

HISTORY 3428F
Modern Germany, 1871 to the Present
Fall 2021
Tuesdays, 11:30-1:20, Location TBA
Course to be taught in-person, with synchronous delivery as backup

Instructor: Eli Nathans

Office Hours: 1:30-3:30 on Wednesdays
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This is a draft syllabus. Please see your course OWL site for the final syllabus.

Course Description:

Germany was arguably the dominant state in continental Europe from its founding until 1945. Since reunification it has again begun to play this role. Its achievements and its crimes cast long shadows on all its neighbors. We examine all aspects of this history, including domestic politics, social divisions, and culture.

Prerequisite(s):

1.0 History course at the 2200 level or above.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Antirequisite(s):

The former [History 3415E](#).

Course Syllabus:

All those who wish to understand modern European history must attempt to understand Germany, if only because of the consequences of its actions for other European nations and peoples. Among the challenges the historian faces are the multiple political revolutions that have taken place in the period we examine, each of which had significant consequences for Germans and Germany's neighbors. There were at least five distinct political regimes: the authoritarian monarchy of the German Empire (1871-1918); the Weimar Republic (1918-1933); the Nazi regime (1933-1945); and the two post-1945 regimes, the German Democratic Republic (1949-1990) and the Federal Republic of Germany (1949 to the present). One might consider the period of rule by the victors of the Second World War between 1945 and 1949 a separate regime, but that was clearly only an interregnum. Perhaps

the development of European institutions from the 1960s and 1970s is creating a sixth regime, one whose significance for the nation states that are its members is still being worked out. Historians have analyzed the character of each regime, its political structures and aims and actions, and the domestic tensions and foreign policies that characterized each.

In the period we examine, in common with other European nations, Germany experienced dramatic changes in the nature of its society. Industrialization led to a massive migration from the countryside to cities; over time raised living standards; created new forms of inequality; and caused periodic recessions and depressions, among the many other changes it produced. Women gained access to higher education and broader employment opportunities, and also new rights within marriage and as citizens. From the 1960s postwar migration to West Germany led to significant changes in the ethnic composition of the country. These and other social changes are also explored in the historical literature and in this class.

That Germany has been studied so intensively is in part a product of the country's highly developed system of public universities, supplemented by institutes dedicated to historical research, also publicly funded. These have provided institutional support for thousands of researchers. Germany has a well developed system of public and private archives. A sign of the significance of historical research in the Federal Republic is the existence of a government office, the Bundeszentrale fuer politische Bildung, the Federal Agency for Civic Education, that publishes historical studies – among other books – in very inexpensive paperback editions to make them accessible to the German public. Hundreds, if not thousands, of books and articles are published each year on German history.

A one semester class must leave many of the subjects that German historians have examined unexplored. But one must start somewhere. The class provides an introduction and a framework. In many areas it sacrifices breadth for depth, so that students may examine particular events, institutions, social forms, and cultural beliefs and practices in some detail. Assignments include both primary and secondary sources. The class will introduce students to several leading German historians whose work has been translated into English.

In the first seven weeks of the class Gordon Craig's *Germany 1866-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1978) will serve as our textbook. Because this book is eight hundred pages in length, I am only asking students to read selections, about half of the book. Craig's book is demanding; it has a high level of resolution. It emphasizes political and diplomatic history, and has less to say about social and cultural history, which we will explore in other assigned texts. As the dates covered by the book indicate, it is constructed in large part to explain the phenomenon of Nazism and the actions of the Nazi regime. That line of inquiry is central to the period we examine, but there are numerous others, and we shall explore them as well. On some occasions, in the view of the instructor of this class, Craig adopts too much the tone of the prosecutor. We will discuss some of these occasions in class. But many of his judgments have stood the test of time. Because of the date of publication, 1978, and its status as a classic, the instructor was able to acquire used copies for the class inexpensively. Several physical copies are also available in Western libraries, and the book can also be accessed on-line through Weldon.

In the last five weeks of the class we will rely on Peter Grieder's *The German Democratic Republic* (Palgrave, 2012) as our textbook with respect to our discussion of East Germany, and on photocopied selections from a range of secondary sources to support our examination of the Federal Republic of Germany, before 1990 also known as West Germany.

The class will also examine a range of other texts and documents and, where appropriate, excerpts from documentaries and other films.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

Explain the causes and consequences of, and relationships between, events and processes of historical change in modern German history, including industrialization; the political structures of the German state founded in 1871; changing gender roles and expectations; class conflicts; the events leading to the First World War and the effects of this war on German society; the challenges faced by the first German republic between 1918 and 1933; the rise of Nazism, the nature of Nazi rule, and the Second World War; the social and political institutions and practices of the German states created in 1949; and the causes and consequences of reunification;

Evaluate primary sources, demonstrating an ability to explain the meanings they contain and their historical significance;

Construct analytic, logical, and clear historical arguments in an essay;

Make informed, constructive, and concise contributions to discussions of complex subjects.

Course Materials:

Gordon Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1978). [to be supplied by the instructor, or borrowed from the Western library system, or read on-line through the Western library catalogue]

Peter Grieder, *The German Democratic Republic* (Palgrave, 2012).

Other materials will be made available in the Resources section of the course website.

Methods of Evaluation:

Class participation 15%

Weekly response papers (to be submitted in class) 15%

Essay (roughly 5-6,000 words) The essay is due at midnight on Tuesday, November 16. Please submit the essay to the Assignments section of the course website. 35%

Final Examination (to be taken during the fall exam period, December 10-21, at the date assigned by the Registrar's office). 35%

Class Participation: A passing grade for class participation in each meeting of the seminar will require active contribution to the discussion. Grading of class participation will reflect the quality, rather than the number, of comments made in class, or the length of comments.

The lowest weekly class participation grade will not be considered in determining the grade for the semester. Thus, if one seminar meeting is missed, under this provision the participation grade for this session will not be considered in the determination of the participation grade for the semester. All other weeks in which a student is absent from a meeting of the tutorial will be assigned a zero, unless a request for an accommodation from an Academic Counselor is sent to the course instructor, or a Self Reported Absence form is submitted, or an accommodation is granted for other reasons by the course instructor.

Response Papers: Because I believe that it will promote the quality of class discussions, because some students are more reluctant than others to participate in these discussions, and because I want to be able to provide at least some credit to students who have carefully done the reading for a class but are unable to, or for any other reason do not, demonstrate this in the class discussion, in most classes I will ask students to respond in writing to a question or questions about the reading. I plan to distribute only one response paper in each class, but it is conceivable that I would distribute two. I will ask students to write a response to the question or questions posed on the page of paper I will distribute (or, if the class is conducted via Zoom, to upload responses to questions to the Assignments section of the course OWL website). Students will usually have ten minutes for this exercise; if the question is complex, it might be a bit longer. This exercise is open book and open notes; students may consult any assigned course materials and any notes that they have prepared before class. I will post the grades on the response papers in the Gradebook section of the course OWL website.

Students are not informed before class of the question or questions to be posed on the response papers. Part of the purpose of the response paper is to test student preparation of the assigned reading for each class. As with respect to class participation, the lowest response paper grade will not be included in determining the final grade for this part of the evaluation of the course. If a student fails to complete a response paper because they were absent from the class and their Academic Counseling Office requests an accommodation, or if the student submits a Self Reported Absence form, or if the instructor grants an accommodation for another reason, the grade of zero will not be included in the determination of the grade for the semester. Response papers may not be completed after the class.

Essay: The course requires one essay, which will be due at midnight on Tuesday, November 16th, but may be submitted earlier. Please submit the essay in Word or as a pdf document to the Assignments section of the course website. Students will be given a selection of possible essay questions at the start of the semester. They may also create a question for themselves, but in this case must seek prior approval from the instructor. Late essays will be penalized one point per day for late submission, starting at 12:01 on Wednesday morning, November 17th. The penalty will be waived if the Academic Counseling Office requests an accommodation, or if the student submits a Self Reported Absence form (in the case of the SBA for 48 hours, in the case of an accommodation request for the period requested by the Academic Counseling Office).

Guidance in organizing and writing your essay, and with respect to the proper citation of historical sources, can be found in the *Guide to Researching and Writing a History Essay*, located in the Resources section of the course website.

Final Examination: The final examination, which will take place during the fall term examination period at the time assigned by the Registrar, is closed book and closed notes. No use of electronic devices is permitted during the examination. The exam will consist of three essay questions. Students will be asked to answer one question regarding each of three of the three time periods into which the material we have examined may be divided: 1871-1918; 1918-1945; and 1945-present. Students will be given a choice of two or three questions from which to choose with respect to each period. All of the questions on the exam will be drawn from a list of questions given to students several weeks before the exam.

Accommodation for missed assignment deadlines with a Self Reported Absence:

If a student reports a SRA for an assignment (i.e. an essay) the new due date will be 48 hours after the SRA was submitted.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Week of September 13

The German states before 1870. The path to unification. The German Empire during Bismarck's chancellorship, 1871-1890: key and characteristic episodes.

Week of September 20

German society and culture in the imperial period. Industrialization and the development of an urban working class. Gender roles. Jews and antisemitism. Friedrich Nietzsche.

Week of September 27

William II, a misfortune for Germany and for Europe. German foreign policy since 1871. German imperialism. The path to the First World War.

Week of October 4

The First World War.

Week of October 11

The Weimar Republic. Hitler and Nazism.

Week of October 18

Hitler's domestic and foreign policies, 1933-1939.

Week of October 25

The Second World War. Genocide and German Resistance to Nazism.

Week of November 1

Fall Study Break – No Classes

Week of November 8

The establishment of the Federal Republic: the Cold War, Konrad Adenauer, the social market economy, and integration with the West. Liberalization of politics and society. Immigration.

Week of November 15

The German Democratic Republic (DDR). The last years of Stalinism to the forced resignation of Walter Ulbricht in 1971.

Week of November 22

East German politics and society in the 1970s and 1980s: repression, dissent, and accommodation. Fall of the Berlin Wall. Reunification and its consequences.

Week of November 29

Germany after Reunification. The chancellorship of Angela Merkel.

Week of December 6

Germany and Europe. Preparing for the final examination.

Final Examination to take place at the time announced by the Registrar, during the fall examination period in December.

Use of Electronic Devices:

Students may not use electronic devices of any kind, or books or notes, during the in-class final examination.

Additional Statements:

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document,

<https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>,

for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness