The Nazi Era
The Politics and Culture of Totalitarianism

Dr. Dennis B. Klein

Hist 3244:01 / Hist 5244:02 / MAHG 5000
Fall 2005
Class meetings Wednesdays, 5:00 – 7:40 pm in CAS 456

To reach Dr. Klein—

Use only the phone if you expect to miss a class or require immediate assistance. Call 908-737-4256 (On campus: 7-4256).

Make an appointment to discuss your progress in this course or to seek more substantial assistance. Office hours MW 3:30-6 pm & by appointment in Willis 205G.

Use Email only to submit extra credit paper proposals. I will not accept written assignments by email. Email address: Dklein@Kean.edu. (Note: Email messages offering reasons for missing class or seeking substantial assistance provide inadequate information and will, accordingly, go unread. Please use the phone for these purposes.)

For your final course grade consult Kean Wise.

Key themes in this course

“Naturally, the common people don’t want war, but after all, it is the leaders of a country who determine the policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. This is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.” – Hermann Goering, Nazi leader, founder of the Nazi Gestapo (Secret Police), and commander of the German Air Force, at the postwar Nuremberg trials

Nazism, the German Third Reich that ruled Germany from 1933-45 and most of continental Europe in World War II, offers a glimpse not only into the evolution of German Europe in the 20th century, but also into the emergence of the total state in the modern world. In order to understand these twin phenomena, we will first take a close look at the millennial dream of empire (“Reich”) in German Europe. We will also consider the origins of Hitler’s totalitarian regime against the background of total war (hot and cold), from the beginning of World War I in 1914 to the end of World War II in 1945.
A key aspect of this course will be an inquiry into the Nazis’ resolute mobilization of the masses. To acquire an understanding of this unprecedented and multifaceted program, we will screen period films, evaluate the Nazis’ techniques of mass suggestion, and consider the role of Nazism’s racial ideology.

This is a course based essentially on informed discussion. I will occasionally offer lectures to establish historical context, but the material of this course appears to raise more questions than provide answers. Consequently, we will examine source documents, including films, in order to achieve credible interpretations of pivotal historical events and developments.

This course is the third of a three-part sequence at Kean exploring Germany’s shaping influence on modern European history. 

- “History of Germany, 1805 to the Present” (Hist 4238 and 5238) examines the origins and ascendance of a modern national power
- “Weimar Germany” (Hist 4241) looks at Germany as a nation negotiating the vast repercussions of world war and mass politics
- “The Nazi Era” (Hist 3244 and 5244, and MAHG 5000) considers Germany as an example of extensive, or totalitarian, nationalism.

You can take any or all of these courses, in any order, without prerequisites since each one offers sufficient background material.

Course philosophy, requirements, and grade distribution:

As with any course I teach, I believe the fundamental value of this course, in addition to its content, is its emphasis on close reading of primary texts and a thoughtful and documented criticism of them both in class and in writing. To achieve these objectives, I require my students to engage in a three-part intellectual progression: (1) carefully read and take notes on all assignments, highlighting for each reading its major themes, key passages, new words, and your own questions; (2) participate in class discussions, referring to readings and your notes (in any particular class, you should never feel satisfied until you understand the material and its significance); (3) in preparation for take-home exams, review your notes to strengthen comprehension and to discern broad historical themes for each part of the course.

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<tr>
<th>Undergraduate requirements</th>
<th>Grade distribution</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 page Midterm Take-Home Essay</td>
<td>40% *</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 page Final Home Essay</td>
<td>40% *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Reports</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-page response paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Graduate requirements

<table>
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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade Distribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-page Midterm Take-Home Essay</td>
<td>25% *</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-page Final Home Essay</td>
<td>25% *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Reports</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-page Response paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-page Research paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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* Essay exam grades will take class attendance and participation into consideration.

A note on oral reports  Oral reports are scheduled reports in class. Everyone is responsible for reading each assignment in advance and should be prepared to evaluate its argument critically, but each one of you will have the chance to open discussion on a particular article. In these oral reports, you must seek to define the reading’s main arguments, select “quotable” passages and explain why they’re important, consider unfamiliar terms, and comment on the reading’s contributions and shortcomings. For complete credit, you must submit hard copy of a completed “In-Class Oral Report” on the day of your report. Forms are located in your Source Reader.

Submitting a response paper  It is important that you immediately reserve one evening – November 2nd at 8 pm in University Center - for a lecture by Pulitzer Prize winner Anthony Lewis. Organized by the Jewish Studies program, the lecture addresses topics that are related to the themes of this course. Your attendance is mandatory and will be monitored. Your response paper must document the relationships between lecture themes and course themes. Due by Mon., Nov. 14 at 5 pm in Willis 205. Following are details:

- “How Free Is Free Speech?,” an exploration into the perils and prospects of free speech in the press, in the academy, and overseas in the United Kingdom, where faculty from Israeli universities were recently a casualty of academic boycott. Relates broadly to the course theme, the “closed” and the “open” society, and specifically to speech restrictions in the closed society, such as in imperial Germany, that contrasts with or can threaten protected speech in the open society – the United States and the United Kingdom.

A note on the final essay exam  The final take-home exam offers the chance for a longer “shelf life” than most of your collegiate written work. This term, with your permission, I will submit the best papers to a faculty committee, constituting members of the university’s Faculty Seminar on Comparative Cultures, for selection of even better papers for a campus roundtable, or panel, of students in the spring term addressing the Seminar’s 2005-06 theme, “Representations of Genocide and Resistance.” This take-home essay will be a great opportunity for you to share your work with the larger campus community. Selected roundtable papers will also be published, along with faculty papers on the same subject, in an E-Book sponsored by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. (You can read papers from the three E-Books currently online at
www.Kean.edu/~ORSP), covering the themes “Violence and the State” and “Empire and Cultural Conquest” (two volumes).

A general word on writing successful essays  For full credit on your written work, you must observe style guidelines located in your Source Reader called “Writing Effective Essays” (WEE). This is especially important for constructing successful take-home exams and (this is important too) for citing your sources.

Course policies and procedures

Class participation Expressing yourself before your peers is as important a skill to master as reading or writing. I will gladly reward your participation in class. I will do so by periodically considering your active involvement based on completed reading assignments, and by raising or lowering each of your take-home exam grades accordingly. A “B” on the first essay exam, for example, would be entered as a B+ or an A- if your class participation for that part of the course was regular and informed. Conversely, a “B” on a take-home exam would be entered as a B- or a C+ if you rarely participated or didn’t participate at all in class for that section of the course. Many students, whose written work could have been stronger, have earned high grades (and really liked my courses) because they routinely come prepared for active participation.

Missing or arriving late to class Attendance is fundamental and is something I take very seriously. You need not inform me about occasions when you need to miss class. If you miss or arrive late to more than one class during any part of the course, I will lower your take-home exam grade for that part by one increment for two or three missed classes or late arrivals, by two increments for four or five missed classes or late arrivals, etc. As an example, if you miss two classes in the first part of the course, a B on the 1st take-home exam would become a B-. I will monitor class attendance at the beginning of each class. Students who otherwise have gotten good, hard-earned grades, have received low grades in my courses due to excessive absences or late arrivals. Please note: If you miss class, it is strictly your responsibility to ascertain subsequent class meetings and assignments (you can call me or consult another student).

In general, please observe customary classroom protocol by arriving to class and submitting original papers on time (late papers will incur penalties), remaining in class throughout the period, and by taking notes on reading assignments and bringing them and relevant source material to each class.

Class will not meet, nor will there be office hours, on Wed., Oct. 12 and on other possible dates as needed. Class on November 2nd will meet at 8:00 in University Center for the Anthony Lewis lecture instead of the usual 5 pm hour. Unscheduled class cancellations will be announced in class.

I enjoy discussing the intriguing implications of the origins and virulence of the Nazi totalitarian state, and look forward to exploring them with you in and outside class. Feel
free to contact me anytime. I can promise that this course will reward your involvement. --DBK.

**Required reading**

The first five books listed below are available for purchase at the Kean University bookstore. In addition to these texts you will receive at no charge to you a *Source Reader* created specifically for this course.

Thomas Mann  *Death in Venice and Seven Other Stories*  
Knopf  0679722068

Adolf Hitler  *Mein Kampf*  
Houghton Mifflin  0395925037

W.G. Sebald  *On the Natural History of Destruction*  
Random  0375504842

Eric Rentschler  *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife*  
Harvard  0674576403

Hagen Schulze  *Germany: A New History*  
Harvard  0674005457

Dennis B. Klein  *The Nazi Era: A Source Reader*  
Kean University

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**Class Schedule**

*The class schedule amounts to a course outline and is essential for helping you organize key themes and supporting sources. Please bring it to each class and consult it regularly. Changes to the class schedule will be announced in class. Students who miss class are responsible for ascertaining subsequent class meetings and assignments.*

SR = *Source Reader*. All other readings in books (designated below by author’s last name), which you may at the Kean University bookstore.

**Sept. 14**

Introduction: Discussion of course, books and assignments.

The Culture of Totalitarianism

Read (in class):  
George Orwell, “Literature and Totalitarianism” (1941)(Handout)  
“Reflections on the Historical Significance of the 3rd Reich” (Handout)

Lecture:  The German *Reich* in History, 962-1871
Sept. 21

The Second German Reich

Lecture: Germany’s Startling Ascent

Readings: Schulze, Chs. 5, 7, 8

Sept. 28

The “Sonderweg” Question

          Heinrich von Treitschke, “Politics” (1862-1896) (SR)
          “The Use and Abuse of History” Reflections on the Place of the Third Reich in German History—The Historical Relationship Between Bismarck and Hitler” (SR)

Lecture: The Great War (1914-1918)

Oct. 5

Total War and the Politics of Redemption (World War I)

Readings: Schulze, Ch. 9
          Ernst Junger, The Storm of Steel: From the Diary of a German Storm Troop Officer on the Western Front (1920) (SR)
          Treaty of Versailles (1919) (SR)
          Thomas Mann, "Mario and the Magician" (1929)

Lecture: Weimar Culture and the Culture of War (1-6)

Oct. 12 No Class

Oct. 19

Hitler and Utopian Politics in Weimar Germany

Readings: Schulze, Ch. 10

          Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, (1923-25)
          Volume I (1923), Chapter 5
          Volume II (1925), Chapters 1,4,6,8
Lecture: The Rise of National Socialism (6-7)

**Oct. 26**

The Psychology of Totalitarianism


Film: The Blue Light (1932)

Lecture: Nationalization of the Masses

**Nov. 2**

Due: Midterm Take-Home Essay Exam: Preconditions of Nazism. Submit your exams in hard copy by 5 pm in my mailbox, Willis 205, or beneath my office door, Willis 205G. No 5 pm class meeting.

Lecture: 8:00 pm in University Center: “How Free Is Free Speech?” by Anthony Lewis. See pg. 3 for details. Free for students with Kean University ID.

**Nov. 9**

The Politics of Mass Suggestion

Readings: *Hitler, Mein Kampf, Vol. I., Ch. 6 (“War Propaganda”)

Lecture: Propaganda and Mass Suggestion
Guest lecture by Alan Robbins (Department of Design)

Lecture: The Consolidation of Power (7-12)

**Nov. 14 (Monday)**

Due: Anthony Lewis response paper. See pg. 3 for details. Submit by 5:00 pm in my mailbox in Willis 205 or beneath my office door, Willis 205G.

**Nov. 16**

*Gleichschaltung*: The Totalitarian State

Readings Schulze, Ch. 11
McAllister, “The Degenerate Art Exhibit…” (SR)
Rentschler, “Emotional Engineering: Hitler Youth Quex,” 53-69

Film: Hitler Youth Quex (1933)
Lecture: The Master Race (1933-38)

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**Nov. 21 (Monday)**

**Due:** Graduate paper proposals (1 page) by 5 pm in Willis 205.

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**Nov. 23**

The Racial State I (1933-38)

Readings:
- “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” (c. 1898) (SR)
- First Racial Definition (1933) (SR)
- Hitler, “Why the Nuremberg Laws” (1935) (SR)
- Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor (1935) (SR)
- Heydrich, "Kristallnacht--A Preliminary Secret Report" (1938) (SR)
- Security Service Report on the Kristallnacht (1938) (SR)

Lecture: The Holocaust (1939-45)

**Nov. 30**

The Racial State II (1938-45)

Readings:
- Rentschler, “The Elective Other: Jew Suss,” 149-69

Film:
- *Jew Suss* (1940)

Lecture: Germany’s Quest for World Empire (1933-45) (12-21)

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**Dec. 7**

World War II and the Final Solution

Readings:
- Schulze, Ch. 12
- Himmler, Speech before SS Group Leaders, Posen, Poland (1943) (SR)
- Wannsee Protocol (1942) (SR)

Film:
- *Baron Munchhausen* (1943) (time permitting)

Lecture: The Burden of the Past in Postwar Germany
Dec. 14

The Rubble Years: Final Reflections


Monday, December 19

Due: Graduate student research papers. Submit your paper (hard copy) in my office mailbox, Willis 205, or beneath my office door, Willis 205G by 5 pm.

Dec. 21

Due: Final Take-Home Essay Exam: Political and Racial Persecution
Submit this exam, and all other course papers, now and in hard copy in my office mailbox in W-205 or beneath my office door (W-205G) no later than 12:30 pm. No extensions possible. No class meeting.