

**HIS 126**  
**HITLER'S GERMANY, 1918-2015**  
**SPRING 2021**

Meeting Times: Monday/Wednesday, 11:50-1:05pm  
Room: The Interwebs/Meliora 203  
Zoom Link: <https://bit.ly/3feZBH5>  
Passcode: 992583

**Instructor**

Thomas Fleischman  
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**Teaching Assistants**

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“But fascism was always about more than the dictators. Indeed, it is a kind of liberal illusion to focus on the figure of the dictator, as though one person was the only problem. The real problems lie in the dictator’s shadow, in the conditions that enable the leader’s rise.”  
—Mark Mazower

This course revolves around the most essential question in modern German history: was Hitler’s regime particular to Germany, German culture, and German society, or was merely the manifestation of an immanent quality in all modern nation states? What does it mean to compare any political figure to Hitler? Was his kind of “evil” *suus generis* or dangerously banal? This course places the rise and fall of the Nazi Party and Hitler in the longer *durée* of German history, from the collapse of the Second Empire in WWI, to the Weimar Republic, Nazi State, and the Two Germanys of the Cold War.

**Texts You May Purchase if You Like:**

Frans Masereel, *The City: A Vision in Woodcuts*  
Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*  
William Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*  
Omar Bartov, *Hitler’s Army*  
Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*  
Benjamin Carter Hett, *Death of Democracy*

Primary Source Collections (Available through Perusall, Library, and Blackboard)

Roderick Stackelberg and Sally A. Winkle, eds., *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts* (available as ebook through library)

Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*

I will provide all readings as PDFs through the Perusall and Blackboard pages. If you wish to purchase any of the readings, I encourage it. Hard copies of books and articles are also on reserve in Rush Rhees Library.

**The Kelly Family History Book Fund:** In 2022, the History Department received an endowed fund to purchase class text books for undergraduate students enrolled in a history course. If you need help acquiring your books, you may apply for funds through this link <https://forms.gle/c2WArDa5g696oKeU6>. Preference will be given to history majors but any student may apply.

### Guidelines

**PARTICIPATION AND PERUSALL:** Complete all assigned readings, regularly attend class and participate in discussion. Since there is no textbook for this course, your learning depends upon your participation.

This semester we will be using the annotation platform Perusall to organize course readings and in-class discussion. **By 5pm the day before the class meeting, you are required to post two questions or two comments to the assigned reading for the day in Perusall.** If you prefer to read in hard copy, by all means please do so by printing PDFs or getting the physical copies. But make sure to insert your annotations into Perusall when you are finished. I will offer a quick demo of the platform in class, but you can also learn more here: <https://support.perusall.com/hc/en-us/articles/360033995074-Getting-started>

**ATTENDANCE: I will not take attendance.** Things are stressful enough as is, and I don't feel like it's worth my time or energy to make sure you are sitting in front of your computer. Nevertheless, I expect you to be present and participate because you are college students who are interested in this subject. If you cannot bring yourself to regularly participate or do the work, this is not the class for you and I suggest you drop it immediately.

### **REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

1. Complete the assigned readings, regularly attend class and participate in discussion.
2. **Write four, short one-page reaction papers to a primary source or secondary source.** The class syllabus has been divided into four sections. You must write a reaction paper for each of those sections. You can complete and turn in the analysis at any point within the demarcated period. Post your paper in the Blackboard link.
3. **Annotate the assigned reading on Perusall.**
4. **Write a party platform paper for the 1930s Election Simulation exercise.** I will hand out instructions beforehand.
5. Complete a **written, open-book final exam.**

#### Assignments

Four Short Reaction Papers	40% (10% each)
1930s Election Simulation	20%

Participation via Perusall	20%
Final Exam	20%

**Formatting:** All papers must be submitted to blackboard, and **formatted in Word** (.doc or docx) and **saved with your last name first, e.g. “Fleischman Masereel Paper.docx.”**

You are expected to master the citation style that is common among historians, known as the Chicago Manual of Style, and is detailed in the volume by Kate Turabian. The guide is available in the library and online at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

Late papers lose 1/3 of a grade per day. E.g., a B paper submitted the morning after it was due, will receive a B-. **Papers more than 72 hours late will receive an F.**

**History Library Guide:** For help with papers and research, students are encouraged to seek out the library and history librarian, Lara Nicosia. Resources and contact information can be found at, <http://libguides.lib.rochester.edu/his>

**Computers:** Obviously our current work is impossible without the internet and computers. We will be staring at screens 100% of the time, which frankly, is a real bummer. That being said, I invited you to use our class time as an opportunity to escape the oppressive, constant drum of the internet and focus on a single subject for an hour of your time every day. I will do my best to vary class activities and discussion. I want to engage you where you are (mentally). So whenever you feel the urge to do something else during class, try to put off that stuff for an hour. Social media, consumer capitalism, and the constant din of “Breaking News” will still be there when we are done for the day. Hopefully by paying attention to something else for a little while, you’ll feel some relief.

**Email:** I am available via email for questions or concerns about the class. There are types of questions, however, that I don’t generally answer. If you write an email telling me you are going to miss class, I will take note, but won’t write back. If you write with a question about an assignment or reading, and the answer is on the syllabus or assignment sheet, I will not write back. Otherwise I do my best to keep up with your questions, although occasionally an email slips through the cracks. If you don’t hear back within a few days, try me again or come up to me after class.

**Disability Services:**

The University offers a number of accommodations for students through the Office of Disability Resources, including special testing locations, extra time, and help with note taking. For a full list of services, please visit <https://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/faculty/accommodations-defined.html> and feel free to contact me with additional questions or requests.

**Academic honesty:** Intellectual integrity is the University’s most fundamental commitment. Plagiarism of any kind will be penalized to the fullest possible extent. There is no mitigating circumstance, ever, for plagiarism. Please visit the University’s official policy on academic honesty here, <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/>.

Whenever you draw upon somebody else's words *or ideas* to make a point, give them credit in a footnote. The most common causes of plagiarism are not deliberate dishonesty. Often it is careless note-taking. Make sure that in your notes you distinguish clearly your thoughts on the reading and the words you have copied from a secondary source. Waiting too long to do the research and the stress and confusion that may result from that rush to finish may produce mistakes that in public represent the most serious violation of academic values. You are, therefore, strongly encouraged to start assignments well in advance of the deadline.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week I. Introduction

Jan. 12 – Anti-liberalism: Fascism, Nazism, and Trumpism?

### PART I – THE RISE AND FALL OF WEIMAR, 1914-1932

Jan. 17 – **MLK Day – No Class**

Jan. 19 – The End of World War One and Civil War

*Primary Source:* in Stackelberg & Winkle, “Proclamation of the Council of People’s Representatives to the German People, 12 November 1918” p. 49

### Week II. The Cracked Consensus

Jan. 24 – Versailles and Weimar Constitution

**Discussion:** Eric Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, Intro and Ch. 1, “A Troubled Beginning,” pp. 1-40

Jan. 26 – Hyperinflation and Hitler’s Origins

*Primary Source:* in Kaes et al., Friedrich Kroner, “Overwrought Nerves” (p. 63-64)

### Week III. Crisis and Stabilization

Jan. 31 – 1923: NSDAP, Beer Hall Putsch’s, and the Occupation of the Ruhr

**Discussion:** Benjamin Carter Hett, *The Death of Democracy*, Ch. 2, “Don’t Believe Him, He’s Telling the Truth,” pp. 35-61

Feb. 2 -- Two Roads Diverged: Hitler’s v. Stresemann’s Germany; Americanization

*Primary Source:* Kaes et al., “Berlin Stahlhelm Manifesto”, May 8, 1927., pp.339-340

END OF FIRST REACTION PAPER PERIOD, SUNDAY FEB. 6<sup>TH</sup> @1159PM

### Week IV. The Weimar Republic & Modernity

Feb. 7 – Gender and Sexuality, from Liberation to Misogyny

*Primary Source:* Kaes et al., “This is the New Woman,” Elsa Herrmann, 1929, pp. 206-208

Feb. 9 – The City

**Discussion:** Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, 2 & 8, pp. 41-79, 297-331

Frans Masereel, *The City: A Vision in Woodcuts*

**Week V. Weimar Culture & Crisis**

Feb. 14 – Expressionism to New Objectivity

Feb. 16 – The Great Depression and Constitutional Crisis of the 1930s

**Discussion:** Hett, *Death of Democracy*, Ch. 3 “Bloody May and the Creeper,” pp. 62-93

**Week VI. The Nazi Seizure of Power**

Feb. 21 – The Onset of the Great Depression and Ensuing Political Crisis

Feb. 23 – The Rise of Nazism in a Small Town

**Discussion:** William Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, Chapters 1-3, 6, 8, or 3-40, 70-90, 108-127,

END OF SECOND REACTION PAPER PERIOD, SUNDAY FEBRUARY 27<sup>TH</sup> @1159PM

**Week VII. The Election Debate of 1930**

Feb. 28 – In Class Preparation. Work in your assigned political parties.

March 2 – 1930 Electoral Debate Simulation

1930S SIMULATION WRITTEN WORK DUE  
SUNDAY MARCH 13<sup>TH</sup> @1159PM VIA BLACKBOARD

MARCH 5-13<sup>TH</sup> – SPRING BREAK/NO CLASS

**PART II – POLITICS, LIFE, AND WORK IN NAZI GERMANY 1933-1938**

**Week VIII. Nazis in Power**

March 14 – The Reichstag Fire and *Gleichschaltung*, or “Putting into Gear”

**Discussion:** Hett, *Death of Democracy*, Ch. 7 “Coordination” pp.

March 16 – A Nazi New Deal?

**Week IX. Jewish Life and Racial Thinking in Nazi Germany**

March 21 – Weeding and Cultivating the Racial Garden

Primary Source: Kaes et al., “Marriage Laws and the Principles of Breeding,” Richard W. Darré pp. 133-137

March 23 – Jews and Germans between 1933 and 1939

**Discussion:** Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, Introduction & Ch. 1-2, 5-6.

**Week X. The Road to War**

March 28 - 1936 and Military Mobilization

Primary Source: Stackelberg et al., “Notes of Chief of the Army General Staff Ludwig Beck on the risks of war with Czechoslovakia, 16 July 1938” pp. 220-221

**Begin:** Bartov, *Hitler’s Army*, Intro. Ch. 1-2, 4

**PART III – WAR AND GENOCIDE, 1939-1945**

March 30 – War in the West and Barbarossa

END OF THIRD REACTION PAPER PERIOD, SUNDAY APRIL 3<sup>RD</sup> @1159PM

**Week XI. War, Empire, & Genocide, Part I**

April 4 – General Plan *Ost*

April 6 – The Wehrmacht in the Killing Fields

**Discussion:** Bartov, *Hitler’s Army*, Intro, Ch. 1-2, 4

**Week XII. War, Empire, & Genocide, Part II**

April 11 – Auschwitz and Modernity

Primary Source: Stackelberg et al., “Testimony of Rudolf Höss, April 15, 1946” pp. 371-375

April 13 – Collapse

**Week XIII. The End**

April 18 – **Film: Hannah Arendt**

**PART IV: HITLER’S LEGACIES, 1945-PRESENT**

April 20 – De-Nazification, Nuremberg, and German “Victimhood”

END OF FOURTH REACTION PAPER PERIOD, SUNDAY APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup> @1159PM

**Week XIV. Postwar Germanys**

April 25 – Memory and Memorials

April 27 – Exam Review