

**The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**  
**His 511B—Seminar in Historical Research and Writing**  
**Democracy and Its Discontents: The Weimar Republic**

Fall Semester 2010

Tu 3:30–6:20pm, MHRA 3209

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Office Hours: Tu, 1:00–2:30pm, and by appointment

**DESCRIPTION**

Germany's Weimar Republic (1919–1933) was part of a widespread democratic belt that extended across Central Europe to the Balkans following the Treaty of Versailles. Despite its ultimate decline, the Republic created one of the first integrative modern cultural worlds that included film, literature, theater, architecture, and increased gender awareness. How do we understand the paradoxical relationship between the Republic's creative cultural production and political unrest? How was Germany between the wars a model for the social and political foundations of "modernism" in general? What were the uniquely German elements of the Weimar Republic's challenges? And how can culture be a social and political manifestation?

Class discussions examine the origins, rise, and ultimate fall of the first democratic experiment in Germany as an example of "modernity." Drawing on sources from literature, philosophy, film, fine arts, architecture, and music, we will attempt to reconcile Weimar's political unrest with these tremendous cultural achievements. Most important, students in this course will be responsible for individual research projects, for which they will locate and use historical source materials, and construct and implement a research plan within the framework of these historical questions. Readings and discussions will be devoted to topical and cultural histories of the Weimar Republic, primary source material, and methodological readings on research and writing.

**CLASS GOALS**

- Construct persuasive written and oral arguments
- Provide constructive and empathetic critique of peers' work
- Make judgments about what is reliable evidence
- Use nontraditional sources (art, film, literature etc) as historical documents
- Understand a volatile historical context without assuming the endpoint

## REQUIREMENTS

All students must attend and participate in all class meetings. The completion of all assignments is necessary for a passing grade. No “incompletes” will be given for this class. If you fall behind please come see me as soon as possible so that we can get you back on track. Because this course is Writing Intensive (WI) and Speaking Intensive (SI) there are several opportunities for criticism and improvement.

## GRADING

Research exercises	20% (average of three assignments)
Historiographical essay (4–5 pages)	10%
Oral Presentations	20% (10% each)
Final Paper (15–20 pages)	30%
Class Participation	20%

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. Research assignments

Students will be required to complete a series of research exercises over the course of the semester. It is crucial that the assignment be completed by the assigned due date. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will not only result in a half letter grade reduction, but also make it very difficult to turn in the final paper on time. You will receive more information about each assignment as the class proceeds, but they are briefly:

1. Project Description (Due September 21) Research Assignment #1
2. Preliminary Bibliography (Due October 5) Research Assignment #2
3. Critique of a Peer’s Paper (Due November 9) Research Assignment #3

### 2. Historiographical Essay

Over the course of your studies in History thus far you have encountered the difference between primary sources (those produced by historical actors) and secondary sources (those scholarly interpretations by historians). A historiographical essay is a critical overview of several historical interpretations (or secondary sources) on a given historical topic. Sometimes they can take the form of a debate over the interpretation of a primary source, other times of an event. All students will produce a 4–5 page historiographical essay (due October 19), in which they will compare the main arguments of the 6–10 secondary sources they have located for their research paper.

### 3. Oral Presentations

Students will be required to give two presentations to the class over the course of the semester. We will discuss the nature of these presentations later on in the course. All students in this class must attend a speaking workshop on September 14.

### 4. Final Paper

All students will produce a research paper, based on both primary and secondary sources in which they examine some aspect of the relationship of culture to politics in Germany's Weimar Republic (1919–1933). You should feel free to use sources from the *Weimar Republic Sourcebook* as a foundation for your paper, though you must also use at least *five* additional primary sources in their entirety that are *not* found in this anthology. In addition, students must incorporate at least *one* nontraditional source (e.g. fine arts, music, film, literature) in your paper. Please consult my list of suggested source material and feel free to consult with me if you have difficulty finding appropriate material.

Papers will be graded on the quality of their writing, the clarity and persuasiveness of their argument, and the use of source material (both primary and secondary). Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade for each day beyond the original due date.

Students will supply brief annotated bibliographies with their final essays. These will be revised versions of the preliminary bibliographies submitted as Research Assignment #2 (due October 5). An annotated bibliography is a list of books, articles, and documents consulted for the paper in which a description, or annotation, follows each entry. These annotations advise the reader on the accuracy and usefulness of the material for the current project.

### 5. Class Participation

An active exchange of ideas is essential to this course. Students are required to complete all the reading (including occasional viewing and listening) assignments by the assigned due date and to arrive at class ready to discuss them. You should also feel free to ask questions in every class or to consult me during office hours if you have difficulty speaking in a public setting.

All students are also required to submit a 1-paragraph response (including 2 discussion questions) to the reading. These responses should be posted to Blackboard by 11pm the Monday evening prior to the Tuesday class meeting.

## REQUIRED READING

Occasional online readings, designated with \*  
Anton Kaes and Martin Jay (eds) *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (WRS)  
Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic, The Crisis of Classical Modernity*  
Eric Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*  
Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*  
Mary Lynn, Rampolla *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (Fifth Ed.)

**Films:** *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920); *The Blue Angel* (1930)

## SYLLABUS

Tu, 9/24: Introduction: Understanding the Weimar Republic on its own terms

*Email sign-in sheet*

Tu, 9/31: The Legacy of War

### Readings:

Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, Introduction and Chapter 1  
Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, Introduction and Chapter 1  
Gay, *Weimar Culture*, Preface and Chapter 1  
From the *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*:  
The Treaty of Versailles: The Reparations Clauses (1919), 8–9  
Ernst Troeltsch, “The Dogma of Guilt” (1919), 12–15  
Paul von Hindenburg, “The Stab in the Back” (1919), 15–16  
Kurt Tucholsky, “The Spirit of 1914” (1924), 20–22

**Skills Discussion:** Choosing a Research Topic/Finding Sources  
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History*, Chapters 1-2, Appendix B

### Assignment:

*Sign up for student conferences in class*

Tu, 9/7: Revolution and the Birth of the Republic

### Reading:

Weitz, Chapter 3  
Peukert, Chapters 2 and 3  
From the *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*:  
Spartacus Manifesto (1918), 37–38

Rosa Luxemburg, "Founding Manifesto of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) (1918), 40–46  
The Constitution of the German Republic, 46–51  
Count Harry Kessler, "On Ebert and the Revolution," (1919), 51–52  
The German Center Party Program (1922), 104–105  
Social Democratic Party (SPD) Program (1925), 112–114  
German People's Party (DVP) Program (1931), 115–116  
Alfred Rosenberg "The Russian Jewish Revolution"

**Skills Discussion:** Styles and Varieties of History Writing:  
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History*, Chapter 3

**Assignment:**

*Five possible research questions due*

Tu, 9/14: The Culture of Inflation

**Readings:**

Weitz, Chapter 4  
Bernd Widdig, *Culture and Inflation in Weimar Germany*, 1–27\*  
Thomas Mann, "Disorder and Early Sorrow" (1925)\*  
From the *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*:  
Friedrich Kroner, "Overwrought Nerves" (1923), 63–64  
The Dawes Committee Report (1924), 64–67  
Count Hermann Heyslerling, "The Culture of Making It Easy for Oneself" (1920), 360–362  
Hermann Hesse, "The Longing of Our Time for a Worldview" (1926), 365–368  
Hans Oswald, "A Moral History of the Inflation" (1931), 77–78

**Skills Discussion:** Conducting Research:  
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History*, Chapters 4–5

5:00–6:00pm – **SPEAKING CENTER WORKSHOP**

**Assignment:**

*Research Assignment #1 Due* (Project Description)

Tu, 9/21: Library Workshop **Meet in CITI Lab in Jackson Library**

Student Conferences (to discuss preliminary bibliographies)

Introduction to Library Resources with Collections and Scholarly

Resources Coordinator, Stephen Dew

Tu, 9/28: Cultural History Case Study #1: Designing the New World

**Reading:**

Weitz, Chapter 2 and 3

Gay, Chapter 2

From the *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Chapters 17 and 18 (entire)

**View:** Bauhaus slides\*

**Skills discussion:** What is reliable evidence?

Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History*, Chapters 6 and 7

Tu, 10/5: Weimar Narratives

**Reading:**

Peukert, Chapters 4–6

Peter Fritzsche, “Did Weimar Fail?” \*

Bruno Heilig, “Why the German Republic Fell”\*

**Assignment:**

*Class Presentations*

*Research Assignment #2 Due* (Bibliography)

**Tu, 10/12- No Class, UNCG break**

**M, 10/18- Film Screening: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920)**

Tu, 10/19: Film as Political Expression

**Reading:**

Weitz, Chapters 6 and 7

Gay, Chapters 3 and 4

Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, excerpts \*

**Film discussion:** *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920)

**Assignment:**

*Historiographical Essay Due*

Tu, 10/26: Cultural History Case Study 3: Outsiders as Insiders

**Reading:**

Gay, Chapters 5 & 6

From *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*:

Elsa Herrmann, "This is the New Woman" (1929), 206–208

Kurt Hiller, "The Law and Sexual Minorities" (1921), 696–697

Carl von Ossietzky, "Anti-Semites" (1932), 276–280

Wilhelm Stapel, "The Intellectual and His People," (1930), 423–425

Tu, 11/2: It's All A Swindle

**Reading:**

Weitz, Chapter 8

**Listening:** Ute Lemper, *Berlin Cabaret Songs*, lyrics by Mischa Spoliansky, Friedrich Hollaender, Rudolf Nelson, Berthold Goldschmidt; liner notes by Peter Jelavich, on Blackboard

**Film, in class:** Joseph von Sternberg, *The Blue Angel* (1930)

**Assignment:**

*First Draft Due*

Tu, 11/9: History Writing "Workshop"

**Assignment:**

Research Assignment # 3 Due (*Peer Review*)

*Sign up for student conferences*

Tu, 11/16: Drafts Returned / Student Conferences

Tu, 11/23: Class Presentations

Tu, 11/30: Class Presentations and Final Remarks

**Assignment:**

Undergraduate Research Papers Due, in class.

**Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, Undergraduate Research Papers Due.**