

History of Germany
History 314, section 001
Prof. Marion Deshmukh
Fall, 2012

COURSE SYLLABUS



REQUIRED READINGS:

David G. Williamson, *Germany since 1815* (text)
Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*
Peter Schneider, *The German Comedy, Scenes of Life after the Wall*
(all readings are paperback)

Almost a generation ago, in the summer of 1989, thousands of East Germans migrated to West Germany, precipitating events which led to the fall of the Berlin Wall in November and the collapse of the German Democratic Republic by 1990. This course will examine how and why Germany unified after being divided since World War II. We will analyze the historic background that propelled the Germans to seek union.

This is an especially exciting semester since the Embassy of Germany has awarded George Mason University one of about thirty grants given to US universities to discuss and analyze German-American relationships under the rubric: "Think Transatlantic." As a result of receiving the grant, there will be a wealth of on-campus co-curricular activities, such as student conferences, papers, a student concert and reception, debates, talks by German scholars and journalists, exhibitions, etc. You are urged to participate in any or all of these! By participating, you will receive "extra-credit" which can be applied to your overall course grade. For example, if your overall course grade is between an A and a B and you have done extra credit, the grade may be raised to the next

level, depending on the quality of your extra credit work. Specific events will be announced at the appropriate times. I will pass out a schedule of events during the first week of classes.

The class itself will consist of lectures, guest speakers, class discussion, slides, and film.

The course is designed to introduce students to the political, social, and cultural history of 19th and 20th century Germany, with occasional discussions of Austrian history. Your papers and examinations will also demonstrate your critical thinking skills in analyzing texts, images and documents. For those of you with no prior knowledge of modern European history, you may wish to read (or re-read) the relevant chapters in a Western Civilization textbook for an overview of some of the issues we will cover in class. It will be assumed that material not covered in the lectures will be read in the texts. Some of the topics include the following:

- Historic background, Germany and the French Revolution (week 1)
- Restoration and the 1848 Revolutions (weeks 2-3)
- Wars of Unification, Bismarckian Germany (weeks 4-5)
- Wilhelmine Germany and World War I (weeks 6-7)
- Arts, Culture, and Society (week 8)
- The Weimar Republic and the Rise of Nazism (week 8-9)
- Hitler and the 3rd Reich (week 10)
- World War II and the Holocaust (week 11)
- Allied post-war occupation and the founding of the Federal Republic and Democratic Republic (week 12)
- Developments in the Federal Republic during the 1960s through the 1980s (week 13)
- Developments in the German Democratic Republic during the 1960s through the 1980s (week 14)
- A united Federal Republic, problems and prospects (week 15)



CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

There will be a midterm examination on Thursday, October 18. It will consist of broad essay questions and identifications. It will cover material through World War I (through page 162 in the text and material from class lectures). I will e-mail you study questions approximately one week before the exam. The midterm is worth 30% of the final grade. Please bring a blue examination book, available in the book store.

The final exam will be held on Tuesday, December 18, 1:30-4:15. It will consist of the remainder of the text and class lectures. It will be a three hour in-class exam similar in format to the midterm (essays and identifications). The exam will count 40% of the final grade. Study questions will be e-mailed a week before the final exam. There are no make up exams or late papers accepted without a doctor's certificate. Please mark your calendars when exams are scheduled and papers are due.

In addition, there are several written assignments based on your outside readings. After reading each book, please write a 3-5 page, typed and double-spaced summary and analysis of the book as it reflects the historical period under study. I have assigned the readings in order for you to get another sense of the various issues facing Germans during different historical periods.

The first outside reading, *Ordinary Men*, is a historical account based on primary documents and readings and is non-fiction. Here you should describe the author's main thesis and discuss whether he argues his thesis in a convincing manner. The second reading, *A German Comedy*, is by a novelist and essayist, though his brief essays are also non-fiction. In this review, you should discuss how effectively he conveys the atmosphere surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

After briefly summarizing the main themes, spend the remainder of your essay analyzing the book's relevance for a history course. Study questions guiding you through the readings will be e-mailed to you a week prior to the due date

Thursday, November 15: Turn in review of Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men*

Thursday, December 6, Turn in review of Peter Schneider's *A German Comedy*
Each reports counts 10% (30% total) No late papers will be accepted without a doctor's certificate.

Grading: Midterm exam, 30%
Final exam, 40%

3 essays on outside readings, 15% each, and 30% total
Total: 100%

Regular classroom attendance is expected as is arrival in class on time.

Class sign-in sheets will be passed around each week at the beginning of class. Please bring your textbook along to class. While we may not discuss specific items from the text each time, we will, on occasion, read and discuss some of the excerpts from primary source documents. The author has provided a number of key documents in the back of the book (pp. 287-425) Most of the questions on the midterm and final exams will be from material discussed and emphasized in class.

See the Fall, 2012 *Schedule of Classes* for the academic calendar, which lists add/drop dates, holidays, etc. The GMU Honor Code is followed in this class regarding issues of cheating and plagiarism.

For the courtesy of your colleagues and myself, please turn off your cell phone before class. No text messaging is allowed in class. If you bring a laptop, it is only to be used to take class notes, not for web surfing or e-mailing. Other electronic gadgetry such as I Pods etc. are also to be stowed away during class.

Please attach this syllabus to your notebook for easy reference and to prevent loss.

Office Hours: Tuesday, 10-12
Thursday, 10-12, or by appointment
338 Robinson B, (703) 993-2149; e-mail: mdeshmuk@gmu.edu

Important Dates: Last day to add courses: Sept.4, 2012
Last day to drop courses: Sept. 28, 2012

If you are a student with a disability and need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.



Reading Assignments in textbook:

Guidelines for reading the text:

There are many names, dates, events, and concepts covered by the textbook. The author presents a chronology of key events and key questions to think about in each chapter. He also defines terms that may be new to you. The chapters' conclusions highlight and recapitulate the chapters' main themes. You will not be required to memorize too many facts and concepts, but I will point out the major ideas and information that you should retain for the examinations. You will also receive study guides prior to each test.

A good way to approach the text is to **highlight the major ideas with yellow markers**, then, using 3 x 5 or 5 x 7 note cards, writing these highlighted ideas down. By reviewing these cards, you will retain more information for a longer period of time.

You will be able to find additional material on various websites, such as H-German, Euro-Docs, and the website of the German Historical Institute (ghi-dc.org) which has assembled a large text and image history of Germany. Our library's holdings of German history books and journals are extensive. And, through the Washington Consortium of Libraries, of which George Mason is a member, one can borrow virtually any major text in the field. We also have an excellent film library of feature films and documentaries, several of which will be shown in class.

Jetzt anfangen! (Let's now begin!)

