

Modern German History

History 314 DL 1
Asynchronous
Fall 2022

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Office Hours: Virtual, by appointment
Optional Weekly Discussion Meeting Wednesday 7PM

Course Description

Where is Germany? That's a harder question than it may seem, since over the past two hundred years, the answers have changed drastically. The very number of German countries has varied wildly, as has the size and scope of the various German empires. Who is a German? This is also a difficult question, as Germans have argued about who and what is German throughout the modern era. Which religion, which gender role, which language, which political beliefs, which cultural constructs, which race, makes a German? Again, these questions have different answers at different times.

This course will engage with Germany, its citizens, and culture from the mid-nineteenth century to now. We will take a rather broad view of both Germany and Germans, as is historically appropriate. The Holy Roman Empire included the Austrian Netherlands and Bohemia, Imperial Germany incorporated millions of Poles and other minorities, Nazi Germany claimed Germans lived all over Europe, and today's Germans include people from around the world. In addition, German speakers have lived throughout Eastern and Central Europe from Vienna to the Volga for centuries. This very diversity has driven much of German history, as minority rights and the very definition of German have swung wildly from coexistence and integration to colonization and genocide.

This course looks at these questions from the mid nineteenth century, when many of them began to bubble up as part of the democratic movements that swept Europe in 1848, until the present. We will explore Germany through the so-called Second Empire of Bismarck and its contemporary German Empire – Austria-Hungary, the First World War, Weimar and the Habsburg successor states, the Nazi dictatorship, the Second World War, and its divided legacy in the Cold War.

Course Information

Course Goals + Expectations

This course is being offered in an online, asynchronous format. As such, you will have to listen to lectures on your own (usually two per week). The lectures will be pre-recorded in audio / visual files available on Blackboard. There will also be slides of images that correspond to the lectures, which will also be available on Blackboard. In addition to office hours, which you may schedule with me individually, I will hold a class discussion session Thursday evening on Zoom at whatever time is most useful to the class. (We will hold a survey the first week of class). These sessions are for class discussion and questions. There will be no attendance taken for these

session—they are purely a resource for you better to understand the course material and meet your classmates.

Grading

Participation in Weekly Discussion (2x per week) — 25%

Book Review—10%

Primary Source Review — 10%

Research Paper — 30%

Peer Review – 5%

Final Exam — 20%

Assignments

Weekly Discussion boards

Each week we will have a class discussion on Blackboard. Participation is worth 25% of your final grade. I will post questions relating to the week's lectures and readings. The questions will be open ended and allow you to analyze material from the week. You must respond **at least twice a week**: once directly to one of the questions I pose, and once again to one of your classmate's responses. Both posts should be substantive - at least a short paragraph, and should draw on (and reference) a total of at least three different readings (at least two for the original post, and one for the response). Your grade will reflect your participation, and the quality of your responses. You must complete both your initial post by **midnight Thursday of each week** and your responses by **midnight on Friday of each week**.

The major written assignment for this class is a 10-15 page research paper. We will do a few additional written assignments to help you prepare for that paper.

Book Review

In consultation with your professor, you will select an academic book on a topic in modern German (or Austrian) history and write a 750 word review. This review should be modeled after reviews in academic journals, and thus should cover the book's major themes, thesis, and contributions to the field. It is highly recommended that use this review to scope out your eventual research paper topic. Further instructions and an example will be posted on Blackboard.

Due midnight on September 15. 10% of your final grade.

Primary Source Review

In consultation with your professor, you will select a book length primary source on a topic in modern German (or Austrian) history. Depending on your research interests, this can be a memoir, a diary, a novel, political work (of its time), collection of sources, etc. You will then write a 1000 word paper on the primary source's origin, contents, and context. You will also address the source's use for academic research. It is highly recommended that you review a book relevant to your research paper topic. Further instructions and an example will be posted on Blackboard.

Due midnight on 13 October. 10% of your final grade.

Research Paper

You will write a 10-15 page research paper. This should address a question, person, movement, or event in German, Austrian, or Central European history and should be based on at least five primary sources and five academic books or articles. It is highly recommended that you turn in outlines, rough drafts, and source lists into the professor. Further instruction will be posted on Blackboard. You will need to select a topic for your paper by the end of September.

Final draft due at midnight, 22 November. 30% of your final grade.

Peer Review

Peer review is one of the most valuable sources of feedback and improvement. You will submit a rough draft of your paper to two of your peers by midnight 14 November and then fill out a peer review sheet. Peer review sheets are due back to the author and the professor by midnight, 18 November. 5% of your final grade.

Final Exam

The final exam will consist of a series of short essay questions and will be open book and open note. It will cover materials from both lecture and readings over the entire semester. 20% of your final grade.

Writing Requirements

While this is not an English class, History requires clear, coherent, and professional writing. Your writing will be evaluated for consistency, style and argument. You should present clear analysis of primary and secondary sources, and relate them to your thesis. You should demonstrate understanding of your sources and how they related to broader context. Your writing should be free of grammatical errors and should be in 12 point, double spaced font.

In addition, as a historian, you should use Chicago-style footnotes in your papers and exams. Any piece of factual information you reference or analysis that is not your work should be cited. This will help you avoid plagiarism and is professionally necessary - give other scholars and authors credit. Footnotes are not necessary for weekly discussion boards, though you should make it clear what documents and authors you are referring to.

Please contact the professor if you have questions about style, citations, or other writing questions.

Office Hours

Please feel free to schedule a meeting with me 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.

Submissions and Extensions

Failure to complete any one graded assignment will result in a failing grade for the semester. Late submissions will be penalized 10% per day. You may request short-term extensions on assignments up to 24 hours before the due date, which I will evaluate on a case-by-case basis. Please stay in touch with me if you have any concerns about meeting deadlines—I understand that everyone's lives are in a state of upheaval due COVID, politics, the economy, etc. If you think you will need an extension, please contact me before the deadline.

Special Needs

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

In addition, I understand that all of us have been through a great deal of stress and disruption thanks to COVID-19, conversations around policing in the United States, politics in general, climate change, and so much else. Also, we are a diverse class with a variety of responsibilities outside of school. If you are struggling with course work, or in general, please contact me so I can adjust course deadlines and expectations and help you find assistance as appropriate.

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.

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/>

Required Texts

The required books can be purchased/rented for around \$40. The course will also use a variety of primary and academic readings which will be posted on Blackboard or online. *A Concise History of Germany* will provide a narrative overview of the topic, while *Germany: A Nation in its Time* is a more interpretive look at German history through the lens of nationalism. There will be substantial primary and secondary sources posted on Blackboard. .

1. Helmut Walser Smith, *Germany: A Nation in its Time* (used around \$20)
2. Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, 3rd Edition (used from \$21) (Earlier editions of Fulbrook are fine, though their coverage of contemporary events is missing).

Schedule

Week 1: Germany Pre-unification (22-26 August)

Lecture 1: The German lands and states in the early 19th century

Lecture 2: The Revolutions of 1848

Readings:

Fulbrook, 94-122.

Smith, chapter 7.

Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Week 2: German Unification (29 August – 2 September)

Lecture 1: Otto von Bismarck and the Austro-Prussian War

Lecture 2: The Franco-Prussian War and Aftermath

Readings:

Fulbrook, 122-131

Smith, chapter 8.

Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Week 3: The German Empire I (5-9 September)

Lecture 1: Second Reich Politics

Lecture 2: Second Reich Culture and Society

Readings:

Fulbrook, 131-144

Smith, chapter 9.

Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Week 4: The German Empire II (12-16 September)

Lecture 1: Germany on the World Stage

Lecture 2: Austria-Hungary at Home and Abroad

Readings:

Fulbrook, 144-148

Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Paper 1 - Book Review - Due 15 September by Midnight

Week 5: World War I (Part I) (19-23 September)

Lecture 1: 1914 - Causes and Impacts at Home

Lecture 2: At the Front

Readings:

Fulbrook, 148-155

Smith, chapter 10

Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Week 6: World War I (Part II) (26-30 September)

Lecture 1: The Home Front - Total War

Lecture 2: The Collapse of Germany and the Treaty of Versailles

Readings:

Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Week 7: Revolution and Aftermath (3-7 October)

Lecture 1: The German Revolution and Aftermath

Lecture 2: Austria after World War I

Readings:

Fulbrook: 155-167

Week 8: The Weimar Republic (10-14 October)

Lecture 1: The Formation and Successes of the Weimar Republic

Lecture 2: Troubles in the Weimar Republic; Interwar Austria

Readings:

Fulbrook: 167-172

Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Paper - Primary Source Review - Due 13 October by Midnight

Week 9: Nazism (17-21 October)

Lecture 1: Nazis - Origins to Takeover

Lecture 2: The Nazi Regime in Power

Readings:

Fulbrook, 172-187

Smith, Chapter 11.

Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Week 10: World War II (24-28 October)

Lecture 1: Nazi Years of Victory

Lecture 2: Europe Under Nazi Occupation

Readings:

Fulbrook, 187-197

Readings Posted on Blackboard

Week 11: The Holocaust (31 October – 4 November)

Lecture 1: Origins and Methods

Lecture 2: Resistance and Rescue

Readings:

Fulbrook, 197-204

Smith, Chapter 11

Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Week 12: World War II (Part II) (7-11 November)

Lecture 1: Home Front - Total War Revisited

Lecture 2: Losing the War

Readings:

Readings Posted on Blackboard

Week 13: Cold War Germany I (14-18 November)

Lecture 1: Occupied Germany

Lecture 2: The German Democratic Republic (East Germany)

Readings:

Fulbrook, 205-230, 235-243
Smith, chapter 13.
Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Rough Draft of Research Paper due midnight 14 November

Peer Reviews due 18 November

Week 14: Cold War Germany II (21-25 November)

Lecture 1: The Federal Republic of Germany

Lecture 2: None, Thanksgiving Break

Readings:

Fulbrook, 230-235, 243-249
Smith, chapter 14.
Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

Research Paper due midnight, 22 November

Week 15: Contemporary Germany (28 November – 2 December)

Lecture 1: Reunification: Germany's Success Story?

Lecture 2: Growing Pains - the European Union, Immigration, the AfD, and now Ukraine

Readings:

Fulbrook, 250-273
Smith, epilogue.
Additional Readings Posted on Blackboard

****Final Exam due midnight at December 12****