

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

Fall Semester 2014

M 3:30–6:20, MHRA 1204

Instructor: Dr. Emily J. Levine

Office: MHRA Bldg 2117

Telephone: 336-334-3514

Email: ejlevine@uncg.edu

Office Hours: W 3:30–5:30pm, 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.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Construct persuasive written and oral arguments
- Devise thesis statements with analytic appeal
- 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- Use nontraditional sources (art, film, literature etc) as historical documents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.

Please be advised: All students are also required to attend the *First Annual Alumni Career Night on Friday, October 24, to be held in MHRA in the evening*. Students will need to preregister by Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup>.

## GRADING

Blackboard posts	5%
Research exercises	20% (average of assignments)
Historiographical essay (4–5 pages)	10%
Oral Presentations	20% (average of assignments)
Final Paper (15–20 pages)	30%
Class Participation (including in-class work)	15%

## 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:

- i. Project Description (*due: Monday, September 15*) Research Assignment #1
- ii. Preliminary Bibliography (*due: Monday September 29*) Research Assignment #2
- iii. Final paper Draft (*due: Monday, October 27; and revised Friday, November 7*) Research Assignment #3
- iv. Critique of a Peer’s Paper (*due, Monday, November 3*) Research Assignment #4

### 2. Historiographical Essay

Over the course of your studies in the field of 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: Monday, October 20*), 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 **three (3) presentations** to the class over the course of the semester, including one final oral presentation on their research paper. We will discuss the nature of these presentations later on in the course. All students in this class must attend a speaking workshop on *Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup>* during class time and write a reflection about this experience.

### 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), which will be due at the beginning of the last day of class, *Monday, December 1st*. 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 *three* 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).

Students will supply brief annotated bibliographies with their final essays. These will be revised versions of the preliminary bibliographies submitted as Research Assignment #2. 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 **Canvas by 9pm the Sunday evening prior to the Monday 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* (Seventh Ed.)

**Required film, viewed in class:** *The Blue Angel* (1930)

**Films for selection to view outside of class with Jackson Library call #:**

<i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i> (1920)	DV THR 12606J
<i>Berlin: Symphony of a Great City</i> (1927)	VH7369
<i>People on Sunday</i> (1930)	DV DRA 13470J

## TOPICAL OUTLINE/CALENDAR

### Week 1: Introduction

M, 8/18: Introduction: Understanding the Weimar Republic on its own terms

**Mechanics:** *Email and presentations sign-in sheet.*

**Skills discussion:** *Picking a research topic: Where to begin?*

### Week 2:

M, 8/25: 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*

**Week 3**

M, 9/1: Labor Day – UNCG Holiday

*Student conferences either F 9/5, 10-noon, M, 9/8, 10-noon, W, 9/10, 3:30–5:30*

**Week 4**

M, 9/8: Revolution and the Birth of the Republic

**Readings:**

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

*What should the project description (prospectus) look like?*

**Assignment:**

*Five possible research questions due*

**Week 5**

M, 9/15: 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

**Assignment:**

*Research Assignment #1 Due* (Project Description)

**5:00–6:20: Library Workshop with Kathy Crowe, Jackson Library**

**Week 6**

M, 9/22: Weimar Narratives

**Reading:**  
Peukert, Chapters 4–6  
Peter Fritzsche, “Did Weimar Fail?” \*  
Bruno Heilig, “Why the German Republic Fell” \*  
Gay, *The Weimar Republic*, reread chapter 1

**Skills discussion:** What is reliable evidence?  
Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History*, Chapters 6 and 7

**\*Preregister with Dr. Levine for First Annual Alumni Career Night on Friday, October 24\***

**Week 7**

M, 9/29: 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, Eliseo Alvarez, “Bauhaus: Less is More” (32:38):

<http://digital.films.com.libproxy.uncg.edu/PortalViewVideo.aspx?xtid=33781>

**In class, view:** Bauhaus slides\*

**Assignments:**

*Research Assignment #2 Due* (Bibliography)

*Present on one building or architectural site*

**Week 8**

M, 10/6: Expressionism in film and politics

**Reading:**

Weitz, Chapters 6 and 7

Gay, Chapters 3 and 4

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

From the *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, Chapter 25 (entire)

**Watch film on reserve, choose from various silent films on reserve at Jackson Library:**

*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920); “Berlin: Symphony of a Great City” (1927); *People on Sunday* (1930).

All: watch accompanying video: “Depicting Modernity in German Films of the 1920s” (03:18) and “Ruttman’s “Berlin Symphony of a Great City,” (1:47).

<http://digital.films.com.libproxy.uncg.edu/PortalViewVideo.aspx?xtid=34180#>

**Assignment:**

*Present on film watched*

**Week 9**

M, 10/13: **UNCG Fall Break—No Class**

## Week 10

M, 10/20: Cultural History Case Study 3: Outsiders as Insiders

### Reading:

Gay, Chapters 5 & 6

Stern, from *Five Germany's I have known*\*

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

### Assignment:

*Historiographical Essay Due*

**Required attendance: Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>: First Annual History Alumni Network Event, time TBA evening.**

## Week 11

M, 10/27: It's All A Swindle

### Reading:

Weitz, Chapter 8

Siegfried Kracauer, "*The Blue Angel*" (1930), in the *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 630–632\*

### 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:

*Research Assignment #3 Due (First Draft)*

## Week 12

M, 11/3: History Writing "Workshop"



**Reading:**  
“The David Abraham Case” Ten Comments from Historians,  
*Radical History Review* 32 (1985): 75–96.\*

**Assignment:**

Research Assignment #4 due (*Critique of a Peer’s Paper*)

*Sign up for student conferences*

**Skills Discussion:**  
What is plagiarism? A case study.

**F, 11/7: Revised Drafts Due**

**Optional:** *Friday, November 7: German Weeks Event in honor of the Fall of the Berlin Wall*

**Week 13**

M, 11/10: Drafts Returned / Student Conferences

**Week 14**

M, 11/17: **REQUIRED: SPEAKING CENTER WORKSHOP, 3:30–5pm**

**Week 15:**

M, 11/24: **NO CLASS– REVISE PAPERS**

**Due: Paragraph Reflection on Speaking Center Workshop**

**Week 16**

M, 12/1: Class Presentations and Final Remarks

**Assignment:**  
Undergraduate Research Papers Due, in class.

## RULES AND PROCEDURES

### Late Work

**No late work is accepted.** All students are required to complete all assignments for the course on the due date specified.

### Attendance

**Attendance at class is mandatory.** *You may miss one class throughout the semester without penalty.* After you miss one class, you lose a point for every class missed from your participation grade (see below). **I reserve the right to withdraw you from the course if you miss six or more classes.**

In accordance with new statewide regulations, students are permitted a minimum of two excused absences due to religious observance. If you plan to be absent due to religious observance, please notify me in advance by email.

### Punctuality

It is imperative that you come to class on time. The lecture starts at the beginning of the hour and ends ten minutes before the hour on the dot. If you arrive late, you miss vital information about assignments given at the beginning of class. Similarly, it is also appreciated if you do not pack up your things until after the lecture is complete. **In an effort to encourage punctuality, three late arrivals will constitute one absence, and therefore, the removal of one participation point, as described above.**

### Cell phones & Laptops

**There are no laptops permitted in this classroom.** Students are encouraged to take notes on paper and transfer your notes to laptops during your exam preparation.

Your cell phone must be turned off before class begins and remain out of view. **If your phone is viewable or goes off in the classroom, you will receive a failing grade for participation/attendance on that day and you will be asked to leave.**

**Students who abuse technology in the classroom risk earning a failing grade for participation/attendance and being removed from the course.**

### Academic Integrity

All students are expected to abide by the UNCG Honor Code. Please visit the following link: Academic Integrity Policy: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>. Depending on the severity of the offense, students risk receiving a final grade of F for the course or being expelled from the university.

### Adverse Weather Conditions

If you think that the university might be closed due to weather, either call the UNCG Adverse Weather Line at (336) 334-4400 or check the university's website

([www.uncg.edu](http://www.uncg.edu)). If the university is open, I will hold class.

### **OFFICE HOURS**

Office hours will be held on Wednesdays from 3:30–5:30pm by appointment. You are encouraged to see the instructor, in particular, if you are having difficulty devising a research paper as soon as possible. If you cannot make the regularly scheduled office hours, please feel free to make another appointment.

**Have a great semester!**