History 4336.501 - Third Reich and the Holocaust  
Fall 2008

Prof. Roland Spickermann  
Mondays, 7:05-9:45  
LL 002

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This course will cover the history of Nazi Germany (the “Third Reich”), with additional concentration on its most salient aspect, the Holocaust. These twelve years in the history of one country have become among the most intensively studied in world history, for very good reason: the period gives insight into nearly every aspect of the human condition, from why societies collapse to why human beings collapse. Everything we think we know about how human beings behave gets put to the test in this period. Expect your studies here to outrage, frighten, and perhaps even inspire you.

This will NOT be a course about World War II! War “buffs” and History Channel fans will find that a knowledge of weapons specifications, battles and newsreels will be of little help.

Likewise, this course does not reward the mere reciting of events much. Such information is necessary but not sufficient. You will not get far by simply spitting back facts, in college or in “real life”. Instead, this course focuses as much on how and why things happened as they did, as much as on what happened. You will learn a lot about processes and structures. To do well in this course, you will have to consider how what you are reading relates to previous readings and current themes... In short, you must evaluate data more than recite it.

COURSE LOAD:

You will have short, weekly writing assignments, analyzing the readings due for that session. These are to be turned in (via WebCT) BEFORE class. Pay attention to section headings in the readings, as well as section and weekly headings for the discussions for guidelines for your assignments. You are to write briefly on how you consider each session’s reading to relate to or reflect the week’s theme. (For example, you could relate readings on September 1 to either “2.1 - The Weimar Republic’s Loss...” or to “PART TWO - “Short-Term Factors...”)

All weekly submissions are to be double-spaced, and at least a page (on the order of 500-700 words), and should include citations and quotations from the materials backing up your evidence. There will be no excuses for plagiarism, which I define here as attempting to take credit for work which is not yours. Even substituting only a word but keeping the core idea is still a form of plagiarism. Either cite your sources and quote, or use your own words. Plagiarism will constitute grounds for failing the course. So: cite your sources.

Non-Seminar students: I will also ask you to read one outside book (several articles from scholarly journals will work as an equivalent) on Third Reich or Holocaust history. You will write a 5-page essay (1500-2000 words) comparing that book to the perspectives and data in your course materials. Summaries of the book will not get far. You must choose that book or collection of articles by September 25, and have formally consulted with me about it (sending me a message via WebCT, so as to leave a record). Not doing so will result in a grade penalty.
Seminar students: I will ask you to write a paper of 15+ pages in length on a given course-related topic. This paper will have as sources both books and articles from scholarly journals and (if possible) primary sources. It may of course use information from the course texts, but cannot be based mainly on the texts. You must have chosen a topic by September 21, and have formally consulted with me about it (sending me a message via WebCT, so as to leave a record). Not doing so will result in a grade penalty. You must have a source list for this topic submitted to me, proving that the topic is doable with available academic resources, by September 28, also submitted by WebCT. Such resources include not only books, but journals, electronic academic resources, and potential interlibrary loan resources from other libraries.

You may send writing material to me may be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx), Macintosh Pages (.pages), or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents. I will return any ".wps" or ".txt" documents. If your resubmission falls after the deadline, then I have to impose a late penalty.

I will not usually grade on attendance or participation, but reserve the right to give pop quizzes in order to ensure attendance. Thoughtful participation on the discussion board on the WebCT site for this class, however, will help your grade and enrich your class experience. I will check the discussion area regularly, to post responses to comments, and perhaps even to raise a question or two myself.

ASK QUESTIONS. IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND SOMETHING, SAY SO. CONTACT ME.

ADA Information:

Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with the Office of Student Disabilities Services in order to receive special accommodations and services. Please notify me during the first week of classes if a reasonable accommodation for a disability is needed for this course. A letter from the UTPB/ADA office, located in the Pass Office (telephone 432-552-2630) must accompany this request. Thereafter, I will make every effort to ensure special accommodations.

READINGS:

I have assigned the following four books to everyone:

Michael Burleigh. The Third Reich: A New History
Terrence Des Pres. The Survivor. An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps
Claudia Koonz. The Nazi Conscience
Neil Gregor (ed.). Oxford Reader: Nazism

Kate Turabian’s A Manual for Writers will help you with proper formatting of your essays.
COURSE SCHEDULE:

PART 1: LONG-TERM TRENDS:
FLAWED MODERNIZATION OR MERELY ANOTHER MODERNIZATION?

We will start with the most general trends in German history leading to the Third Reich, and also of trends in modern society generally. We’ll focus on the idea of “modernization”: how a society adjusts to industrialization and mass politics. This has bearing on a huge question: **how much did German modernization promote or inhibit German democratization?** Was there something inherently abnormal about German culture and society? Or is it simply just as normal for a country to go dictatorial as it is to go democratic as it modernizes?

August 24
(No readings)

PART 2: SHORT-TERM FACTORS:
THE "CRISIS OF MODERNITY" AS NAZISM’S INCUBATOR

We will examine the more immediate factors regarding how the Nazis came to power. Having discussed the idea of “modernity” and long-term issues, we move to the difficult life of the first German democracy, the “Weimar Republic”, and how much its difficulties helped to make Nazism attractive to German voters. The main question here: why did the Republic fail, and why did Nazism gain such a following?

August 31

2.1: The Weimar Republic’s Loss of Legitimacy and Stability, 1918-1930

Burleigh 1: The Weimar Republic and the National Socialist German Workers’ Party, 1918-1933, PAGES 27-101

Reader, Section B2: *The National Socialist Movement*
- 17: Broszat: “The Social Motivation and Führer Bond in National Socialism”
- 19: Tyrell: “The NSDAP as Party and Movement”

Koonz 1: An Ethnic Conscience
**September 14**

**2.2: The Death of the Weimar Republic, 1930-1933**

Burleigh 1: The Weimar Republic and the National Socialist German Workers’ Party, 1918-1933, PAGES 102-148

*Reader, Section B3: The Failure of Weimar and the Crisis of 1933*
- 22: Bracher: “Stages of the Seizure of Power”
- 23: Mommsen: “The National Socialist Seizure of Power and German Society”
- 24: Bessel: “Why Did the Weimar Republic Collapse?”
- 26: Kershaw: “30 January 1933”

*Reader, Section B4: National Socialism, Civil Society, and the Seizure of Power*
- 29: Koschar: “Toward the Mass Party”
- 30: Heilbroner: “The Abandoned Regular’s Table”
- 31: Pyta: “Protest Rural Milieu and National Socialism Prior to 1933”

Koonz 2: The Politics of Virtue

**PART 3: NAZISM AS GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY**

This section discusses how Nazi rule and German society actually functioned. The Nazi takeover was not just a seizure of power but an attempt to transform a nation. How much did they succeed or fail? How much is it even possible to transform a society? Add a few disturbing questions: how many aspects of Nazism and German society were unique to Germany… and how many were shared with other modern societies?

**September 21**

**3.1: The Dismantling of Civil Society**

Burleigh 2: “Miss Becker, Your Head is at Stake”… The Demise of the Rule of Law

*Reader, Section C3b: The Regime and the Conservative Establishment*
- 43: Caplan: “State Formation and Political Representation in Nazi Germany”

*Reader, Section C3c: Charismatic Authority and the Erosion of Rational-Bureaucratic Government*
- 51: Broszat: “The Hitler State”
- 52: Dreseielh-Thiele: “Party and State in the Third Reich”
- 53: Mommsen: “Cumulative Radicalization and Self-Destruction of the Nazi Regime”
- 54: Hüttenberger: “National Socialist Polycracy”

**September 28**
### 3.2: The Promotion of the New Order

**FILM:** *Triumph of the Will*

**Reader, Section D:** *The "Seductive Surface" of National Socialism*
- 61: Schäfer: “Split Consciousness”
- 64: Düffer: “The Matrix of Totalitarian Imagery”

Koonz 4: The Conquest of Political Culture
Koonz 5: Ethnic Revival and Racist Anxiety
Koonz 6: The Swastika in the Heart of the Youth
Koonz 7: Law and the Racial Order
Koonz 8: The Quest for a Respectable Racism

### October 5

**3.3: Daily Life in Totalitarian Society (for Germans)**

**Burleigh 3:** Replacing the Bridge: New Times, New Man

**Reader, Section E2:** *Participation*

### October 12

**3.4: Creating a Racial Order in Germany: Culling and Breeding**

**Burleigh 5:** “Extinguishing the Ideas of Yesterday”: Eugenics and “Euthanasia”

**Reader, Section E2:** Participation
- 70: Koonz: “Mothers in the Fatherland”
- 73: Burleigh: “Death and Deliverance”

**Reader, Section F:** The Impact of National Socialism
- 83: Bock: “Racial Policy and Women’s Policy”
- 84: Stümke: “The Persecution of Homosexuals”
PART 4: GENOCIDE

This is the Holocaust itself: not only how the Nazi state implemented it, but also the dynamics and psychology of the camps. In contrast to the more “macro” themes of historical trends, this section will be more “micro”, examining human behavior: what made both the victims and the victimizers behave as they did. This section is the most profound, and the most troubling, of the whole course.

October 19
4.1: Jews in the Racial Order: Separation

Burleigh 4: Living in a Land with No Future: German Jews and their Neighbours, 1933-1939
Koonz 9: Racial Warriors
Koonz 10: Racial War at Home

October 26
4.2: Creating a Racial Order Beyond Germany: Conquest

FILM: Stalingrad
Burleigh 7: A Blitzkrieg Too Far: The German Invasion and Occupation of the Soviet Union, 1941-1943

November 2
4.3: Jews in the Racial Order: Extermination

FILM: Schindler’s List
Burleigh 8: “Iron Times, Iron Brooms”: Racial War against the Jews

Reader, Section E2: Participation
74: Browning: “Reflections on a Massacre”

Reader, Section F: The Impact of National Socialism
89: Hilberg: “Children”
90: Piper: “The Number of Children”
91: Arad: “Operation Reinhard”
92: Golczewski: “Poland”
**November 9**  
4.41: The “Anatomy of Life” in the Death Camps - Part 1

**FILM:** *Schindler's List*, cont.  

**NOTE:** Terrence Des Pres is especially difficult reading, in part because the content is so troubling, but also because it is so deep. Be prepared to begin reading early.  

- Des Pres 2: “The Will to Bear Witness”  
- Des Pres 3: “Excremental Assault”  
- Des Pres 4: “Nightmare and Waking”

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**November 16**  
4.42: The “Anatomy of Life” in the Death Camps - Part 2

**FILM:** *Memory of the Camps*  

- Des Pres 5: “Life in Death”  
- Des Pres 6: “Us and Them”  
- Des Pres 7: “Radical Nakedness”
PART 5: COLLAPSE AND LEGACY

This section rests on the others: a discussion of the Nazi state’s collapse, and of Nazism’s legacy for Germany and for humanity in general. Can it happen again? Who was responsible? What does it say about us? What can we do?

November 23

5.1: Opposition - Potential and Realized

FILM: Sophie Scholl

Burleigh 9: “When God Wills It, Even a Broom Can Shoot” (Russian Proverb): Resistance in Germany, 1933-1945

Reader, Section E1: Resistenz?
   65: Broszat: “Resistenz and Resistance”

November 30

5.2: The Fall and Legacy of the Third Reich

Burleigh 10: “Playing a Part in a Film”: War and Peace, 1943-1948

Reader, Section F: The Impact of National Socialism
   77: Schoenbaum: “The Third Reich and Society”
   78: Dahrendorf: “National Socialist Germany and the Social Revolution”
   80: Alber: “National Socialism and Modernization”

LAST PAPERS DUE: DECEMBER 5

FINAL EXAM, DECEMBER 8:
There isn’t one, actually. However, this will be the last day for which I will accept your paper on your outside readings, though with a late penalty. I will also show a movie (The Quarrel) during the exam time (7:30-9:30). Those who attend will receive extra credit.