

Fall Semester, 2006

Karl A. Schleunes, Professor
Tyson Smith, Teaching Assistant

HIS 376: GERMAN HISTORY, 1914-1945
(HIS 692 for Graduate Students)

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Required Readings: Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (original in 1928)

Roderick Stackelberg & Sally A. Winkle, eds., *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook; An Anthology of Texts* (2002)

Otto Friedrich, *Before the Deluge; A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* (1995 ed., original in 1972)

Ian Kershaw, *Hitler [Profiles in Powers]* (1991)

Graduate Students in HIS 692 only:

Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship; Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (4th ed., 2000)

Course Description:

At the beginning of the 20th century, German power and prestige were at an all-time high. In politics, economics, and military prowess, the German Empire was poised to challenge Great Britain as the world's leading power. German cultural institutions enjoyed world-wide renown. Its universities, science, medicine, music, and literature placed it among the world's most important cultural centers.

In August 1914 this Germany entered the Great War (later called World War I) confident that victory would be achieved by Christmas. Things turned out quite differently. The war lasted more than four years, exacted unprecedented sacrifices of life and treasure, and ended in a humiliating defeat that most Germans were unable to understand or accept and came very much to resent.

The defeat of 1918 and the subsequent socialist/democratic revolution threw German society into economic and political turmoil, seriously handicapping its sometime brilliant experiment in the 1920s with democracy and cultural modernity. The hated Treaty of Versailles of 1919, the hyperinflation of 1923, and the Great Depression of 1929 created resentments that Adolf Hitler, a charismatic veteran of the Great War, shaped into an ideology of racism and national redemption. He promised Germans a racially pure world in which they deserved to rule for a thousand years.

Hitler's promise led to a brutal dictatorship, a devastating Second World War, the attempt to destroy a people (Jews) in its entirety, and, finally, a defeat in 1945 that was total and absolute.

This course will trace German developments through three critical eras of the early 20th century: the First World War (1914-1918); the turbulent and often brilliant Weimar years (1919-1932); and the years of the Nazi Third Reich (1933-1945).

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. explain how World War I and its outcome shaped German political and social developments through the 1920s,
2. understand why the defeat in 1918 was perceived as devastating and unjust,
3. explain how World War I made the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis possible,
4. recognize the importance of the German cultural “renaissance” of the 1920s,
5. understand the connection between the Great Depression of 1929 led to the failure of democracy and the coming of Hitler to power in 1933,
6. explain how Hitler managed to establish his nearly total dictatorship during the first half of 1933,
7. explain Nazi racism and why so much of it was directed against the Jews (who were not a race),
8. explain the incremental radicalization of the Nazis persecution of the Jews,
9. explain Hitler’s ambitions and war aims during the course of World War I, and
10. explain why the anti-Nazi resistance failed.

Course Requirements:

Attendance Policy **Regular attendance is absolutely essential.** Attendance will be taken. More than four unexcused absences can lead to being dropped from the course.

Examinations: The **MID-TERM EXAM** will be on Friday, October 6th; the **FINAL EXAM** is scheduled for Monday, December 11th from 8:00-11:00 AM.

Course Paper: *Undergraduate students:* You will be required to produce two papers based primary documents from the Stackelberg and Winkle collection. These papers are to be three or four pages long. The due dates are in the syllabus and are included in the separate page of instructions.

Graduate students are asked to read widely in order to acquaint you with the literature available for this period of history and to submit a 12-15 page review essay on these readings. Please see me about drawing up a reading list. **Due Date: December 4.**

Grading Scale: Mid-Terms Exam = 30 %; Paper = 35 %; Final Exam = 35%

Class Discussion: Participation in class discussion is vital. Active participation in these discussions can add as much as 10% (bonus) to your final grade.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Aug. 14 Course Introduction

Germany During the Era of the Great War: 1914-1918

Reading Assignment: E.M. Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*
Stackelberg & Winkle, eds., [S &R] Ch. 1: The German Empire and the First World War

Aug. 16 The Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II (“Kaiser Bill”)
“ 18 Pre-War Diplomacy/ A German “Grab for World Power Status”?
“ 21 1914: The Schlieffen Plan and its Execution
“ 23 1916: Verdun, the Somme, and the German Home Front

- “ 25 1918: Collapse of the German Army and its Defeat
- “ 28 1918: Collapse of the German Army and its Defeat

Weimar Germany: 1919-1933

Reading Assignment: Otto Friedrich, Chs. I-XV
S & R, Ch. 2: The Weimar Republic, 1919-1933;

- Aug. 30 Revolution? Democracy? Socialism? Communism?
- Sept. 1 Creation of the Weimar Republic
- Sept. 4 **LABOR DAY HOLIDAY**
- Sept. 6 The Treaty of Versailles/ The *Diktat*
- “ 8 Weimar Culture: Dada and Expressionism
- “ 11 The “Cold Civil War”; 1920-1923
- “ 13 The Great Inflation: 1919-1923
- “ 15 The Culture of *DADA* Expressionism
- “ 18 Weimar Culture: The *Bauhaus*
- “ 20 The Years of Stability: 1924-1929
- “ 22 Neo-Conservatism/ Anti-Republicanism
- “ 25 Aryan Racism
- “ 27 1928/29: From Stability to Crisis (First Undergraduate Paper Due)
- “ 29 The Great Depression
- Oct. 2 September, 1930: The Collapse of Democracy: (Nazis or Communists?)
- “ 4 Review for Mid-Term Exam
- “ 6 Mid-Term Exam
- Oct. 9 **FALL BREAK**

The Third Reich: 1933-1945

Reading Assignment: Otto Friedrich, *Deluge*, Chs. XVI-XVII; Kershaw, *Hitler*;
S & R, Ch. 3: The Third Reich: The Consolidation of Nazi Rule, 1933-1935, and

- Oct. 11 Hitler and Charisma
- “ 13 Jan. 30, 1933: The Nazi “Seizure of Power”
- “ 15 Hitler Consolidates His Dictatorship: *Gleichschaltung*
- “ 18 Acronyms and Ideology: SA, SS, SD, Gestapo
- “ 20 “Purifying” and “Multiplying” the Aryan Race
- “ 22 The “Jewish Problem”: From Aryan Paragraph to the Nuremberg Laws
- “ 25 The Nazi Economic Miracle
- “ 27 1936: Hitler’s “Best Year”

The Road to War: 1936-1939

Reading Assignment: Ian Kershaw, *Hitler*; Stackelberg & Winkle, (Chapter 4: The Road to War: 1936-1939)

- Oct. 30 Nazi Foreign Policy – Objectives: *Lebensraum* in the East
- Nov. 1 Breaking the Chains of Versailles
- “ 3 1937: Plans for War, The *Hossbach Protocol*
- “ 6 Feb. 1938: Hitler Gains Control of the Armed Forces
- “ 8 1938 : Annexation (*Anschluss*) of Austria
- “ 10 1938: Coordinating the “Jewish Problem,”/ The *Kristallnacht* Pogrom

The Second "Great War": 1939-1945

Reading Assignment: Stackelberg and Winkle, (Chapter 5: The Second World War, 1939-1945;
Chapter 6: The Holocaust)

Nov. 13	September 1939: War, Race, Revolution – The "Jewish War"
" 15	Hitler's Five Wars
" 17	The Home Front in WWII
" 20	The "Final Solution to the Jewish Problem"
" 22	Thanksgiving
" 24	Thanksgiving
" 27	The "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem" (Second Undergraduate Paper Due)
" 29	July 20, 1944: The Plots to Kill Hitler
Dec. 1	Suicide and Surrender; May 8, 1945
" 4	Review for Final Exam

HIS 376/ Instructions for Course Papers

Two course papers based upon your analysis of primary source documents assigned from the Stackelberg and Winkle book of documents are required.

These papers are to be three to four pages in length, double-spaced in 12-point typeface.

You are to analyze the document and discuss the following points:

1. Summarize what the document says.
2. Identify the authors.
3. Explain how the document fits into the history we know. Or, another way of putting it: what historical context does the document fit into?
4. Explain how the document helps us (you) understand the events to which it is related?

In addressing the items listed above, draw upon the documents themselves and lectures and any other readings that might be helpful to you.

To illustrate the above instructions and for the sake of “practicing” on them, on we will spend about 15 minutes analyzing Document # 1.10: “Chancellor Bethmann’s September Program, 1914.”

DUE DATES:

PAPER # 1: Thursday, March 23

Document # 2.4 (The Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919)

OR

Document # 2.5 (Constitution for the German Reich, 11 August, 1919)

PAPER # 2: Thursday, March 27

Document # 4:10 (The Hossbach Memorandum, 5 November 1937)

OR

Document # 6.4 (Goering’s Authorization to Heydrich)

