

Germany after Nazism

History 499-005
M 16:30-19:10
Fall 2019
Planetary Hall 126

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Office Hours: M, 13:00-15:00
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Course Description

In the years following the end of World War Two, Germany underwent a series of radical changes. It was occupied by the four Allied Powers—the United States, Soviet Union, UK, and France—and divided into four individually governed occupation zones. Prominent Nazis were put on trial at Nuremberg for war crimes and crimes against humanity, while thousands of ordinary Germans were tried, imprisoned, or removed from their jobs on suspicion of Nazi sympathies. Other Germans, many of them women whose husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons the war had claimed, took it upon themselves to rebuild a country that Allied firebombing had reduced to rubble. The newly-formed United Nations labored to help millions of displaced persons across Europe, in particular survivors of the Holocaust and those brought to Nazi Germany as forced laborers. The United States and the Soviet Union worked with German leaders who had resisted Nazism to found two competing political systems in what would become West and East Germany. These years saw the beginning of the Cold War, including the dramatic Berlin blockade and airlift. In this seminar, you will research and write a substantial paper on some aspect of German politics, society, or culture during the occupation, and present your findings at the end of the semester.

Course Goals and Structure

As a capstone research seminar, this course aims to guide you through the process of defining, researching, and writing a substantial, original paper. Throughout this course you will work on your writing faculties and hone your ability to engage in qualitative analysis of historical sources.

This seminar is designated as an RS (Research and Scholarship) course and is part of the Mason Impact. This means that you are required to submit your final paper to the undergraduate education office at the end of the semester, the title of which will be noted on a separate line in your transcript.



This seminar also fulfills the requirements for Mason Core Synthesis/Writing Intensive and meets the following learning outcomes: 1. Communicate effectively in both oral and written forms, applying appropriate rhetorical standards (e.g., audience adaptation, language, argument, organization, evidence, etc.); 2. Using perspectives from two or more disciplines, connect issues in a given field to wider intellectual, community or societal concerns; 3. Apply critical thinking skills to evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources.

The first six weeks of the semester will be spent in seminar-style discussions of relevant secondary materials. During that time you will also propose a research topic and begin gathering sources. In the subsequent five weeks, we will meet periodically to workshop parts of your papers. And in the final weeks, you will each give a twenty-minute presentation about your findings. There will be a class field trip to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives in Washington, DC on September 16.

Required Texts

1. Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone*
2. Anita Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*
3. Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*

Schedule

August 26

Mark Mazower, "[Changing Trends in the Historiography of Postwar Europe, East and West](#)," *International Labor and Working-Class History*

Fritz Stern, *Five Germanys I Have Known*, Chapter 5 [Blackboard]

Tony Judt, *Postwar*, Chapter 2 [Blackboard]

September 2

Labor Day – No Class

September 9

Visit from GMU Special Collections Archivist

Anita Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*

Kim Christian Priemel, "[Consigning Justice to History: Transitional Trials after the Second World War](#)," *The Historical Journal*

September 16

****Trip to Archives of US Holocaust Memorial Museum; Trip Details TBA****

****Provisional Research Question Due****

September 23

Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*

Jennifer Evans, "[BahnhofBoys: Policing Male Prostitution in Post-Nazi Berlin](#)," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*

September 30

Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone*

Edith Sheffer, "[On Edge: Building the Border in East and West Germany](#)," *Central European History*

****Updated Research Question and Provisional Bibliography Due****

October 7

No Class - Research Time and Individual Meetings

October 15

No Class - Research Time and Individual Meetings

****Outline Due****

October 21

****Dr. Edith Sheffer will be give a lecture on the Iron Curtain in Germany at 5pm, location TBA. Come prepared with questions!****

October 28

Workshop

****5-page section due****

November 4

Workshop

November 11

Presentations

November 18
Presentations

November 25
Presentations

****Optional: Submit Draft of Final Paper****

December 2
Presentations

****Final Papers Due 5pm, December 16****

Course Information

Grading

Participation—20%
Reading Responses—12%
Provisional Research Question—5%
Provisional Bibliography—5%
Paper Outline—5%
5-Page Section—10%
Presentation—10%
Final Paper—33%

Attendance and Participation

Participation in discussion will be worth 20% of your final grade. Attendance, which will be taken at the start of class, will account for 20% of your participation grade and performance in discussion will account for the remaining 80%. In other words, participation is a significant component of your course performance. More than two absences will severely affect your participation grade, and insufficient attendance will result in failure of the course. If you have a prolonged illness or a personal situation that might lead to more than two absences, you should contact me in advance.

It is critical that you actively engage in the discussion of readings. Come to class prepared to make comments, express opinions, and ask questions that will move discussion forward. Actions that will adversely affect your participation grade include absences from class, coming to class unprepared, and displaying a lack of respect for your classmates.

Please do not hesitate to check in with me throughout the semester to discuss your in-class participation should you have any questions or concerns.

Assignments

Reading Responses

For the first four discussions, you will write one-page responses to the week's readings. I have chosen these readings to give you a sense of the kind of research being done on the history of postwar Germany to aid you in your formulation of a research topic. These responses should help you to think about what you would like to research, what kind of scholarship exists on these questions, and what sorts of sources you might be able to access. Each individual response is due at the beginning of class that week and is 3% of your final grade.

Provisional Research Question

By the end of the fourth week, you will formulate a research question and submit it in writing. It should be at least one paragraph in length and describe a historiographical question or problem that you hope to answer or solve. My expectation is that this initial research question will be a starting point, not necessarily the topic you actually wind up researching. 5% of your final grade.

Provisional Bibliography

By the end of the sixth week, you must have solidified your research question. You will turn in a revised question (it may be entirely different from what you submitted in week 4) along with a tentative bibliography. The bibliography must contain primary and secondary sources and represent an ambitious, but realistic research plan. Because each project will vary in scope, there are no requirements about the number of sources you must have in the bibliography. 5% of your final grade.

Paper Outline

At the end of eighth week, you must submit an outline of your paper. This should be as detailed an outline as possible so that I can give feedback on your sources, methods, and arguments. 5% of your final grade.

5-Page Paper Section

By the beginning of the tenth week, you must submit a section of your final paper. This should not be your introduction or conclusion, but rather a substantial piece of analysis. We will workshop these sections as a group in Weeks 10 and 11. 10% of your final grade.

Project Presentations

In the final four weeks, you will each present your research. These presentations should take the form of talks, but you are free to decide their parameters. They should be twenty minutes in length and leave time for twenty minutes of questions afterwards. You are also expected to devote your attention to your classmates' presentations and ask questions of them. You will be graded on both your presentation and your participation in general. 10% of your final grade.

Final Paper

Your final research paper must be 6,000-7,000 words (excluding notes and bibliography). It should define a historiographical question and set out to answer it using primary sources. This paper should be of journal article quality. You may examine articles from *Central European History*, *The Journal of Contemporary History*, or *The Journal of the History of Sexuality* (among others) as models. You have the option of submitting a draft of your paper to me in the fourteenth week for feedback before it is due at 5pm on December 16. In addition to emailing the paper to me, you must also submit it at <https://uge.gmu.edu/students-submit-a-project> (December 16 is the university deadline for this submission). 33% of your final grade.

Writing Assessment

Your writing will be evaluated for its argumentation, style, and mechanical consistency. In each of your assignments you must advance and support clear interpretations of primary sources and demonstrate an understanding of how these interpretations relate to the arguments of secondary sources we read. You should endeavor to write in a clear, readable style. Your writing must be free of typographical and grammatical errors. In each of these three areas, I will work with you throughout the semester to improve your writing. One of the primary goals of this course is the development of each student's writing abilities.

Office Hours

Please feel free to come to my office hours to discuss any concerns, questions, or conundrums. I'm happy to discuss the course, writing, history, or academic work more generally.

Digital Communication

I will communicate with you using your Mason email address. Please check it regularly.

Writing Resources

George Mason's Writing Center is an excellent place to get help on your writing at all levels. I encourage all of you to make use of their writing tutors when working on written assignments throughout the semester.

Submissions and Extensions

Failure to complete any one graded assignment will result in a failing grade for the semester. Late submissions will be penalized 1/3 grade per day. (An A- becomes a B+, for instance). Students may request short-term extensions on assignments up to 24 hours before the due date.

Electronic Devices

The use of laptop computers is not allowed. All phones and other electronic devices are to be set on silent and put away during discussion.

Special Needs

Students with disabilities or other special needs will receive all appropriate accommodations. Please email me or speak with me after class if you require such accommodation.

Diversity + Inclusion

This course strives to promote a culture of inclusion and belonging where diverse opinions, backgrounds, and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected, consistent with [Mason's Diversity Statement](#).

I will use whatever name and pronoun/s by which you wish to be addressed. You should feel free to introduce yourself in this way in class or to speak to me in private if you would prefer.

Title IX

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Honor Code

All students are responsible for understanding and complying with the George Mason Honor Code. For details, see <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>