

# Nazi Germany – Rise and Fall

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6 January – 24 January 2025

**CATEGORY** Social Sciences, Politics & History

## COURSE STRUCTURE

You will receive a total of **45 hours of academic lessons** (one lesson equals 45 minutes; 15 hours per week). Lessons will comprise lectures, group work, discussion sessions, and excursions.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

HUWISU courses are grouped into different time tracks. Your course will take place in **Track B**

Monday: 1.00 pm – 2.30 pm & 2.45 pm – 4.15 pm  
Tuesday: 4.45 pm – 6.15 pm & 6.30 pm – 7.15 pm  
Wednesday: 1.00 pm – 2.30 pm & 2.45 pm – 4.15 pm  
Thursday: 9.00 am - 10.30 am & 10.45 am - 12.15 pm

## COURSE LANGUAGE

This course is taught in **English**, including the readings. For the understanding of the texts and the discussions in class, a language-level of B2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is required.

## TARGET GROUP

**Undergraduate students of all subjects** with an academic background that qualifies them to participate in the course. Students should have a strong interest in the various aspects of German History.

## CREDITS & CERTIFICATES

Participants will receive **6 ECTS** credit points and a certificate if they attend regularly (at least 80% attendance), participate actively and fulfil all course assignments. Additionally, six weeks after the end of the course a Transcript of Records is issued by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

You are invited to **join our cultural and social program**. We offer a fine selection of interesting activities that aim to give you an unforgettable stay in Berlin. Through excursions, social gatherings, and sport activities, you have the opportunity to get to know the city, the university, and to meet students from all parts of the world. **Costs for these offers are included in the program fee.** Below, you find examples of previously offered cultural activities. You will be informed about the respective cultural program shortly before the start of the program via email as well as during the course period.



### POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL GUIDED TOURS

- Federal Chancellery (*Bundeskanzleramt*)
- German Parliament (*Bundestag*)
- House of Representatives (*Abgeordnetenhaus*)
- Topography of Terror exhibition
- Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office

### CULTURAL GUIDED TOURS

- Kreuzberg Tour
- Museum Island (*Museumsinsel*)
- Berlin Cathedral (*Berliner Dom*)
- Daytrip to Potsdam
- Exhibitions

### SOCIAL GATHERINGS

- Welcome Session
- Ice Skating
- Farewell Get2gether

## EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

**Preparation for lively discussions in the classroom:** Be on time, have at least the required readings completed, and points in mind for discussion or clarification.

**Assignments:** Complete all assignments according to the specified requirements on the schedule including handing them over to the lecturer.

**Commitment in class:** Pay particular attention to the lecturer and respect differences of opinions (classmates', lecturers').

**Academic guidelines:** Comply with academic integrity policies (such as no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical) especially the academic honor code and the student code of conduct.

**Attendance policy:** No unexcused absences are permitted. Students must follow teachers' instructions to catch up on missed work – to excuse absence please contact the HUWISU office.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In two World Wars, Germany tried to dominate the globe in the first half of the 20th century, and all major decisions were made in the capital Berlin.

Why was Germany such an aggressive power until 1945? How did Hitler manage to gain and keep power? Why were many Germans Nazis and deeply racist? How was the life of ordinary people during the war? Why did the Nazis kill millions of Jews and other innocent people in concentration camps? What were the long-term effects of World War II? What happened to the Nazis after the war?

The course will provide answers to such questions via readings of texts from political science, sociology, and history, while also taking the opportunity to explore the grounds on which the events between 1933 and 1945 took place.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to understand:

- why the first German Republic failed, and the Nazis become a popular movement.
- why the Nazis killed so many people and started WWII.
- and to reflect on the results of the Nazi era and World War II

## READINGS

Reading materials will be available via Moodle during the course.

## ASSIGNMENT INFO

In order to be granted 6 ECTS, participants will be asked

- to attend actively all sessions (A minimum of 80% class attendance is required.)
- to present in class (10-15 minutes, 10-25 slides)
- to write 3 short reading responses (300 to 400 words)
- to write an academic paper (1.400 to 2.000 words) on Nazi Germany (Submission deadline: two weeks after last course day).

**Failure to fulfil one of the mentioned components results in failure of the class.**

## YOUR INSTRUCTOR

**Stefka Wiese** is a social scientist and urban planner. Her main interests are economic sociology (with a focus on socio-ecological transition and comparative capitalism) and transition processes within urban systems and regions. Her regional focus lies on Germany and Europe, including the transition in Eastern Europe. She studied at Technical University Berlin and Humboldt University Berlin. Beside her scientific work she is professionally working as a consultant in the field of ecological transition of economic and urban systems.

She regularly teaches in the fields of political sciences and economics at Humboldt University and at International School of Management Berlin.

In the HUWISU program Stefka Wiese has been teaching the courses on:

- The Berlin Wall and the Cold War Era
- Nazi-Germany – Rise and Fall
- German Social Market Economy – A better Capitalism?

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **PART I**

#### **Historical background and Hitler´s Path to Power**

- Introduction and course outline
- Lecture: German History - Historical background/overview: late nation building, weak central power, racism, militarism and anti-democratic tradition, German(ic) national mythology: "Stab in the back"(Eric Hobsbawn, Benedict Anderson)
- Mapping Germany, Europe, and the World in and after World War I
- Between "The Golden Twenties" and crisis: unstable democracy founding and rise of the Nazi Party
- Deep economic crisis: high inflation and mass unemployment
- Elections 1932
- „Machtergreifung“ / Machtübertragung / „seizure of control“ to Hitler 1933
- Reichstagsbrand / fire at parliament
- Eliminating the external opposition (Enabling Act of 1933) and opponents within the Nazi Party ("night of the long knives")

#### Readings:

*Torpie, Ryan: The Role of History in the Construction of Identity.*

### **PART II:**

#### **What life in Nazi Germany was like: inclusion of the „Germans“ and exclusion and extermination of the „enemies of people`s community“**

##### **Inclusion of the „Germans“**

- Inclusion of the Germans: Workfare for the "people`s community" - the Nazi version of the New Deal: building roads (Autobahnen), the "people`s car" (Volkswagen), maternity protection, new public holidays etc.
- Ideological roots: People`s community („Volksgemeinschaft“) and its enemies

- Nazi culture and propaganda: "The Triumph of the will" (Leni Riefenstahl), movies, radio
- Plans for Berlin as "Germania" - the "Capital of the World"; walk through Berlin

Readings:

- Taylor, Simon 1981: *Symbol and Ritual under National Socialism*.
- Welch, David 2004: *Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft*.

**Exclusion and extermination of the „enemies of people`s community“**

Defining who is „German“, who is not: The racist Nuremberg Laws

Imprisonment of opposition and pogroms against Jews (Reichspogromnacht)

Opposition and resistance in Nazi Germany

Excursion: German Resistance Memorial Center

Holocaust / Shoa

The system of the concentration camps

Excursion: concentration camp Sachsenhausen

World War II: Preparing war and appeasement; early victories; "Blitzkrieg"; war against the Soviet Union; Stalingrad; D-Day; Battle of Berlin

movie and explanations: Downfall

Readings:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 2007: *Nazi Ideology and the Holocaust*
- Steizinger, Johannes 2018: *The Significance of Dehumanization Nazi Ideology and Its Psychological Consequences*.

**PART III:**

**After the downfall of Nazi Germany**

- What to do with the Nazis: Nuremberg Trials and denazification in West Germany and East Germany; the "ratlines"; Operation Paperclip; Organization Gehlen, new and old elites in West Germany and East Germany
- Culture of Remembrance: How to remember the sacrifices made during National Socialism? How to deal with collective shame and guilt?
- Reception - Nazis and Hitler in popular culture over the decades
- Political consequences - Lecture: Political System Germany
- Right Wing Extremism in Germany and Europe today

Readings:

- Gebauer, Miriam 2015: *The Pop-Icon Hitler as a Trope of Critical Reflection on Media Society. The World's Most Recognisable Face.*
- Leggewie, Claus 2014: *The second world war in european memory.*

**PART IV**

**Wrap-up and Evaluation**

- Summary: Making sense of the past?

*The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: 24 September 2024*

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