

Fall Semester, 2001

225 McIver Building

**HIS 376 [R]--GERMANY, 1914-1945
(HIS 692 for Graduate Students)**

Karl A. Schleunes

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Office Hours: TTh - 8:30-9:15; MW - 8:30-9:30

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Required Texts:

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

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

Joseph Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, 2nd ed. (2001)

Christian Leitz, ed., *The Third Reich; The Essential Readings* (1999)

Mary Lynn Tampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 3rd ed. (2001)

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. The German Empire was poised to challenge Great Britain for world leadership--in politics, economics, and military might. In addition, German cultural institutions commanded world-wide respect and admiration--in particular, its universities, medicine, science, music, and literature. A major theme of this course is what went wrong with this powerful and cultured nation. This course traces German developments through three critical eras of the early twentieth century: the First World War (1914-1918), the turbulent and often brilliant Weimar years (1919-1932), and the Nazi Third Reich(1933-1945).

In August 1914 Germans entered World War I confident of a quick victory, probably 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 defeat that Germans resented and were unable to understand or accept. The defeat of 1918 and the subsequent socialist/democratic revolution threw German society into economic and political turmoil, seriously handicapping its sometimes brilliant experiment in the 1920s with democracy and cultural modernity. The hated Versailles Treaty of 1919, the hyperinflation of 1923, and the Great Depression of 1929 created the resentments that Adolf Hitler, a charismatic war veteran, shaped into a "gospel" of racism and national redemption. He promised the German people a racially pure world in which they would rule supreme for a thousand years. Instead, Hitler's promise led to a brutal dictatorship, the most devastating war ever, the attempt to destroy a people (the Jews) in its entirety, and, finally, a defeat that in 1945 was total and absolute.

Course Requirements:

Attendance Policy: Regular class 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** is scheduled for Thursday, October 4; the **Final Exam** for Tuesday, December 18th from 12:00 to 3:00 PM.

Course Paper: Undergraduate Students: This is an “R” (for Research) designated course. An “R” course is required of all History majors prior to taking the required HIS 511 capstone course. A separate sheet of instructions about this assignment will accompany the syllabus.

Graduate Students: You are asked to read widely in order acquaint yourself with the literature available in the history for this period and to submit a 15-page book review essay on these readings. A separate sheet of instructions will follow.

Grading Scale: Mid-Term Exam = 30%; Final Exam = 40%; Course Paper = 30%

Class Discussion: Participation in class discussion is vital. Active participation in these discussions can add as much as 10% (bonus) to your final grade. In many cases in the past this has led to a full letter upgrade.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

READING ASSIGNMENT

Aug. 21

Course Introduction

Germany: Era of World War I – 1900-1918

Reading: E. M. Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Aug. 23 Pre-War Diplomacy/ A “Grab for World Power”?

“ 28 The Euphoric Expectations of August 1914

“ 30 The Great Battles of 1916/ Verdun and the Somme

Sept. 4 1918: Collapse at the Front/ Abdication of the Kaiser

Defeat, Revolution, Democracy

Reading: Otto Friedrich, *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s*

Sept. 6 Revolution: Communist? Socialist? Democratic?

“ 11 The Treaty of Versailles (the *Diktat*)

“ 13 The Unsteady Democracy. 1919-1923

“ 18 *Voelkisch Racism*; the Protocols of Zion; Hitler’s Beer Hall Putsch

“ 20 1924-1928 The “Good Years”

“ 25 Weimar and Cultural Modernism / The *Bauhaus*

“ 27 Culture and “Conservative Revolution”

Oct. 2 Review for the Mid-Term

Oct. 4 MID-TERM EXAM

Oct. 9 FALL BREAK

Hitler and the Third Reich

Reading: Joseph Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*
 Christian Leitz, ed., *The Third Reich*
 Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship* (for Graduate Students)

Oct. 11	1929: The “Great Depression” and Political Radicalism -- Nazi and Communist
“ 16	Crisis and Charisma: Adolf Hitler and the Nazis – 1929-1932
“ 18	January 30, 1933/ Hitler’s “Seizure of Power”
“ 23	<i>Gleichschaltung</i> / The Consolidation of the Dictatorship – 1933-1936
“ 25	Purifying the Aryan race/ Dealing with the “Jewish Problem”
“ 30	1938-39/ <i>Kristallnacht</i> ; <i>Anschluss</i> ; The Rape of Czechoslovakia
Nov. 1	Hitler’s War/ Why 1939? Why <i>Blitzkrieg</i> ?
“ 6	Hitler’s War against the Jews/ Why the “Final Solution”
“ 8	<i>Generalplan Ost</i> – Nazi Plans for Post-War Eastern Europe
“ 13	The Plots to Kill Hitler/ July 20, 1944
“ 15	From Stalingrad to Berlin
“ 20	The Final Days of the Third Reich
“ 22	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
“ 29	April 30, 1945/ Hitler’s Suicide and the Last Week of the Third Reich
Dec. 4	Assessing the Third Reich and its Meaning
“	Review for Final Exam

December 18 FINAL EXAM: 12:00 - 3:00 pm