Course Description
The Berlin Wall remains one of the Cold War’s most potent symbols, a representation of the physical and ideological divisions that shaped the world over the course of forty years. In this seminar we will examine Germany in the Cold War era, reading historical scholarship about both the East German communist dictatorship and the West German democracy. We will look at how early historiography, which viewed East Germany through the lens of totalitarianism, has given way to new approaches that take up questions of citizenship and sovereignty in both Germanies through perspectives of gender, sexuality, race, ideology, and class. Over the course of the semester, we will ponder how the Cold War shaped each Germany’s path, how ordinary people engaged in the geopolitical struggles of the Cold War, and how national and international priorities intersected in the two German states.
Course Goals + Expectations
This course aims to introduce students to contemporary scholarship on Cold War-era Germany. As a discussion-based seminar, it will hone students’ oral faculties. A substantial written assignment at the end of the course will ask students to apply what they have learned. Each week we will discuss one book related to Germany in the Cold War. You should read these books carefully and come prepared to discuss them in detail.

Required Texts
1. Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler*
2. Monica Black, *A Demon-Haunted Land*
4. Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State*
5. Thomas Fleischman, *Communist Pigs*
6. Andrew Demshuk, *Bowling for Communism*
7. Robert Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*
8. Jennifer Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany*
9. Tiffany Florvil, *Mobilizing Black Germany*
10. Astrid Eckert, *West Germany and the Iron Curtain*
11. Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*
12. Samuel Clowes Huneke, *States of Liberation*
13. Susan Neiman, *Learning from the Germans*

Schedule

January 25 | Introduction to Germany in the Cold War

Getting over the Nazis

February 1 | Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler*

February 8 | Monica Black, *A Demon-Haunted Land*

February 15 | Elizabeth Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make?*
East Germany

February 22 | Mary Fulbrook, *The People’s State*

March 1 | Thomas Fleischman, *Communist Pigs*

March 8 | Andrew Demshuk, *Bowling for Communism*

**March 15 | Spring Recess**

West Germany

March 22 | Robert Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*

March 29 | Jennifer Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany*

April 5 | Tiffany Florvil, *Mobilizing Black Germany*

Comparative Approaches

April 12 | Astrid Eckert, *West Germany and the Iron Curtain*

April 19 | Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*

April 26 | Samuel Clowes Huneke, *States of Liberation*

May 3 | Susan Neiman, *Learning from the Germans*

Course Information

Grading

Participation—20%
Leading Discussion—20%
Book Review—20%
Final Project—40%
**Attendance and Participation**

Participation is worth 20% of your final grade. Of that, attendance will account for 20% of your participation grade, another 20% will come from responding to one of the Blackboard discussion questions before class starts on Tuesday, and participation in class discussion will account for the remaining 60%. In other words, participation is a significant component of your course performance. More than two absences will severely affect a student’s participation grade, and insufficient attendance will result in failure of the course. If a student has a prolonged illness or a personal situation that might lead to more than two absences, the student should contact me in advance and may be provided an opportunity to make up the work missed.

It is critical that all students 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**

**Leading Discussion:** Each week one (and sometimes two) students will lead discussion. This means you will submit a 1-page, single-spaced response to that week’s book by noon of the Monday before class, in which you draw out the book’s principal themes and arguments, its supporting evidence, and any critiques you have of it. You will also post five discussion questions on the Blackboard discussion board by noon on Monday before class, to which other students will respond. These questions and responses will serve as a springboard for class discussion. You will be responsible for introducing the book and its author at the start of class and for using your questions to guide discussion.

**Book Review:** You will write a 1,500-word book review. You will choose a book outside the syllabus that covers something of particular interest to you in the history of Cold War Germany. I will distribute a list of possible books to choose from at the beginning of the semester, although you are free to choose your own. Your essay should explicate the book, explaining and critiquing its interventions in the historiography. You should draw out what its key research questions are, how the author/s answer them, and give your own view of the book’s merits. The
kind of synthetic thinking and writing necessary for a book review is an important skill for scholars as they plan their own research agendas. Ideally this paper will help prepare you for your final paper. This review is due by 11:59 PM on March 25 and is worth 20% of your grade.

Final Project: In consultation with me, you will design and complete a substantial final project related to the course material. This project should be equivalent in work to a paper of approximately 4,000 words. This project may take the form of an historiographical review essay, research paper, course plan (with annotated syllabus and lesson plans), research proposal, museum exhibit, or some other scholarly project. If you choose to write an historiographical review essay, it must be based on a minimum of four scholarly monographs, one of which may be drawn from the syllabus and one of which may be the book you review in your first paper. By March 31 you should have met with me to discuss possible projects. The project will be due by 11:59 PM on May 17.

Citation Style
Please use Chicago-style footnotes in all of your papers.

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**

You may use a laptop or similar electronic device if you have notes or readings stored on it. 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.

**COVID-19**

All students taking courses with a face-to-face component are required to follow the university’s public health and safety precautions and procedures outlined on the university Safe Return to Campus webpage (https://www2.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus). Similarly, all students in face-to-face and hybrid courses must also complete the Mason COVID Health Check daily, seven days a week. The COVID Health Check system uses a color code system and students will receive
either a Green, Yellow, Red, or Blue email response. Only students who receive a “green” notification are permitted to attend courses with a face-to-face component. If you suspect that you are sick or have been directed to self-isolate, please quarantine or get testing. Faculty are allowed to ask you to show them that you have received a Green email and are thereby permitted to be in class.

Students are required to follow Mason’s current policy about facemask-wearing. As of August 11, 2021, all community members are required to wear a facemask in all indoor settings, including classrooms. An appropriate facemask must cover your nose and mouth at all times in our classroom. If this policy changes, you will be informed; however, students who prefer to wear masks will always be welcome in the classroom.

Campus Closure or Emergency Class Cancelation
If the campus closes, or if a class meeting needs to be canceled or adjusted due to weather or other concern, students should check Blackboard and their George Mason emails for updates on how to continue learning and for information about any changes to events or assignments.

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/