History 136
Before the Deluge: Paris and Berlin in the Interwar Years
Williams College
Fall 2005
Tuesday-Thursday 8:30-9:45 a.m.

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Office Hours: Stetson h20, Thursday 1:30-3:30 and by appointment

Course Description and Goals

Paris and Berlin were the two poles of Europe in the 1920s, rival capital cities of two historically hostile nations that had only just put an end to the carnage of World War I. Paris was the *grande dame*; Berlin the upstart. In the 1920s, these two pulsating metropolises became the sites of political and cultural movements that would leave a lasting imprint on European society until the present day. This course focuses on the politics, society, and culture of these two cities in their heyday in the 1920s. We will also consider their fate in the 1930s, first as depression set in, and then as the Nazis came to power. Devoting half the semester to Paris and the other half to Berlin, we will examine a range of parallel topics in both contexts, including the impact of World War I, the growing popularity of right-wing political movements and the increase in political violence, shifting gender norms and sexual mores, and new developments in the realms of art, film, theatre, cabaret, and literature.

The primary goals of this course are, one, to acquaint students with a wide array of historical texts and ways of interpreting them, and, two, to introduce students to different approaches to the study of history.

Assigned Readings

The following books are for sale in the bookstore. They are also on reserve in the library.


Christopher Isherwood, *The Berlin Stories: The Last of Mr. Norris and Goodbye to Berlin*.

Colette, *The Last of Chéri*.

Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*. 
In addition, a course packet with required readings is available for purchase in the History Department Office (Stetson 310).

**Course Requirements**

You are expected to abide the Honor Code in executing all course assignments. If you are uncertain about how the Honor Code applies to your work in this class, please come speak to me.

1) **Readings and Discussions**

   History 136 is a discussion course. Thus, you are expected to attend all class meetings and to complete the readings by the date assigned. Participation in the discussions of these readings is an essential part of the course. In addition, we will watch three films outside of class. The films are also part of the course requirements. Attendance at the films is mandatory.

   Attendance and participation are worth 30% of your final grade.

2) **Written Assignments**

   a) **Four papers** (5-6 double-spaced typed pages, standard margins, Times 12-point font) based on the readings and films are required. For three of the papers, I will give you questions to write about in advance, or you can write about a topic of your choice if you speak to me about it in advance. For the fourth paper, you will re-write one of the previous papers on the basis of further reflection on the subject, and written and oral comments you receive from me and from a student critic. This paper will be graded anew (i.e., not in reference to the grade you previously received). This means that your grade for the re-written paper could go up, go down, or be the same.

   **Papers are due at 5 p.m. in my Stetson mailbox on Monday, October 3; Monday, November 7; Monday, November 21; and Monday, December 5.**

   I will not accept late papers.

   These papers are worth 40% of your final grade. Comments on a fellow student's paper are worth 5% of your final grade.

   b) **Final paper** (10-12 double-spaced typed pages, etc.) is a research paper exploring one aspect of the history of Paris and/or Berlin in the interwar years. You need to meet with me to discuss your plan for the paper before Fall Reading Period. **Due date: Wednesday, December 14th at 5 pm in my Stetson mailbox.** This paper is worth 25% of your final grade.
Weekly Schedule

Thursday, September 8

1. Course Introduction

Assignment: (for next class) Find 2 photos of Paris and/or Berlin from the 1920s-1930s and bring them to class on Tuesday (either make photocopies for everyone in the class or scan and send the JPEG file to me) Be prepared to discuss why you selected those photos and what you see in them. Discuss as well the source of the photos (the book, the website, etc).

Week of September 12

2. Images of Paris and Berlin
Discuss Photographs.


3. The Culture of Cities


Week of September 19

4. The Impact of the Great War


5. **The Weimar Republic**


***FILM SCREENING: Sunday, September 25***

"Berlin, Symphony of a City" (72 min) in Griffin 5 at 7 p.m.

**Week of September 26**

***FILM SCREENING: Monday, September 26***

"Berlin, Symphony of a City" (72 min) in Griffin 5 at 9 p.m.

6. **Berlin Metropolis**

Readings: Ludwig Finckh, "The Spirit of Berlin"
Matheo Quinz, "The Romanic Café"
Kurt Tucholsky, "Berlin and the Provinces"
Franz Hessel, "The Suspicious Character"
Egon Erwin Kisch, "We Go to a Café Because . . ."
Wilhelm Stapel, "The Intellectual and His People"
Harold Nicolson, "The Charm of Berlin"
Martin Heidegger, "Creative Landscape: Why Do We Stay in the Provinces?"

Film: "Berlin, Symphony of a City" (72 min.)

7. **Weimar Culture**

Class meets in the Williams College Museum of Art, Rose Gallery, with Stefanie Spray Jandl, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Associate Curator for Academic Programs

**Week of October 3**

**FIRST PAPER DUE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 3 at 12 noon in my Stetson mailbox**

8. The Twilight of France's Third Republic  

9. Research Orientation  
   Assignment: Research Paper Topic (1-2 paragraphs). Print out and bring to class.

   Class meets in Sawyer Library with Reference Librarian Lori DuBois.

**Week of October 10**

10. The "New Woman" in France  

**Week of October 17**

11. The "New Woman"?  
    Readings: Colette, *The Last of Chéri*.

12. The "New Woman" in Germany  
    Readings: Marianne Weber, "The Special Cultural Mission of Women"  
    *Die Kommunistin*, "[Manifesto for International Women's Day]"  
    Manfred Georg, "The Right to Abortion"  
    Gabriele Tergit, "Paragraph 218: A Modern Gretchen Tragedy"  
    Alfred Polgar, "The Defenseless: A Conversation Between Men"  
    Max Brod, "Women and the New Objectivity"  
    Elsa Herrmann, "This is the New Woman"  
    Textile Workers, "My Workday, My Weekend"  
    Hilde Walter, "Twilight for Women?"  
    "Women's Work and the Economic Crisis"
Else Kienle, "The Kienle Case"
Siegfried Kracauer, "Working Women"
Alice Rühle-Gerstel, "Back to the Good Old Days?"


Week of October 24

13. Berlin Cabaret as Political Expression
Readings: Alice Gerstel, "Jazz Band"
Frank Warschauer, "Berlin Revues"
Maximilian Sladek, "Our Show"
Katharina Rathaus, "Charleston: Every Age Has the Dance It Deserves"
Ivan Goll, "The Negroes Are Conquering Europe"
Erich Kästner, "The Cabaret of the Nameless"
Curt Moreck, "We Will Show You Berlin"
Siegfried Kracauer, "Girls and Crisis"
Friedrich Hollaender, "Cabaret"


14. Paris Theater

Guest Speaker: Professor Sally Charnow, Hofstra University, on "Le Theatre du Peuple: Modern Theatre, Regionalism, and the Search for the Authentic in Fin-de-Siècle France"

Week of October 31

15. Race and the City: Berlin


16. **Race and the City: Paris**


*Week of November 7*

***SECOND PAPER DUE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7 at 12 noon in my Stetson mailbox***

17. **Paris as Expatriate Playground**
   **Readings:** Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*.

18. **Berlin as Expatriate Playground?**

***FILM SCREENING: Sunday, November 13***
"M" by Fritz Lang (110 min) in Griffin 5 at 7 p.m.

*Week of November 14*

***FILM SCREENING: Monday, November 14***
"M" by Fritz Lang (110 min) in Griffin 5 at 9 p.m.

19. **Late Weimar Berlin: Depression and Suspicion**

Film: "M" by Fritz Lang (110 min.)

Assignment: Bring a clean copy of one of your first two papers to class. I will pair students and distribute papers. You should read and comment on your fellow student's paper, using my comments as a model of what you should be doing.

20. Berlin: Capital of the Third Reich


In Class: Paper Conferences

Week of November 21

**THIRD PAPER DUE (Re-write of a previous paper): MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21 at 12 noon in my Stetson mailbox

21. Culture as Politics in the Third Reich

Readings: Editor's Introduction
Hermann Burte, "Intellectuals Must Belong to the People"
"The Birth of Intellectuals"
"Streicher the Intellectual"
"A Balance Is Necessary"
R. Walther Darré, "The German Peasant Formed German History"
Joseph Goebbels, "Freedom and Organization"
Adolf Spemann, "On the National Responsibility of Publishers"
"Goebbels Forbids Art Criticism"
Kurt Karl Eberlein, "What Is German in German Art?"
Heinrich Zillich, "The Poet Summoned by History"
Josefa Berens-Totenohl, "Wulf's Manor: Two Episodes in a Peasant's Life"
Tüdel Weller, "A Rowdy as Hero: From an Anti-Jewish Novel"
Eckart von Naso, "Events at the Prussian State Theater"
"Playbills of the Herne City Theater, 1936-1940"
"The Winter Program of the German Radio, 1936"
"Fundamental Features of Radio Programming, 1938"
"German Films for Venice, 1938"
"The Film Public Is Not So Stupid"


Week of November 28
22. **The Hollow Years**

23. **1930's Paris**

***FILM SCREENING: Sunday, December 4***
"La Regle du Jeu" (106 min) in Griffin 5 at 7 p.m.

*Week of December 5*

**FOURTH PAPER DUE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 5 at 12 noon in my Stetson mailbox**

***FILM SCREENING: Monday, December 5***
"La Règle du Jeu" (106 min) in Griffin 5 at 9 p.m.

24. **Decadence**

   Film: La Règle du Jeu (106 min.)

25. **Final Class Meeting**
   Assignment: Prepare a description of your research paper for your classmates. Include questions you have and problems you are confronting.

**Final Papers Due: Wednesday, December 14th at 5 pm in my Stetson mailbox***