In a recent article, the historian Mary Fulbrook noted that “one of the most striking features of German contemporary history to someone socialized within Anglo-American academia is the extraordinarily close relationship which in Germany is often assumed to exist between historical approaches and positions on the political spectrum.” For better or worse, German historical debates have taken on “dimensions of personal involvement and vituperation that, witnessed by outsiders, might seem not merely out of proportion but indeed entirely out of place in the academic world.” Why has German historiography been so politicized and its debates so acrimonious?

This seminar investigates key controversies within the German historical profession since the end of the Second World War. The aim of the course is to familiarize students with central questions in German history while exploring issues and approaches in historical method. Beyond an examination of the specific historiographical questions at stake in these debates and a re-consideration of the texts that ignited the controversies, the seminar will provide students with a broad framework to track and analyze the shifting place of National Socialism and the Holocaust within German historiography. Because many of these debates – particularly the Fischer Controversy, the debate about the German Sonderweg, and the Goldhagen controversy – involved historians from outside Germany, the course will acquaint students with the complex positionality of writing and thinking about German history.

**Course Requirements:**

Active class participation:  50%
Historiographical Essay:  50%

**Active class participation** means arriving at class prepared to discuss the week’s readings. For class preparation, I strongly recommend that you find out basic biographical information about the scholars and other personalities involved in the controversies we examine.

Each of you will pick one date to **report on the “presented readings”**. Some of the readings to be presented in class are in German, so those of you who read German will soon become immensely popular. The readings slated for presentation are rather uneven in quantity. We will work out individual solutions for your presentation.

Each of you will **write an introduction to one class meeting** and **facilitate our discussion** of that meeting. The introduction will be a short text (1-2 paragraphs) summarizing the scholarly debate we examine that day, mapping out what – in your opinion – was/is at stake in that debate, and pointing out some key questions that you think we should address in the class
meeting. You will post the introduction on our LL conference by Tuesday, 6pm. You will also lead the discussion of that class meeting, at least for the first hour or so.

Each of you will write one **historiographical paper** (~20pp.) relating to German history. In an ideal case, you will find a historiographical debate that connects to your own honors thesis or dissertation work. The debate you research does not need to be as high profile as the ones on the syllabus. Please see me during office hours early in the semester to discuss a possible topic. The paper is **due December 12**.

**Core Readings:**

**AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT THE DRUID HILL BOOKSTORE IN EMOY VILLAGE:**


**ON 1 DAY RESERVE:**

Berger, *The Search for Normality*

Blackbourn/Eley, *Peculiarities of German History*

Fischer, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War*

Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*

Maier, *The Unmasterable Past.*

Müller, *Another Country.*

Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871-1918*

*Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original documents of the Historikerstreit*

For older publications such as Eley/Blackbourn’s *Peculiarities* or Wehler’s *German Empire*, you may want to check online sites for used books.

Core readings must be read by **everyone**; some readings will be presented by students who will report about them in class; further readings are listed to offer background for future reference.

**Finding Articles:** Some articles are placed on E-reserve. Other articles are available through the library’s databases (JSTOR, for example). You will receive copies of some articles directly from the professor.

NOTE that the further we move historiographically into the present, the more difficult it becomes to find a corpus of English language literature on the controversies we will study. For obvious reasons, the core texts (for our purposes, you can think of them as primary sources) were written in German. You will find that a compilation of multiple essays, rather than one core text, provides the best overview and basis for understanding of more recent controversies.
Course Schedule:

Week 1, September 7:  The Peculiarities of German Historiographical Controversies

Core Readings:

Further Readings: (on historical controversies in the German profession, pertinent to many controversies we will study over the course of the term)
Lehmann, Hartmut (ed.): Historikerkontroversen (Göttingen: Wallstein 2001).

Week 2, September 14:  The German Historical Profession in the 20th Century

Core Readings:

Further Readings: (overviews on the German historical profession)
Dorpalen, Andreas: German History in Marxist Perspective. The East German Approach (Detroit, MI: Wayne State UP, 1988) [deals with the East German profession while it still existed]
Week 3, September 21: The Continuity of Military Aggression: The Fischer Controversy

Core Readings:
Fischer, Fritz: *Germany’s Aims in the First World War* (New York: Norton, 1967; German 1st ed. 1961), Ch. 1-3 (pp. 3-119).
Fischer, Fritz: “Twenty-Five Years Later: Looking Back at the Fischer Controversy and Its Consequences,” *Central European History* 21 (1988), 207-223. [Here Fischer, age 80, takes a last shot at his critics. The same issue of CEH features an article by K. Jarausch on “Bethmann Hollweg Revisited”]

Presented Readings:
Archival material: Excerpt from Fischer’s research diary and correspondence, 1959-61. (In German, available from me.)
Stibbe, Matthew: “The Fischer Controversy over German War Aims in the First World War and its Reception by East German Historians, 1961-1989”, *Historical Journal* 46:3 (2003), 649-668. [The Fischer controversy was a welcome occasion for GDR historians to critique their “bourgeois” West German colleagues. Fischer’s research was strongly supported by East German archives, and East German historians concurred in his findings.]

Further Readings:
Große Kracht, Klaus: “Fritz Fischer und der deutsche Protestantismus,” *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte* 10:2 (2003), 224-252. [This questions Fischer’s völkisch views as a young man. The article elicited strong response in newspapers by Fischer supporters. (Available from me upon request.)]

Further Watching:
Interview with Fritz Fischer (DVD), IN GERMAN ONLY; available at Music Media Library, Call # DVD 6016 and 6017
1) Fritz Fischer, Biography – Interview with Fritz and Margarete Fischer - Hamburg, February 24, 1988 (37min; IWF Göttingen 1990): His parents’ house - Childhood in Upper Franconia - Outbreak of World War I as formative experience - From Protestant theology to history: School days in Catholic Eichstätt;
studies in theology in Erlangen and Berlin, habilitation on M.A. von Bethmann-Hollweg - Motives for entering the Nazi Party – Frank’s Reich Institute for History - On German historians during NS - Military service and POW experience - From the History of the Reformation to contemporary history - Outbreak of the World War I as research object, experiences abroad, early essays, "Reaching for World Power" - Problems: family-career.

2) Fritz Fischer on Germany’s War Aims 1914/1918 - Hamburg, February 24, 1988 (34min; IWF Göttingen 1990): Proceeding from his works "Reaching for World Power" and "War of Illusions." Fischer primarily discusses the history of these works’ origin and reception: German world power illusions before 1914 - Germany's sole responsibility for World War II? - Tendencies toward self-overestimation in Wilhelm II. - Bethmann Hollweg's moderating influence - War objectives in West and Eastern Europe, Africa and in the Orient - Edition of the Rietzler Diaries - Continuity Wilhelm II to Hitler?

Week 4, September 28: Before and After Fischer: Writing German and European History in the United States

Core Readings:

Further Readings:
Week 5, October 5:  
**Germany’s Special Path: The Sonderweg Debate**

**Core Readings:**
Lorenz, Chris: “Beyond Good and Evil? The German Empire of 1871 and Modern German Historiography,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 30:4 (1995), 729-765. [This article will give you an overview of how research on the Kaiserreich developed over the years. It takes the story up to the early ‘90s. It should be helpful to place Wehler’s German Empire in historiography.]

**Presented Readings:**
Nipperdey, Thomas: "Wehlers 'Kaiserreich.' Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung."
Nipperdey, Gesellschaft, Kultur, Theorie (Göttingen: V&R 1976) [Nipperdey is Wehler’s foremost German critic. This article was first printed in Geschichte und Gesellschaft 1 (1975), the journal founded by Wehler.]

**Further Readings:**
Wehler, Hans-Ulrich, ed.: *Sozialgeschichte heute. Festschrift für Hans Rosenberg* (Göttingen: V&R, 1974). [snapshot of West German social history in early 70s with contributions by its leading practitioners.]

Week 6, October 12:  
**The Sonderweg Debate, Part II**

**Core Readings:**
Kocka, Jürgen: “German History before Hitler. The Debate about the German Sonderweg”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 23 (1988), 3-16.
Presented Readings:
Hans-Ulrich Wehler, “‘Deutscher Sonderweg’ oder allgemeine Probleme des westlichen Kapitalismus? Zur Kritik an einigen ‘Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung’” Merkur 35 (1981), 478-487; Response Eley, ibid., 757-759; response Wehler, ibid., 760; Heinrich August Winkler, “Der deutsche Sonderweg. Eine Nachlese”, ibid., 793-804. [This is a heated exchange over the German version of Blackbourn/Eley, Peculiarities and is not for the faint-hearted. The German title appears catchier as Mythen der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung (Myths of German History Writing).]

Further Readings:

Week 7, October 19: The Flavor of the 80s: Historikerstreit

Core Readings:
Contributions by Ernst Nolte, Jürgen Habermas, Andreas Hillgruber, Michael Stürmer, Hans Mommsen and Martin Broszat published in: Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? [The volume is on library reserve. Feel free to read more than the contributions I distribute in class.]

Presented Readings:

Further Readings:
Baldwin, Peter (ed.): Reworking the Past. Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historians’ Debate (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990). [This reprints some of the essays that first appeared in New German Critique.]
Hartmann, Geoffrey (ed.): Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective (Bloomingon, IN: Univ. of Indiana Press, 1986).
Muller, Jerry Z.: “German Historians at War,” Commentary 87 (1989), 33-41.

New German Critique 44 (spring/summer 1988) is devoted solely to the Historikerstreit with contributions from Habermas, Mary Nolan, Andrei S. Markovits, Martin Broszat, Saul Friedlaender, Hans-Georg Betz, and Anson Rabinbach.

The German press marked the 20th anniversary of Historikerstreit this year with a flood of reports and interviews. If you are interested in this topic, check the Feuilleton of the main German papers (Frankfurter Allgemeine, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau, Die Welt, Die Zeit).

Week 8, October 26: Unification and the Return of the Nation

Core Readings:

Further Readings:
Philipsen, Dirk, ed.: We were the People. Voices from East Germany’s Revolutionary Autumn of 1989 (Durham: Duke UP, 1993). [oral history account of GDR opposition; wants to show that events of 1989 were a genuine revolution]
Pond, Elizabeth: Beyond the Wall. Germany’s Road to Unification (Washington, D. C.: Brookings, 1993). [considered the first account on German unification; written by an American journalist; day-to-day account of events 1989 in Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin, Bonn, Washington and Moscow.]
Week 9, November 2: Who Writes GDR History? The Disintegration of the East German Historical Profession and the Beginnings of Historicizing the GDR

Core Readings:
Ross, Corey: The East German Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR (London: Arnold, 2002), Ch. 1-3, 7-8 (pp. 1-68, 149-202).

Presented Readings:

Further Readings:
Berger, Stefan: “Former GDR Historians in the Reunified Germany: An Alternative Historical Culture and its Attempts to Come to Terms with the GDR Past,” Journal of Contemporary History 38 (2003), 63-84. [Includes Berger’s views on the end of the GDR historians’ profession are also covered in his book Search for Normality.]
Eckert, Rainer, Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk and Isolde Stark, eds: Hure oder Muse? Klio in der DDR. Dokumente und Materialien des Unabhängigen Historiker-Verbandes (Berlin: 1994). [This is an indispensable volume. It contains the main contributions to the controversy (newspaper articles, memoranda). We don’t have it at the library, but I’d be happy to share my copy.]
Jarausch, Konrad H.: “The German Democratic Republic as History in United Germany: Reflections on Public Debate and Academic Controversy,” German Politics and Society 15:2 (Summer 1997), 33-
48. [This is a special issue of GPS with further articles on post-nationality and German identity after the Wall.]


**Week 10, November 9: Pictures at an Exhibition: Wehrmachtsausstellung**

**Core Readings:**


Niven, Bill: *Facing the Nazi Past. United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (London: Routledge, 2002), 143-174. [The chapter we read was drafted before the revised exhibition was released in 2001.]


Please browse these internet resources:

1) Entries on HGerman’s discussion log on Wehrmacht exhibition:  
   [http://www.h-net.org/~german/discuss/other/wehrmacht.htm](http://www.h-net.org/~german/discuss/other/wehrmacht.htm)

   You can switch the site to English. It features an outline of the exhibition [http://www.verbrechen-der-wehrmacht.de/pdf/vdw_en.pdf](http://www.verbrechen-der-wehrmacht.de/pdf/vdw_en.pdf), a virtual tour, HIS press releases on the exhibition(s) and press clippings. Our library acquired the DVD-ROM on the exhibition (D757.1 .V47 2004), containing texts, photos, maps and impressions from some cities where the exhibition was displayed (in German only).
Presented Readings:
Bundestagsprotokoll for sessions on March 13 and April 24, 1997 [in German only; available from me]

Further Readings:
Bartov, Omer: Hitler’s Army. Soldiers, Nazi and War in the Third Reich (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991) [If you need some background on Wehrmacht, this is a good place to start.]
Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, ed.: Eine Ausstellung und ihre Folgen. Zur Rezeption der Ausstellung “Vernichtungskrieg” (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999). [HIS was most active in documenting the controversy on the exhibition. This contains contributions on the reception of the exhibition.]
Musial, Bogdan: “Bilder einer Ausstellung. Kritische Anmerkungen zur Wanderausstellung Vernichtungskrieg”, Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 47:4 (1999), 563-591. [This is one of the two substantial critiques of the 1st exhibition that led to its withdrawal.]
Ungvári, Christian: “Echte Bilder, problematische Aussagen. Eine quantitative und qualitative Analyse des Bildmaterials der Ausstellung ‘Vernichtungskrieg’,” Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht 10 (1999), 584-595. [This is one of the two substantial critiques of the 1st exhibition that led to its withdrawal.]
Wette, Wolfram: The Wehrmacht. History, Myth, Reality (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2006) [This is another good place to start if you need some background on German Wehrmacht. It’s a translation of Wette’s Wehrmacht. Feindbilder, Vernichtungskrieg. Legenden (2002). Wette is one of the leading German military historians.]

Further Watching: “East of War” (Jenseits des Krieges), dir. Ruth Beckermann (Austria), available at Music Media Library, Call # VHS 4499 (German with Engl. Subtitles)
Documentary; chronicles reactions of former Austrian soldiers to the Wehrmacht exhibition as shown in Vienna in 1995

Week 11, November 16: “Eliminatory anti-Semitism”? The Goldhagen Controversy

Core Readings:
Eckert: HIST 585 – Fall 2006


Presented Readings:

Further Readings:
Erb, Rainer and Johannes Heil, eds.: Geschichtswissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit: Der Streit um Daniel J. Goldhagen (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998),


LaCapra, Dominick: “Perpetrators and Victims: The Goldhagen Debate and Beyond,” in LaCapra, Writing History, Writing Trauma (= ch. 4) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001), 114-140.


Discussion forum on Goldhagen on HGerman:
Week 12, November 23: No class – Thanksgiving break

Week 13, November 30:  Shaking the Academic Family Tree: Frankfurt 1998 and Historians during National Socialism

Note that we need to work from articles, reviews, and essays in this session as there is no substantial overview of the debate available in English yet. I will provide a reader with the texts for this session.

Core Readings:
Kansteiner, Wulf: "Mandarins in the Public Sphere. Vergangenheitsbewältigung and the Paradigm of Social History in the Federal Republic of Germany," German Politics and Society 52 (1999): 84-120. [This article will partly be redundant on things we have read already on the Historikerstreit, Goldhagen etc.. Focus on the aspects relating to this session.]

Presented Readings:
Hohls, Rüdiger and Konrad H. Jarausch, eds: Versäumte Fragen : Deutsche Historiker im Schatten des Nationalsozialismus (Stuttgart: DVA, 2000). [An oral history project. Scholars of the (now) older generation are interviewed about how they became historians, how they related to their doctoral advisors, and which ‘burning’ issues and questions (in)formed their work.]
Weinreich, Max: Hitler’s Professors. The Part of Scholarship in Germany’s Crimes Against the Jewish People (New York: YIVO, 1946, 2nd ed. Yale University Press, 1999). [Historians frequently referred to this book during the debate since it already asked in 1946 some of the questions that would fuel discussions in the late ‘90s.]

Further Readings:
Berger, Stefan: “Nationalism and Historiography,” German History 18:2 (2000), 239-259. [A review article. You are already familiar with some of Berger’s argument from the book in the first meeting; pp.244-251 relates to today’s session.]


Online discussion on Rothfels on HSozKult at: [http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/e_histfor/1/](http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/e_histfor/1/)

Online discussion on “unasked questions” in the profession: [http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/](http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/) (go to “Rezensionen”, then to “Review Symposien” to “Versäumte Fragen”)

**Week 14, December 7:** Normality Ever? The German historical profession, German history in the United States, and where the journey might take us

**Core Readings:**