

**HIS 376 – GERMANY, 1914-1945  
(HIS 692 for Graduate Students)**

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**Required Texts:** (All Students)

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)

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

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

Graduate Students in HIS 692 Only:

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

**Course Description:**

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century German power and prestige were at an all-time high. In politics, economics, and military might, 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 great 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 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 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 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, a devastating Second World War, the attempt to destroy a people (Jews) in its entirety, and, finally, a defeat that in 1945 was total and absolute.

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

## 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** is scheduled for Friday, October 10; the **Final Examination** for Monday, December 15 (8:00-11:00 AM)
- Course Paper: Undergraduate Students: You are asked to do a 6-8 page paper that is either a comparative book review on at least two books related to the course, or a term paper on a topic related to this course. I need to approve the books or the topic.  
Graduate Students: You are asked to read widely in order to acquaint yourself with literature available in the history of this period and to submit a 12-15 page review essay on these readings. A sheet of instructions will follow.
- Grading Scale: Mid-Term 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 the final grade.

## Lecture Schedule

Aug. 18 Course Introduction

### Germany: Era of the Great War – 1914-1918

**Reading Assignment:** E.M. Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*  
Stackelberg & Winkle, Chapter 1: “The German Empire and the First World War”

- Aug. 20 The Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II (1890-1914)  
“ 22 Pre-War Diplomacy/ A “Grab for World Power?”  
“ 25 The Schlieffen Plan and its Execution in 1914  
“ 27 Verdun and the Somme and the German Home Front  
“ 29 The Collapse of November 1918

Sep. 1 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

### Defeat, Revolution, Democracy

**Reading Assignment:** Otto Friedrich, *Before the Deluge* (Chapters I-XV)  
Stackelberg & Winkle, Chapter 2: “The Weimar Republic, 1919-1933

- Sep. 3 Revolution: Communism? Socialism? Democracy?  
“ 5 The Creation of the Weimar Republic  
“ 8 The Treaty of Versailles/ The *Diktat*  
“ 10 The “Cold Civil War”/ 1920-1923  
“ 12 The Great Inflation: 1919-1923  
“ 15 The Culture of *Dada* and Expressionism  
“ 17 Weimar Culture: The *Bauhaus*  
“ 19 The Years of Stability: 1924-1929  
“ 22 Neo-Conservatism

- “ 26 Aryan Racism/ *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*
- “ 29 1928-29: From Stability to Crisis
- Oct. 1 The Great Depression
- “ 3 September 1930 -- The Collapse of Democracy
- “ 6 Nazis or Communists?
- “ 8 Review Session
- “ 10 **Mid-Term Exam**

### **FALL BREAK**

#### The Third Reich: 1933-1935

**Reading Assignment:** Otto Friedrich, *Before the Deluge* (Chapters XVI-XVII)  
 Ian Kershaw, *Hitler*; Stackelberg & Winkle, (Chapter 3)

- Oct. 15 Hitler and Charisma
- “ 17 Jan 30, 1933: The Nazi “Seizure of Power”
- “ 20 Consolidating the Dictatorship
- “ 22 SA, SS, SD, Gestapo: Acronyms and Ideology
- “ 24 “Purifying” and “Multiplying” the Aryan Race
- “ 27 The “Jewish Problem” from “Aryan Paragraph” to Nuremberg Laws
- “ 29 The Nazi “Economic Miracle”
- “ 31 1936: Hitler’s Best Year

#### The Road to War: 1936-1939

**Reading Assignment:** Ian Kershaw, *Hitler*; Stackelberg & Winkle, (Chapter 3 and 4)

- Nov. 3 Nazi Foreign Policy – Objectives: *Lebensraum* in the East
- “ 5 Breaking the Chains of Versailles, 1933-1936
- “ 7 1937 –Plans for War: The “Hossbach Protocol”
- “ 10 1938—Controlling the Army
- “ 12 1938 -- *Anschluss* of Austria
- “ 14 1938-- Coordinating the “Jewish Problem” -- *Kristallnacht*

#### The Second Great War: 1939-1945

**Reading Assignment:** Stackelberg & Winkle, (Chapters 5 and 6)

- “ 17 September 1939 – War, Race, Revolution -- The “Jewish War”
- “ 19 Hitler’s Five Wars
- “ 21 The Home Front in WWII
- “ 24 The Plots to Kill Hitler
  
- “ 26 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
- “ 28 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
  
- Dec. 1 Auschwitz and the Racial Revolution
- “ 3 April 1945: Suicide and Surrender
- “ 6 Assessing the Third Reich and its Meaning
- “ 8 Review Session

The **Final Examination** is scheduled for **Monday, December 15** (8:00-11:00 AM)

