Fall 2006  
History 114—Fascism

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Office Hours: Monday 10-12; Wednesday 11-12

Course Description:

Sixty years after the defeat of Nazi Germany, fascism remains a source of fascination for everyone from academic historians to History Channel devotees. Americans of various political stripes use fascism to refer to everything from “Islamofascists” to George W. Bush’s America. In this seminar, we will seek to disentangle these later attributions from the historical experience of fascism in early twentieth century Europe. We will examine the ideology and practices of the fascist state as developed in Italy and Germany, focusing in particular on an examination of life under fascist regimes. This course will then explore the policies of occupation and extermination practiced during the Second World War, including the creation of fascist regimes in France and elsewhere. Finally, we will discuss the memory of fascism and the potential for a fascist revival.

This course is intended to introduce second year students to both the study of fascism specifically and the issues and methodologies involved in the study of European history more generally. As a small colloquium, the success of this class depends on your engaged and informed participation.

Prerequisites and Requirements:

There are no prerequisites for this class, although it will be helpful if you have a basic background in the major events and issues of European History. If you do not possess this background, let me know and I can suggest some outside readings.

Your grade in this class will be determined as follows:

35% Participation & Attendance  
20% Primary Source Critique (5pp.)  
20% Monograph Review (5pp.)  
25% Final Paper (5pp.)

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

All written work should be double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font on paper with 1” margins. Unless otherwise directed, you MAY NOT turn in papers online but rather, must drop them off at my office or in class on the day it is due. Papers must be stapled. Also, while your grade for any paper is primarily based on its content, errors in grammar or citation style can figure into the grade, especially if such errors are egregious. The page limits for these papers should be taken as relatively strict. While I don’t want you to cut off a thought in mid-sentence to fit the limit, I will not read more than one page past the assignment limit (i.e. for a 5 page paper, I will not read past the 6th page).

ALL late papers will be downgraded 1/3 of a grade for every day that they are late. If you are late or do not attend class on the day a paper is due, that paper is automatically an additional one day late. If
you turn in a paper draft late, the lateness penalty will be assigned to the final paper. You will have a total of four “screw-ups” to use over the course of the semester. A “screw-up” can allow you to take a 24 hour extension for a paper (this applies to either the actual paper or, in the case of the first paper, the draft) or it can be used to take an unexcused absence from class. So, for example, you could take a 48 hour extension on a paper and miss two classes. If you wish for one or several “screw-ups” to apply to a late paper, please indicate that on the first page of the paper when you (finally) turn it in.

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 paper and exam. We will talk briefly about the honor code in class, but if you have further questions, please go to: http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html.

Readings/Films:

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


These books are also on reserve at the Oberlin College Library.

Readings marked with an * are available on ERes.

The films we are viewing for this class have additionally been placed on reserve.

Schedule of Readings & Discussion Topics

September 5  Introduction: What is Fascism?

The Origins of Fascism

September 7  Nineteenth Century

*Stefan Berger, Germany (London: Hodder Arnold, 2004), 77-110

September 12  World War I and the Birth of Italian Fascism


September 14  The Great Depression and German Fascism

Allen, The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, part I (pp. 1-147)
September 14  Isabel Hull, “Military Necessity and Mass Killing in the German Imperial Army,” Wilder 101, 4:30pm

September 15  Christopher Browning, “Holocaust History and Survivor Testimony: The Starachowice Factory Slave Labor Camps,” Wilder 101, noon

Fascist Society

September 19  Fascist Ideology

*Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, Fascist Spectacle (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1997), 42-88

September 21  NO CLASS

September 26  The Fascist Aesthetic

*Alessandro Pavolini from Critica Fascista (1926) in A Primer of Italian Fascism, 212-218
*Massimo Bontempelli (1926) in A Primer of Italian Fascism, 218-220

September 28  The Fascist Aesthetic


Primary Source Critique—DRAFT Due at the Start of Class

October 3  Fascist Society: Atomization, Consent & Control

Allen, Part II (pp. 152-303)

October 5  Fascist Society: Workers


October 9 (Monday): Primary Source Critique Due 5pm At My Office (311 Rice)

October 10  Fascist Society: Gender

October 12  Fascist Society: Youth

Film: Hitlerjunge Quex (1933)
*Victoria de Grazia, How FascismRULEd Women, 116-165

FALL BREAK
October 24                  What is Resistance?

                          Ignazio Silone, *Bread and Wine*

October 26                  NO CLASS

October 31                  Eugenics & the Volkskörper in Nazi Germany


November 2                Anti-Semitism and the Jews

                      Film Screening: *Jud Süß* (1940)

                      *Monograph Critique DRAFT Due at the Start of Class (Optional)*

November 7                Anti-Semitism and the Jews

                          Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 9-72; 94-145

World War II

November 9                The Lead-up to War

**November 10 (Friday): Monograph Critique Due 5pm At My Office (311 Rice)**

November 14              Occupation & Collaboration


November 16              The Eastern Front

  *Omer Bartov, *Hitler’s Army*, 12-28;106-178

November 21              The Holocaust—Perpetrators

                          Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*

November 23              THANKSGIVING

November 28              The Holocaust—Victims

                          Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

After Fascism

November 30              1945

                      Film: *Die Mörder sind Unter Uns* (1946)
December 5  Coming to Terms with the Past

*James Young, *Texture of Memory*, 17-48 & 81-112

December 7  The Radical Right in Europe

December 12  Could it happen here?

    Philip Roth, *The Plot Against America*

December 14  Final Discussion

**Final Paper Due Tuesday, December 19ᵗʰ, 2pm**