

Nazi Germany – Rise and Fall

9 January – 27 January 2023

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 (Track C)

- Monday: 5.05 pm – 6.35 pm & 6.45 pm – 7.30 pm
- Tuesday & Wednesday: 1.30 pm – 3 pm & 3.20 pm – 4.50 pm
- Thursday: 9.00 am – 10.30 am & 11.00 am – 12.30 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 = 5 ECTS

All courses are accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Learning extends beyond your course! As a participant in HUWISU, you are invited to join our cultural and social programs. We offer a fine selection of interesting extra-curricular activities that aim to give all participants an unforgettable stay in Berlin. Through excursions, social gatherings, and sport activities, we are providing you with the opportunity to get to know the city, the university, and your classmates and to meet students from all parts of the world. The 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 after your enrolment 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 Get-Together
- Ice Skating
- Farewell Party

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 contact their class teachers 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 Nazis were a popular movement
- why the Nazis killed so many people (Jews, "Gypsies" etc.)
- why Germany finally lost the war

and to reflect on the results of World War II:

- as decolonization and the Cold War
- and the function of Nazis in contemporary pop culture.

READINGS

Reading materials will be available via Moodle during the course.

ASSIGNMENT INFO

In order to be granted 5 ECTS, participants will be asked to attend actively all sessions, to present in class (15 minutes) and to write an academic paper (5-10 pages) on Nazi Germany.

Submission deadline: last course day.

The final grade will be composed of a presentation (20%), the final academic paper (60%) and active participation in the class discussion (20%). A minimum of 80% class attendance is required. 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART I: Historical background/overview

1. Introduction and course outline
2. Mapping Germany, Europe, and the World in and after World War I
3. Historical and ideological backgrounds: Militarism, racism, anti-democratic tradition and late nation building, weak central power (Georg Lucács, Karl Mannheim, Eric Hobsbawn, Benedict Anderson)
4. Excursion: Overview of German history 1914 –1945, Permanent Exhibition in the German Historical Museum
5. German national mythology: “Stab in the back” (“Siegfried the dragon slayer”, Film 1924, Fritz Lang)
6. The 1920th: The unstable democracy: Street fights between communists and national socialists in Berlin (Horst Wessel song vs. Bertholt Brecht)
7. Deep economic crisis: high inflation and mass unemployment

PART II: Hitler’s path to power

1. Founding of the Nazi Party
2. Organs of the party: SS, SA, Gestapo etc.
3. Election of Hitler in a democratic election in 1933
4. Eliminating the external opposition (“Enabling Act of 1933”) and within the Nazi Party (“night of the long knives”)

PART III: What life in Nazi Germany was like: inclusion for the Germans; exclusion and death for the other

Inclusion of the Germans

1. The Nazi version of the New Deal: Workfare for the “people`s community” (Volksgemeinschaft): building roads (Autobahnen), the “people’s car” (Volkswagen), maternity protection, new public holidays etc..
2. Nazi culture and propaganda: “The Triumph of the will” (Leni Riefenstahl), movies, radio, TV, music (Zarah Leander)
3. Inventing traditions (Ernest Gellner), mixing old symbols and rituals (“bricolage”, Lévi-Strauss) from ancient India (swastika), Roman Empire (Hitler salute) and medieval German stories and castles with modern technology and (quite) efficient centralized government.
4. Plans for Berlin as the “Capital of the World” (Germania)

Exclusion and death for the other:

1. Imprisonment of opposition and pogroms (Reichspogromnacht) against Jews
2. Defining who is German, who is not: The racist Nuremberg Laws
3. The “Final Solution” to kill “inferior races” (Social Darwinism)
4. The system of the concentration camps

PART IV: World War II

1. Preparing war and Appeasement
2. The beginning of the war: Early victories (Blitzkrieg) in Poland, France, Norway, etc. Film: "Das Boot" (The Boat)
3. The war against the Soviet Union (Stalingrad)
4. Film: The downfall (Der Untergang)
5. Loss of reality: The dream of the final victory ("Endsieg")

PART V: After the downfall of Nazi Germany

1. What to do with the Nazis: Nuremberger Trial and "ratlines"
2. How to deal with collective shame and guilt?
3. Political consequences: The Cold War, European Integration and decolonization
4. Neo-Nazis today
5. Nazis in popular culture: Iron Sky, Marathon Man, Inglorious Basterds, Death Snow etc.
6. Summary: Making sense of the past? (Shmuel Eisenstadt)
7. Wrap-up and Evaluation

The course and its syllabus are subject to change. Last update: August 2022