

**Spring 2013  
History 317**

**Politics and Culture in the Weimar Republic/Politik und Kultur der Weimarer Republik**

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**Course Description:**

This first democracy on German soil was born in the chaos that accompanied the end of World War I and ended with the Nazi assumption of power. Between this tumultuous beginning and this tragic ending, the Weimar Republic was the site of an enormous amount of artistic, intellectual, and political creativity. This class will investigate the culture and politics of the Weimar era, paying particular attention to the intersections between these different realms. Topics we will address include: the initial and final crises of the Republic, the phenomenon of the New Woman, as well as the city of Berlin in particular, and urban imaginings in general.

We will be reading and interpreting a wide variety of primary sources—from newspaper articles to manifestos and from films to buildings. Students who already can read German will have the opportunity to work with additional German-language sources both in class and for their final papers.

**This course is explicitly designed as a research-oriented class. This means that you will spend most of the semester devising an original research project, researching it, and finally writing it up. Although the final paper is worth only 30% of your grade, in total 65% of your grade is dependent on the paper you write and the feedback you give your classmates on their papers. Before committing to this class, think about how you feel about such an intensive project.**

**Prerequisites and Requirements:**

This course assumes a background in European history (either through taking AP European history or History 102). If you do not have this background, please come see me as soon as possible so that we can determine if this course is right for you.

Your grade in this class will be determined as follows:

**Assignments:**

- February 18: Initial Informal Proposal, 1p.
- 5% March 4: Formal Proposal, 2pp.
- 15% March 21: Literature Review (4-6 pp.)
- 5% April 26: Draft (check, check-plus, check-minus)

--	May 6: Paper Abstract
30%	DATE: Final Paper (12-15 pp.)
10%	Your Feedback
10%	Discussion Papers (4)
25%	Discussion

All written work must be turned in to receive credit for this class.

All work for this class is governed by the honor code. You must write and sign the honor code pledge at the end of each assignment. We will talk briefly about the honor code in class, but if you have further questions, please go to: <http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/2011-2012/11-Policies-Honor.pdf>.

Please follow Chicago Style citation form. Here is a short guide:  
<http://www.oberlin.edu/faculty/svolk/citation.htm>. For more detailed citation information, <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/> is a good place to start.

The paper that you write must utilize original research using primary sources. These primary sources include (but are not limited to): films, government documents, manifestos, posters & cartoons, novels, memoirs, newspapers, etc. Reflecting the various backgrounds and interests you each bring to the class, you are given a fair amount of freedom in choosing your topic. The only requirement is that your paper is a history paper. We will discuss the specific requirements of a history paper (versus one for a literature or a political science class, for example) in class. Although it is never required, I am more than happy to meet with you at any stage of this project.

If you read German, your paper options will, of course, be greatly expanded, but you will also potentially face special challenges that accompany working with foreign language sources.

On February 18, you will turn in an informal paragraph-length proposal. This will not be graded, but will serve as the basis for your refining your topic for your formal proposal.

On March 5, you will submit a formal proposal. This should be 2 pages in length and feature an explanation of your topic, a description and/or citations of the primary sources you will be using, as well as an annotated bibliography of no less than three scholarly sources on your topic.

On March 21, you will turn in a literature review that is worth 15% of your grade. This should be a review of one monograph (in English or German) that is relevant to your topic. We will talk about what a monograph is and how to find an appropriate one in class. Your review will evaluate this book, including two reviews of it that were published in major academic journals, and finally, explain how it is relevant for your own work.

After you submit your initial, unofficial proposals, you will be divided into reading groups, which will remain the same throughout the semester. 10% of your grade is based on the feedback that you give your fellow classmates on their work throughout the semester. Several times throughout the semester, we will take class time in order for you to consult with your group members; however, it is expected that you look at your group members as a resource to

use for feedback at other times as well. I will set up separate discussion boards on blackboard for each group to assist in this process.

In the final week of class, you will submit a 1-2 page abstract of your paper. These abstracts will be collected and distributed to everyone in the class to serve as the basis for our concluding discussions.

When you turn in your final paper, you are expected to turn in a portfolio consisting of: all drafts that you submitted to your group, the graded copy of your literature review as well as all feedback you received from your group members (including formal comment sheets, comments they wrote on earlier drafts, as well as any emails they may have sent you apart from the group blackboard forum).

10% of your grade is based on four discussion papers you will write over the course of the semester. These papers can be written before any day's discussion for which we have a reading assignment but three of the four must be written before spring break. Your discussion paper should discuss some issues raised by the reading for that class and must end with at least two questions for that day's discussion. Discussion papers must be submitted by 9pm of the day before any given discussion, can be submitted via email, and will be graded in a  $\sqrt{-}$ ,  $\sqrt{}$ ,  $\sqrt{+}$  format.

25% of your grade is based on your participation in class discussions. Attendance is a key component of participation and is therefore mandatory. If you need to miss a class due to a medical or other emergency, you must provide adequate documentation (such as a doctor's note) to avoid the absence penalty. If you come late to class, it will count as a one-half absence.

For the most part, you will be submitting your proposals, lit reviews, and drafts on blackboard. We will discuss the details of paper submission in class.

All written work should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font on paper with 1" margins. Also, while your grade for any paper is primarily based on their content, errors in grammar or citation style can figure into the grade, especially if such errors are egregious.

**ALL late papers will be downgraded 1/3 of a grade for every day that they are late.**

You will have a total of 4 "screw-ups" to use over the course of the semester. A "screw-up" can allow you to take a 24 hour extension on a paper or it can be used to take an unexcused absence from class. So, for example, you could take a 48 hour extension on the literature review and miss two classes. You can use it for any of your drafts or proposals. **YOU CANNOT USE IT TO GET AN EXTENSION ON THE FINAL PAPER.** If you wish for one or several "screw-ups" to apply to a late assignment, please indicate that on the first page of the paper when you (finally) turn it in.

#### Readings/Films:

The following **required** books are available for purchase at the Oberlin College Bookstore:

Sabine Hake, *Topographies of Class* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008)  
 Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*  
 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994)  
 Irmgard Keun, *Artificial Silk Girl* (New York: Other Press, 2002)  
 Joseph Roth, *What I Saw: Reports From Berlin, 1920-1933* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.,  
 2003)  
 Pamela Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies: The Culture of Radicalism in Berlin, 1929-1933* (New  
 York: Cambridge UP, 2007)

Additional required readings are marked with a \* if available on Blackboard or a # if available from an online journal. Probably the easiest way to find any online journal reading is to search for the name of the journal in Obis and go from there. If you have any problems accessing online journals, please let me know as soon as possible.

A number of films are also required texts for this course and have been placed on reserve. I will arrange class screenings for these films. If you cannot attend the screening, it is your responsibility to watch the films on your own time.

#### Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

February 5 Introduction

February 7 Wilhelmine Germany & WWI

\*Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 104-154

February 12 WWI

\*Richard Bessel, *Germany After the First World War*, Chapter 1.

\*Elizabeth Domansky, "Militarization and Reproduction in World War I Germany," in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*, ed. Geoff Eley (Ann Arbor, 1996), 427-463

February 14 Defeat & Revolution

#Michael Geyer, "Insurrectionary Warfare: The German Debate About the Levée en Masse in October 1918," *Journal of Modern History* 73 (2001): 459-527.

Ernst Simmel, "War Neuroses and 'Psychic Trauma,' (1918) in: *Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (henceforth: WRS), 7-8

Heinrich Mann, "The Meaning and Idea of Revolution," (1918) in: WRS, 38-40

February 19 The Wars after the War

Ernst Jünger, "Fire" (1922) in: WRS, 18-20

Ernst von Salomon, "The Outlawed" (1929) in: WRS, 24-25

Annemarie Sammartino, *The Impossible Border: Germany and the East, 1914-1922* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2010), Chapter 2.

February 21 Library Session with Jen Starkey to discuss paper proposals

February 26 The Culture of War/Trauma & Revolution

Spartacus Manifesto (1918) in: WRS, 37-38

Bruno Taut, "A Program for Architecture" (1918) in: WRS, 432-435

Walter Gropius, "Program of the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar" (1919) in: WRS, 435-438

November Group Manifesto (1918): WRS, 477-478

Work Council for Art Manifesto (1919): WRS, 478-479

Screening: *Caligari* (1919)

February 28 Politics of the Early Republic

Weimar Constitution (August 11, 1919) [http://www.zum.de/psm/weimar/weimar\\_vve.php/](http://www.zum.de/psm/weimar/weimar_vve.php/)

\*Arthur J. Jacobson and Bernhard Schlink, "Constitutional Crisis: The German and the American Experience," in Arthur J. Jacobson and Bernhard Schlink (eds.), *Weimar: A Jurisprudence of Crisis* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 1-39

#Andrew Donson, "The Teenagers' Revolution: *Schülerräte* in the Democratization and Right-Wing Radicalization of Germany, 1918–1923," *Central European History* (2011), 44, 3, 420-446

GERMAN LANGUAGE MEETING: Emil Gumbel, *Vier Jahre politischer Mord* (1922), selections.

March 5 Inflation

\*Lords of Finance, Part II.

*Das Tagebuch*: On the Occupation of the Ruhr (1923) in: WRS, 62-63

Friedrich Kroner, "Overwrought Nerves" (1923) in: WRS, 63-64

Hans Ostwald, "A Moral History of the Inflation," in: WRS, 77-78

March 7 Discuss Paper Proposals and follow-up meeting with Ms. Starkey

March 12 Stability & the New Political Landscape

\*Julia Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), Chapter 2.

#Manuela Achilles, "With a Passion for Reason: Celebrating the Constitution in Weimar Germany," *Central European History* 43 (2010): 666-689.

*Das Tagebuch*, "Editorial on the Anniversary of the Death of Walther Rathenau" (1923) in: WRS, 109-110

Carl von Ossietzky, "Defending the Republic: The Great Fashion" (1924) in: WRS, 110-112

Founding Manifesto of the Communist Party (KPD) (1918) in: WRS, 40-46

German Center Party Program (1922) in: WRS, 104-105  
 Social Democratic Party (SPD) Program (1925) in: WRS, 112-115  
 German People's Party Program (1931) in: WRS, 115-117  
 German Worker's Party (DAP) 25 Points (1920) in: WRS, 124-127

March 14 New Woman—Representations

Keun, *Artificial Silk Girl*

March 14 Gabriele Brandstetter, "Dance during the Weimar Republic," 4:30pm, location TBA (optional)

March 19 New Woman—Interpretations

#Rüdiger Graf, "Anticipating the Future in the Present – "New Women" and Other Beings of the Future in Weimar Germany" *Central European History* 42 (2009): 647-673

\*Kerstin Barndt, "Mother, Citizens, and Consumers. Female Readers in Weimar Germany," *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

GERMAN LANGUAGE MEETING: Gabriele Tergit, „§ 218: Moderne Gretchentragödie" (1926)

March 21 NO CLASS  
 LITERATURE REVIEW DUE

SPRING BREAK

April 2 Berlin: Urbanism and Modernity

Sabine Hake, *Topographies of Class*, selections TBA

Franz Hessel, "The Suspicious Character" (1929) in: WRS, 420-422

Harold Nicolson, "The Charm of Berlin" (1932) in: WRS, 425-426

Curt Moreck, "We will Show You Berlin" (1930) in: WRS, 563-564

Screening: *Berlin, Symphonie der Grossstadt*

April 4 Berlin: Minorities

\*David Clay Large, "'Out with the Ostjuden': The Scheunenviertel Riots in Berlin, November 1923," in *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 123-40.

Joseph Roth, *What I Saw: Reports From Berlin, 1920-1933* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003), 31-81.

April 9 Berlin: Nightlife

Sabine Hake, *Topographies of Class*, selections TBA  
 Alice Gerstel, "Jazz Band" (1922) in: WRS, 554-555  
 Katharina Rathaus, "Charleston: Every Age Has the Dance It Deserves" (1926) in: WRS, 558-559  
 Ivan Goll, "The Negroes Are Conquering Europe" (1926) in: WRS, 559-560  
 Joseph Goebbels, "Around the Gedächtniskirche" (1928) in: WRS, 560-562  
 Carl Ludwig Schleich, "Cocaineism" (1921) in: WRS, 723-724  
 Ernst Engelbrecht and Leo Heller, "Night Figures of the City" (1926) in: WRS, 724-726  
 Willi Pröger, "Sites of Berlin Prostitution" (1930) in: WRS, 736

April 11      Imagining the Future: Bauhaus

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "Architecture and the Will of the Age" (1924) in: WRS, 438-439  
 Hannes Meyer, "The New World" (1926) in: WRS, 445-449  
 Rudolf Arnheim, "The Bauhaus in Dessau" (1927) in: WRS, 450-451  
 Marcel Breuer, "Metal Furniture and Modern Spatiality" (1928) in: WRS, 453  
 Bruno Taut, "The New Dwelling: The Woman as Creator" (1924) in: WRS, 461-462  
 Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, "A Construction, Not a Dwelling" (1927) in: WRS, 468-469  
 Otto Steinicke, "A Visit to a New Apartment" (1929) in: WRS, 471-473

GERMAN LANGUAGE EVENING MEETING: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, excerpts

April 16      Imagining the Future: Metropolis

Screening: *Metropolis* (1926)

April 18      Depression & Political Crisis

Pamela Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies: The Culture of Radicalism in Berlin, 1929-1933* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2007), selections.

Heinrich Hauser, "The Unemployed" (1933) in: WRS, 84-85

April 23      Culture of Collapse

Siegfried Kracauer, "Girls and Crisis" (1931) in: WRS, 565-566

Gabriele Tergit, "Fritz Lang's *M*: Filmed Sadism" (1931) in: WRS, 632-633

Siegfried Kracauer, "Murder Trials and Society" (1931) in: WRS, 740-741

Screening: *M* (1931)

April 25      The Nazi *Machtergreifung*

Melita Maschmann, "A German Teenager's Response to the Nazi Takeover in January 1933," in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, 47-49

New York Times, "Germany Ventures. January 31, 1933," in Moeller, *The Nazi State*, 49-51

APRIL 26 ROUGH DRAFT DUE

April 30 Final Discussion

May 2 Workshop Groups

May 7 Paper Presentations

May 9 Paper Presentations

FINAL PAPER (AND PORTFOLIO) DUE, WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2PM