History 223: Authoritarian Impulses in Europe, 1918-1945

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Course meetings: TTH 1:30-2:45 p.m., King 323  
Office Hours: T 3-4:30 p.m.; W 10-11:30 a.m. and by appointment

The aftermath of World War I not only witnessed the final collapse of the old post-Napoleonic order in Europe, but featured the emergence of two radical anti-liberal, anti-Communist movements: Fascism in Italy and National Socialism in Germany. This course examines these two authoritarian movements from their earliest manifestations through their respective “seizures of power” in 1922 and 1933, and culminates with their collapse as a result of defeat in the Second World War. It will also trace the relationship between these two movements and the Bolshevik dictatorship that emerged in the Soviet Union. Key themes for the course include: the intellectual origins of the two movements; the role of the First World War, anti-Bolshevism and street violence in shaping the early Fascists and Nazis; the place of Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler within each movement; the transformation of both groups into governing institutions; everyday life and gender roles in Italy and Germany; anti-Semitism under Fascism and Nazism; other “fascistoid” movements elsewhere in Europe during the interwar period; and the place of war (from the First World War to Ethiopia to the Second World War) and race war in particular in shaping both movements.

Course Goals/Objectives

The goals and objectives of this class are two-fold, and involve both its content and the skills and practices that it will help you cultivate, as students of history, critical thinkers and engaged members of the Oberlin community.

Content: by the end of the semester, you should be conversant with the broad historical context for the creation of anti-liberal political movements in Europe after the First World War, and should be able to identify some of the fundamental hallmarks of both Nazism and Fascism. You should also be conversant with the major interpretative approaches to those two movements among historians, and (hopefully) will be able to better historicize contemporary discussions that concern both movements.

Skills: this course is designed to sharpen and broaden your cognitive, communication, and collaborative skills, in particular. You will be working with both secondary and primary sources, and will gain familiarity with how historians construct their arguments and critique each other’s work. The course will cultivate your communication skills, by challenging you to become
effective writers, capable of analytic sophistication and synthesis, and by obligating you to become better speakers, capable of presenting clearly and concisely on discrete topics. Finally, the course will also hone your collaborative instincts, as we mutually and respectfully work together in our discussions to “unpack” and analyze our readings.

Course Requirements

All work must be turned in to receive credit for the course. The breakdown of grades is as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/participation in weekly discussions</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short response papers (5% each)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Book review</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review oral presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final annotated bibliography project</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Details (further “ground rules” are at the end of the syllabus)

1. Discussion
   All students are expected to do all of the course readings at the time they are indicated on the syllabus, and to actively participate in class. Readings must be brought to class in some form. Attendance is mandatory, and more than two absences (barring exceptional circumstances, of course) will have a direct and adverse effect on your grade. See “Additional Ground Rules” at the end of the syllabus for more details.

2. Short Response Papers
   These analytical papers (3 pages in length) are intended to demonstrate your ability to cogently summarize and analyze reading material from the syllabus, in response to a designated question distributed in advance. You must turn in two analytical papers in the first half of the semester (out of the four possible paper topics), and one (out of two possible topics) in the second half of the course.

3. Critical book review
   This paper (5-7 pages in length) is due in Week 7 on the syllabus. (You can certainly submit it earlier if you so desire). This paper will give you a chance to review a scholarly monograph of your choosing. I will distribute a list of possible monographs for review, although you may review a book not on the list as long as you consult with me first. This paper is designed for you to engage critically with the academic scholarship on Fascism, Nazism, Stalinism (although preferably only in its relation to the first two movements), the less successful “fascistoid” movements outside of Italy and Germany, or the more traditional authoritarian regimes of the interwar period (e.g. Spain or Portugal). While you have a lot of flexibility in choosing your topic, I would advise that you avoid general narrative histories of Nazism or Fascism, which will be harder for you to critique. Keep in mind that your monograph paper might also provide you with a springboard for your final annotated bibliography (more on this below).
You will also be responsible for an oral presentation based on your book review during the second half of the course. This will be no more than 7 minutes in length, and will cut to the essence of your review by presenting (for the class) the book’s main arguments and how it connected to our course discussions; you should also highlight the most successful aspects of the book (what “worked” for you) and what you found problematic. Feel free to incorporate any visual or audio elements related to your chosen monograph if you feel that they will enhance the overall impact of your analysis.

4. Annotated bibliography
The final project for the course (taking the place of both a final paper and a final exam) is an annotated bibliography on some particular topic covered (or ignored) during this course that you find compelling and worthy of further attention. It will entail a 5-8 page annotated bibliography itself that surveys the useful and relevant literature for your chosen topic, along with a 4-5 page essay summarizing the major themes and debates within the literature. We will “build” this project as the semester advances; you will note that you must submit a topic proposal during week 5, and will need to meet with me after Fall Break to discuss progress on your project. A draft of the bibliography will be due during Week 12, and the final bibliography and review essay will be due at the regularly-scheduled exam time.

Texts and Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the College Bookstore. While I will attempt to place a copy of each on reserve at the library, I would strongly recommend that you purchase them for your own convenience and to look incredibly well-read when you carry them around campus or display them prominently on your bookshelf.


The following readings are required and available on Blackboard (and are indicated with an asterisk* on the syllabus).

Shelley Baranowski, “Strength Through Joy: Tourism and National Integration in the Third

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week 1
September 6 Introductions

September 8 Conceptualizing Fascism and Nazism
Readings: *Robert Paxton, “The Five Stage of Fascism,” 1-23; R.J.B. Bosworth, Mussolini’s Italy, 1-8; Jane Caplan, Nazi Germany, 1-25

Week 2:
September 13 Origin Stories and the First World War
Readings: Bosworth, 8-92

September 15 Getting Power in Italy
Readings: Bosworth, 93-183

*DUE IN CLASS: RESPONSE PAPER POSSIBILITY #1

Week 3
September 20 From Collaboration to Dictatorship
Readings: *Benito Mussolini, The Doctrine of Fascism; Bosworth, 184-214

September 22 Origin Stories: Weimar, Nazis, and Hitler
Readings: Caplan, 26-72; *“Beer Hall Putsch” from Nazi Germany Sourcebook, 85-87

*DUE IN CLASS: RESPONSE PAPER POSSIBILITY #2

Week 4
September 27 Forging Fascist Society
Readings: Skim Bosworth, 215-276; begin Ignazio Silone, Bread and Wine

September 29 Bread and Wine
Readings: Silone (through chapter 16 at least)

Week 5
October 4 Bread and Wine
Readings: Silone (finish!)

*DUE IN CLASS: RESPONSE PAPER POSSIBILITY #3

October 6 Nazi Society: Party and Repression
Readings: Caplan, 73-98, 122-139

*DUE IN CLASS: ONE-PARAGRAPH TOPIC PROPOSAL FOR ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Week 6
October 11 Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches?
Readings: Caplan, 99-121; *Shelley Baranowski, “The Beautiful Look of the Third Reich,” 213-236

October 11 FILM NIGHT: Triumph of the Will (Dir.: Leni Riefenstahl, 1935)
7 P.M., Location TBA

October 13 Discussion of Triumph of the Will
Readings: None

*DUE IN CLASS: RESPONSE PAPER POSSIBILITY #4

Week 7
October 18 Imperialism, Radicalization, and War
Readings: Bosworth, 367-462

*DUE OCTOBER 19 (WED.), 4:30 P.M.: CRITICAL BOOK REVIEW, RICE 311

October 20 Spanish Conflagrations
Readings: *Alun Kenwood, The Spanish Civil War, 3-17, 56-70, 181-198

MIDTERM BREAK!

Week 8
November 1 Comparative Perspectives: Looking East
Readings: Timothy Snyder, Bloodlands, 1-114; *Sheila Fitzpatrick, Stalin’s Peasants, 69-79

November 3 Mobilizing for war
Readings Caplan, 168-218

*DUE IN CLASS: RESPONSE PAPER POSSIBILITY #5

Week 9
November 8 Wars West and East
Readings: Snyder, 119-186

November 10 Race War and Destruction
Readings: Snyder, 187-223; Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 1-70

Week 10
November 15 Ordinary Killers?
Readings: Browning, 71-189

November 17 Browning versus Goldhagen
Readings: Browning, 191-223; *Daniel Goldhagen, “The Evil of Banality”*

*DUE IN CLASS: RESPONSE PAPER POSSIBILITY #6

Week 11
November 22 The Holocaust
Readings: Snyder, 225-276

November 24 NO CLASS

Week 12
November 29 Survival in Auschwitz

*DUE NOVEMBER 30 (WED.), 4:30 PM: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FULL DRAFT, RICE 311

December 1 Resistance?
Readings: *Michael Burleigh, The Third Reich*, 665-728

Week 13
December 6 Defeat and Disaster (Italy)
Readings: Bosworth, 463-530

December 8 Defeat and Disaster (Germany)
Readings: Snyder, 277-337; Caplan, 246-266

Week 14
December 13 Conclusion/Review

*DUE DECEMBER 18 (SUNDAY), 4 PM: FINAL ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REVIEW ESSAY, RICE 311

Additional Ground Rules:
1. Papers must be either one and a half-spaced or double-spaced and have one-inch margins, and should not employ anything larger than 12-point font.

2. Deadlines are to be taken most seriously. I will automatically grant you one extension for either the book review or one of the steps of the final annotated bibliography (but not the final draft itself). The short response papers are designed to prepare you for discussion on that day of class, and so granting you an extension on one of them would somewhat defeat the purpose of the assignment. You must e-mail me before the paper is due; you do not need to explain the circumstances necessitating the extension. The extension will be for 72 hours. Barring exceptional emergency circumstances, I will not grant you an extension on another paper. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.

3. All work turned in for this course must be your own, and is subject to the Honor Code. This pledge states: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.” If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me or raise the issue in class.

4. Any student who misses more than five classes (again, barring exceptional emergency circumstances) may not receive a passing grade. This does not, however, give you license to miss four classes; as noted earlier, more than two absences, barring those that have been cleared with me in advance, will have a direct and negative impact on your overall grade, not just your discussion grade.

5. If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to Jane Boomer in the Office of Disability Services in Peters G-27/G-28.