Hist3P56
WEIMAR GERMANY, 1918-1933

Brock University, Fall Term 2010

Lectures: Tuesdays 5-7pm (PL409)
Seminar 1: Wednesdays, 10-11 (MCD300); Seminar 2: Wednesdays, 9-10 (MCD300)

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Description:

This course investigates the rise and fall of Germany’s first republic, from its inauspicious birth in the midst of defeat and revolution, to its untimely death at the hands of Hitler. It will focus in particular on the social and cultural developments of the interwar period, and the impact that these had on German political life. Students will also be introduced to the historiography of this fascinating and troubling period. Ultimately, the course will uncover the reasons why Weimar failed, and question whether the Republic was doomed from the start.
Required Textbooks

Bertolt Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera* (1928)

And ONE of the following:

Peter Fritzscbe, *Germans into Nazis* (1999)

There are also additional texts required for seminars available on Sakai only. Please download or make copies of these texts and bring them to the appropriate seminars.

Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar leadership</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary source essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film response paper (in-class)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Final examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
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All the elements that make up the final grade are obligatory. A grade of ‘incomplete’ will be given to students who fail to complete all parts of the evaluation.

Seminars

(Participation: 25%; Leadership: 10%)

Students must prepare for and actively participate in the weekly student-led seminars. This is an essential part of the course – not only is more than a third of the final mark based on seminar participation and leadership, but questions on the final exam will also draw from seminar readings and discussions.

Each seminar will be led by two students who will introduce the readings in a 10-minute presentation, and then engage the class in a 40-minute discussion. While it is important that the seminar leaders provide some brief historical background, the presentation should not simply be a factual narrative or summary of the material. Rather, it should provide the base for group discussion.
by highlighting problems, important issues and themes, and possible controversies. Seminar presenters must meet with the instructor in advance (preferably the previous week) to go over their presentation and main discussion questions – part of the leadership mark will be based on this meeting. They must also submit their notes to the instructor at the end of the seminar.

In order to guarantee a fruitful discussion in every seminar, each week students will prepare and submit 1-2 pages of ‘reading notes.’ These notes will consists of answers to questions that the instructor will post on WebCT, as well as any additional points of interest or issues that student wishes to raise in class. These notes are due at the end of each seminar (students are encouraged to refer to these notes throughout the seminar discussion) and must be submitted to the instructor in person. They cannot be sent by e-mail or left in the instructor’s mailbox. These assignments will be awarded either a ‘pass’ or a ‘fail’ – the instructor is looking for proof that the student has done the readings and spent some time thinking about them. Ultimately these notes are to help students prepare themselves more effectively for seminars and for the final exam.

The marking of ‘seminar participation’ will thus be based on attendance, the quality of participation in the discussion, and the reading notes, for a maximum of 25 points each week. Marks will be granted as follows:

**Attendance:** Zero (absent) or 5 points (present)

**Participation:** Maximum of 12 points

**Notes:** Zero (not submitted or unsatisfactory) or 8 points (satisfactory)

For example, if you attend the seminar, submit satisfactory reading notes, but do not participate in the in-class discussion, you will receive a mark of 13/25 (52%). If you attend seminar, do not submit your reading notes, but contribute to the discussion, you will still only be able to score between 13/25 (52%) and 17/25 (68%). But if you attend seminar, submit your reading notes, and contribute to the discussion, you can expect a mark between 18/25 (72%) and 25/25 (100%).

Please note that two or more unexcused absences from seminars will seriously jeopardise your grade.

**Primary Source Essay (20%)**

Instead of a large research paper, students will write an analytical essay based around readings from *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*. Students will select three documents from one chapter of the textbook. The analysis of these texts will provide the basis for an essay exploring a particular aspect of Weimar Germany.

Based on information gathered from secondary sources (textbooks and academic journal articles), the essay will begin by providing historical background and context, and introducing the main theme(s) to be analyzed (eg. historical event; political movement or party; social or cultural development; particular individual or personality). Each primary document will then be addressed – in addition to providing a brief summary of the main arguments of each text, make sure to include relevant background information on the author, the date of publication, the circumstances of its publication, its historical importance, and contemporary reactions to the text (if relevant). Compare and contrast the documents, indicating what the differences and similarities reveal about the issue being
discussed. Provide some concluding remarks regarding the importance of the texts and their usefulness in shedding light on this particular topic.

More detailed guidelines for the writing of this assignment will be provided by the instructor in the introductory seminar.

The essay must be six (6) to eight (8) double-spaced pages in length (roughly 1,500-2,000 words), and must include a bibliography (with at least four (4) secondary sources, not including the course textbooks). The essay is due in seminar on 20 October.

**Book Review (10%)**

Students will select one of four texts to review. The review should be four (4) to five (5) double-spaced pages in length (roughly 1,000-1,250 words), and must include a bibliography. The review is due in seminar on 24 November.

Detailed guidelines for the writing of this assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

**Film Response Paper (5%)**

Students will be asked to watch Fritz Lang’s film *M* (available on course reserve as well as on YouTube and Google Video), and then write a short (2-3 pages) paper answering a question set by the instructor. Students are responsible for watching the film in time for this in-class writing assignment, scheduled for Tuesday, 9 November.

**Additional important information:**

**Late assignments will be given a penalty of 5% per day.** Assignments that are more than 1 week late will not receive comments. Assignments that are more than 2 weeks late will receive a mark of zero.

**Turnitin.com**

Students must also submit their essay and review to Turnitin.com. While it is within a student’s rights not to submit his/her work to Turnitin.com, students who choose not to submit their assignments must instead hand in regular installments of their written work to the instructor.

If you decide you do not wish to submit your work to Turnitin.com, please inform the instructor as soon as possible.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Please ensure that all sources that you use in your assignments are thoroughly documented (including material from websites). If you do not do this, you are guilty of plagiarism. Brock University’s Academic Misconduct Regulations define plagiarism as ‘…presenting work done (in whole or in part) by someone else as if it were one’s own.’
If you have any doubts about what practices are characterised as plagiarism, please refer to http://www.brocku.ca/library/plagiarism.htm or consult the instructor. Penalties for academic dishonesty will vary according to the particular case, but may be severe. In this course, a student found guilty of plagiarism will get a zero on the assignment, which may result in a failure in the course.

A few final remarks regarding in-class behaviour

Students will maintain a proper decorum during lectures and seminars. This means refraining from conversations or any other behaviour that may distract others.

Cellphones must always be turned off during lectures and seminars. Texting or tweeting in class is forbidden.

Laptops are allowed in class, but only in order to take notes. Playing games, watching videos, reading e-mail, checking Facebook, etc. is strictly forbidden. In order to guarantee that laptops are being used appropriately, at the end of each lecture the instructor may call on one student who has been using a laptop to share his/her notes with the rest of the class by posting them on WebCT.

The instructor maintains the right to have a student leave the classroom if he/she is being disruptive.

Lectures and Seminars

Week 1 (14-15 Sept.) – The German Empire, 1871-1918
- From Bismarck to Wilhelm II
- German History: A Special Path?
Readings: Evans, The Coming of the Third Reich, pp.5-25

Introductory Seminar – Please bring your copy of The Weimar Republic Sourcebook.
Week 2 (21-22 Sept.) – War and Revolution

- Germany and the Great War
- Revolution and Defeat

Readings: Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp.60-77

Seminar – Politics, Society and Culture in Imperial Germany

Readings: On course reserve:


Matthew Jeffries, ‘Imperial Germany: Cultural and Intellectual Trends,’ in Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *German History since 1800* (New York, 1997), pp.181-198

Additional reading (all additional readings are available either online or at the Brock library):


Week 3 (28-29 Sept.) – The Birth of the Republic

- The Humiliation of Versailles
- Political and Constitutional Challenges

Readings: Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp.78-102
Weimar Republic Sourcebook, pp.35-53

Seminar – The Legacies of the War

Readings: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 5-25


Additional reading:


Week 4 (5-6 Oct.) – The Crisis Years, 1919-1923

- Hyperinflation
- Assault from the Left and the Right

Readings: Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp.103-117
*Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp.60-67; 77-80

Seminar – Coming to Terms with Democracy

Readings: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp.53-59; 86-118

Additional reading:
Bernd Widdig, *Culture and Inflation in Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, 2001)
Niall Ferguson, ‘The German Inter-war Economy; Political Choice Versus Economic Determinism,’ in Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *German History since 1800* (New York, 1997), pp. 258-278.

Week 5 (12-13 Oct.) – The Period of Stabilization, 1924-1929

- Dawes, Stresemann and the ‘Spirit of Locarno’
- ‘Roaring Twenties’?

Readings: Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp.118-153

Seminar – The Challenge of Modernity

Readings: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp.393-428; pp.662-663

Additional reading:

Week 6 (19-20 Oct.) – Recasting German Society?

- The Middle Classes
- Workers and Working-Class Culture

Readings: Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp.155-194

Seminar – Youth Culture

Readings: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. TBA
On course reserve: Larry Eugene Jones, ‘Generational Conflict and the Problem

Additional reading:
Charles S. Maier, Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in the Decade after World War I (Princeton, 1975)

** PRIMARY SOURCE ESSAY DUE IN SEMINAR **

Week 7 (26-27 Oct.) – Sexuality and Gender Conflict
• Women in the Weimar Republic
• Reactions and Responses to Gender Crisis and Sexual Anxiety
Readings: Evans, The Coming of the Third Reich, pp.195-230
Film: Scenes from Metropolis, Pandora’s Box, and The Blue Angel

Seminar – The ‘New Woman’

Suggested reading:
Richard W. McCormick, Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Modernity: Film, Literature, and ‘New Objectivity’ (New York, 2001)
Elizabeth Harvey, ‘Serving the Volk, Saving the Nation: Women in the Youth Movement and the Public Sphere in Weimar Germany,’ in Larry Eugene Jones and James Retallack (eds.), Elections, Mass Politics, and Social Change in Modern Germany: New Perspectives (Cambridge and New York, 1992), pp.201-221.
Vibeke Rützou Petersen, Women and Modernity in Weimar Germany: Reality and Its Representation in Popular Fiction (New York, 2001)
Victoria Harris, Selling Sex in the Reich: Prostitutes in German Society, 1914-1945 (Oxford, 2010)

Week 8 (2-3 Nov.) – The Artistic Avant-garde
• Bauhaus
• Beckmann, Dix and Grosz
Readings: Evans, The Coming of the Third Reich, pp.232-265
Seminar – Brecht and the Politics of Theatre

Readings:  
Weimar Republic Sourcebook, pp.530-550  
Bertolt Brecht, The Threepenny Opera

Suggested reading:  
Peter Gay, Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider (New York, 1968)  
Frank Whitford, Bauhaus (London, 1984)  
Jonathan Jones, ‘What the Nazis didn’t want you to see,’ in The Guardian, 16 August 2005 (available online at http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,11710,1549924,00.html)  
John Willett, The Theatre of the Weimar Republic (New York, 1987)  
David R. Midgley, Writing Weimar: Critical Realism in German Literature, 1918-1933 (Oxford, 2000)

Week 9 (9-10 Nov.) – Mass Culture

- Jazz, Cabaret and the Cinema
- **In-class film response paper**

Readings:  
Evans, The Coming of the Third Reich, pp. 266-308  
Weimar Republic Sourcebook, pp.551-567; pp.594-635

Film:  
Fritz Lang’s M (1931)

Seminar – The Golden Age of German Film

Readings:  
Weimar Republic Sourcebook, pp.412-428; pp.718-736  

Suggested reading:  
Maria Tatar, Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany (Princeton, NJ, 1995)  
Siegfried Kracauer, From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film (Revised and expanded edition, Princeton, NJ, 2004)  
Janet Ward, Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany (Berkeley, 2001)  
Bruce Arthur Murray, Film and the German Left in the Weimar Republic: From Caligari to Kuhle Wumpe (Austin, 1990)

Week 10 (16-17 Nov.) – The Weaknesses of Weimar

- Hitler and the Rise of Nazism
- The Depression

Readings:  
Evans, The Coming of the Third Reich, pp.310-349

Seminar – Who voted for Hitler?

Readings:  
Weimar Republic Sourcebook, pp.119-144  
On course reserve:  
Detlef Muhlberger, ‘A “Workers’ Party” or a “Party without Workers”? The Extent and Nature of the Working-Class Membership of the NSDAP, 1919-1933,’ in Conan Fischer
Suggested reading:


Martin Broszat, Hitler and the Collapse of Weimar Germany (New York, 1987)

Peter D. Strachura (ed.), Unemployment and the Great Depression in Weimar Germany (New York, 1986)

Hans Fallada, Little Man – What Now? (1932)

Week 11 (23-24 Nov.) – The Death of the Republic

- The Nazi Seizure of Power
- Germans into Nazis

Readings: Weimar Republic Sourcebook, pp.80-83; 145-175

Evans, The Coming of the Third Reich, pp.350-390

Seminar – Did Weimar Fail?

Readings: On course reserve:


Peter Fritzsche, ‘Did Weimar Fail?’, Journal of Modern History 68 (1996), 629-666. (available on JSTOR)

Suggested reading:

Peter Fritzsche, Germans into Nazis (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1999)


** BOOK REVIEW DUE IN SEMINAR **

Week 12 (30 Nov.) – Conclusion

- The Legacies of the Weimar Republic
- Exam revision

Readings: Evans, The Coming of the Third Reich, pp.391-461

NO SEMINAR THIS WEEK

Additional reading:

Panikos Panayi (ed.), Weimar and Nazi Germany: Continuities and Discontinuities (Harlow, 2001)
Book Review – Guidelines

For your second written assignment in this course you will write a critical review of one of the following texts:

Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (1999)

A review is very different from a book report. While a report is usually just a summary of the content of a book, a review combines a brief summary of content along with a critique of that content. You should consider such things as the soundness and clarity of the author’s arguments, his/her evidence, conclusions, methods, biases, etc. When thinking critically of the content, there are a number of questions you can ask and approaches that you can take. You might think about whether the author leaves questions unanswered and whether his/her answers themselves are satisfactory. What sort of evidence does the author use? What are its limitations, and does he/she use it well? What does the book attempt to do, and does it do so successfully? How is the book structured, and is this structure effective? How is the book structured, and is this structure effective? How is the book structured, and is this structure effective? How is the book structured, and is this structure effective? Does the author’s argument strike you as unique, controversial, or particularly compelling? Why, and to whom, would you recommend such a text? In other words, you should examine this book as an historian, and not simply as a reader.

If you have never written a review before, consider the following steps:

1. Read the book twice. During the second reading, underline or mark any passages which highlight the author’s arguments, strengths, weaknesses, use of evidence, conclusions, etc., as well as any parts which you think would present clear, strong examples of these.
2. Develop an outline for your paper before you begin to write, so that you are working from a coherent plan, rather than simply moving randomly from one subject to the next. For a critical review, a thesis statement is less significant than it is for a research paper, because you are making an assessment rather than an argument. In structuring the paper, you may wish to try something along the following lines:
   a. Introduce your paper with a very brief overview of the content.
   b. Select what you think are the clearest strengths and/or prominent weaknesses which your reader should know about, making sure to include examples and evidence for each one drawn from your reading of the text. These ideas will form the core of your critique, and each one should be dealt with coherently and thoroughly.
   c. Conclude with an overall assessment of the book and your thoughts on it (historically, politically, and/or personally).

While writing, keep in mind the need to balance a summary of content (assume that I have not read the book), and a critique of that content.

As a general rule: do not let the narrative structure or content of the book guide your paper – i.e., avoid giving a chapter-by-chapter summary, and pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of each
individual chapter. You must structure your critique according to your opinion of the text as a whole. This approach will also prevent you from giving a summary of content alone.

If, when you have completed a second reading of the text, you cannot figure out how to structure your essay so that it is not simply a basic summary of the content, then you might consult other academic reviews of the text to guide you (academic reviews of other texts will also help give you a sense of how to do a critique of this nature). However:

- **Do not read these reviews before you read the book**, as they will colour your perception of it. Reading them after you have read the book will help to make sure that your opinion is the one which is presented in the paper itself. (Although you should not be afraid to agree or disagree with the ideas of another reviewer, it is your opinion that I want to see.)
- **Also, remember:** if you employ these reviews, or even simply read them, **they must be included in your bibliography**. If you use any of the ideas or borrow any element of these critiques within your own paper (either because you agree or disagree with them), you must also reference them in the text of your paper, as you would any other source.

**Additional information:**

The review should be four (4) to five (5) double-spaced pages in length (roughly 1,000-1,250 words), and is due **in lecture on Tuesday, 25 November**.

Late assignments will be given a penalty of 5% per day. Assignments that are more than 1 week late will not receive comments.

Online sources may be used, *if you do so with great care*. Wikipedia is NOT approved for use.


If you have any questions concerning this assignment, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would be happy to read over outlines or proposals, but make sure you submit these no later than one week prior to the deadline.