us in hindsight. By exploring a wide range of perspectives on this complex period, students will sharpen their skills in historical thinking and writing.

Learning Outcomes

As a "Historian's Craft" seminar, this course focuses as much on historical content as on skills of research, analysis, writing, and speaking. These skills are not only foundational to the history major, but applicable to your other courses and the world beyond the university. Writing assignments will build in complexity over the semester, beginning with short analyses of assigned readings and culminating in a research paper. You will also give a presentation on your original research. 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:

- Articulate 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, images, film, and memoir
- 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 Books

Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*, trans. Oliver Pretzel (New York: Picador, 2002) [1939]. ISBN: 9780312421137.

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

These books are available for purchase at the University Book Store, and are placed on reserve at College Library. Keun 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 (30%)

Because this is a discussion-based seminar, your attendance and participation are crucial to the seminar’s success. The most productive discussions happen when classmates engage respectfully and constructively with one another’s ideas, and I will structure discussions to facilitate this dialogue. Keep in mind 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 I am happy to meet if you would like to discuss strategies for speaking in class. Participation in two in-class debates (Sept. 20 and Oct. 25), in-class writing exercises, and peer reviews will count toward your class participation grade.

You will have a free pass to miss two class meetings, for any reason. Please inform me if there are extenuating circumstances that require you to miss more than two classes. Unexcused absences will lower your participation grade.

2. Three Essays (25%)

During the first part of the course, you will complete three short essays. No outside research is required or expected. The first essay (worth 5%, graded Complete/Incomplete) is a *feuilleton* (literary editorial) of 800-1,000 words, in the style of a Weimar-era newspaper columnist. Two primary source essays of 1,000-1,200 words (approx. 3-4 double-spaced pages, worth 10% each) will ask you to analyze a primary source assigned for class. The essay assignments are designed to equip you with tools of historical thinking that you will apply in the research paper.

3. Research Paper (45%)

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 at least 2,100 words, excluding footnotes (approx. 7-8 double-spaced pages) that draws on at least three primary and two secondary sources. (One of these primary sources may be an assigned reading.) We will spend significant time in class discussing how to define a research question and locate sources, and I will provide a bibliography of English-language primary and secondary sources to get you started. The final paper is due on Wed. Dec. 20 at 5 p.m.

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

- Draft research question (due Oct. 30 in class)
- Draft research proposal & annotated bibliography (due Nov. 6 in class)
- Revised research proposal & annotated bibliography (due Nov. 13 in class)
- Outline & introductory paragraph (due Nov. 20 in class)
- First draft of paper (due Dec. 4 in class)
- In-class presentation, 5 mins. (Dec. 11 or 13 in class)

The intermediate assignments will count for 10% 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.

Late Work

If you are unable to meet an assignment deadline, please inform me as soon as possible and we can work out a plan for you to get caught up. I understand that life is unpredictable, and that you may require an extension due to illness, religious observance, or personal or family emergency. In cases of unexcused late work, I reserve the right to apply a deduction to late assignments out of fairness to other members of the class. 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 Thursday, Dec. 21, the last day of the exam period. Incomplete grades can only be granted to students who are unable to complete the final paper 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 encouraged 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 should 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 original author's 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. The course is designed to mitigate both of these factors. We will discuss how to cite your sources for each assignment; if you're unsure about a particular case, don't hesitate to ask. I have also implemented scaffolding in the final paper, with preliminary assignments guiding you through the steps of writing a research paper. If you are worried about not finishing an assignment as a deadline approaches, please email me! We can always work out solutions to help you 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 and Community Standards.

A note on ChatGPT and other generative AI tools: During our in-class writing workshops, we will experiment with ChatGPT as a tool for generating sample research questions, thesis statements, and bibliographies, in order to discuss the possibilities and limitations of this technology. Outside of class, you are permitted to use generative AI to help you brainstorm ideas and outline your essays. If you utilize AI in this capacity, you will be asked to append a note to your final paper explaining how you used the AI tool—including the prompts you submitted—and whether you found it helpful. However, you are not permitted to directly import text generated by AI into a final paper, or to submit a paper that is merely a revised version of a draft written by AI. I am implementing this policy for two reasons: a) AI does not function as a "source" (for reasons we will discuss in class); and b) the purpose of History 201 is to foster your skills as an independent thinker, researcher, and writer (which will allow you to use AI more critically in the future). Submitting text generated by AI in one of the three essays or research paper will be treated as an academic integrity violation.

We will have ongoing conversations about the use of generative AI as a writing tool throughout the semester. Further guidelines will be provided for each assignment.

Technology

You are welcome to use a laptop for taking notes and referencing readings during class. Of course, I ask that you refrain from checking email or social media. In this class, we will talk extensively about how to evaluate the reliability of historical sources, including sources found online. Please treat information generated by AI tools such as ChatGPT with caution, and you should not submit assignments written by artificial intelligence (see above). If you face challenges accessing the technology necessary to succeed in this course, please let me know as soon as possible.

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 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.

Honors Credit

Students taking this course for honors credit will be asked to complete two enrichment activities related to the course themes, to be chosen in consultation with Prof. Bloch. Enrichment activities could include attending a lecture, exhibit, or performance on campus; visiting the Library Special Collections or Wisconsin Historical Society; or completing additional readings on relevant current events in Germany and Europe. After completing each enrichment activity, you will be asked to contribute a one-paragraph response to the Canvas discussion board. Any student is welcome to sign up for the honors section; you do not need to be enrolled in the L&S Honors Program.

A Note on Classroom Environment

Studying history involves discussion of complex themes including race, 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 week of class, we will establish a Group Agreement setting out classroom discussion norms for 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 any concerns about the course content and discussions.

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:

University Writing Center

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

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 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.

McBurney Disability Resource Center

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

Contact the McBurney Center if you have or think you may have a disability to discuss a range of possible accommodations.

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, except the course books, are available as pdf documents on Canvas. See the Modules tab for week-by-week links to readings and assignments.

DATE/THEME	READING	ASSIGNMENT
Sept. 6: Course Introduction		
UNIT I: CREATING THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC		
Sept. 11: World War I & the German Revolution	– Rosa Luxemburg, “Our Program and the Political Situation” (1918)	
Sept. 13: Legacies of Defeat	– Joseph Roth, <i>What I Saw: Reports from Berlin, 1920-1933</i> , pp. 23-27, 63-68, 97-103, 119-123	
Sept. 18: Forging Democracy		– Feuilleton
Sept. 20: National Assembly Debate	– Excerpts from Weimar Party Platforms (1919-22)	

Sept. 25: The Nazi Party in the Early Weimar Republic <i>[Yom Kippur: class online & asynchronous]</i>	– “Program of the German Workers’ Party” (1920) – “Hitler’s Speech at the Putsch Trial” (1924) – Adolf Hitler, “Reestablishing the National Socialist German Workers Party” (1925)	
Sept. 27: Writing Workshop: Thesis Statements		– Draft thesis statement for Primary Source Essay #1
UNIT II: WEIMAR MODERNISMS		
Oct. 2: Artistic Modernisms	– Walter Gropius, “Program of the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar” (1919) – Gustav Hartlaub, “Introduction to ‘New Objectivity’: German Painting since Expressionism” (1925)	
Oct. 4: Modernism in Cinema	– FILM: <i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i>, dir. Robert Wiene (1920)	
Oct. 9: Modernism in the Visual Arts <i>[Chazen Museum]</i>		– Primary Source Essay #1
Oct. 11: The Sex Reform Movement and the New Woman	– Elsa Herrmann, “This is the New Woman” (1929) – “My Workday, My Weekend” (1930)	

Oct. 16: Library Research Skills <i>[Memorial Library]</i>		
Oct. 18: The New Woman in Literature	– Irmgard Keun, <i>The Artificial Silk Girl</i> (1932)	
UNIT III: REVOLUTION FROM THE RIGHT		
Oct. 23: The Depression and the Crisis of Democracy	– Ernst Thälmann, “The SPD and NSDAP are Twins” (1932) – Social Democratic Party, “The Iron Front for a United Front!” (1932) – Reports by Otto Meissner and Kurt Baron von Schröder (1932-33) – Diary entries of Louise Solmitz (1933)	
Oct. 25: Debate: (Why) Did Weimar Fail?		– Primary Source Essay #2
Oct. 30: Writing Workshop: Research Proposals		– Draft research question (bring to class, no Canvas submission)
Nov. 1: German Society and the Nazi “Seizure of Power”	– Sebastian Haffner, <i>Defying Hitler: A Memoir</i> (1939), pp. 3-71, 85-94, 105-135	

UNIT IV: RESEARCH PAPERS		
Nov. 6: Peer Workshop: Research Proposals		– Draft research proposal and annotated bibliography
Nov. 8: Individual Meetings <i>[No class meeting]</i>		– Sign up for 30-min. meeting with Prof. Bloch on Nov. 7 or 8
Nov. 13: Writing Workshop: Introductions and Source Analysis		– Revised research proposal and annotated bibliography
Nov. 15: Nazism in Power		
Nov. 20 Peer Workshop: Introductions and Outlines		– Outline and draft of introductory paragraph for final paper
Nov. 22: Weimar in Exile <i>[Class online & asynchronous]</i>		
Nov. 27: Writing Workshop: Quotation, Paraphrase, Citation		

Nov. 29: Writing Workshop: How to Revise		
Dec. 4: Concluding Reflections: Why study Weimar today?		
Dec. 6: Peer Workshop: Drafts		– First draft of final paper
Dec. 11: Research Presentations		– In class: 5-minute presentations on final papers
Dec. 13: Research Presentations		– In class: 5-minute presentations on final papers
FINAL PAPER DUE WED. DEC. 20 at 5 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