

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

Spring Semester 2012

Tu 3:30–6:20pm, MHRA 2210

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Office Hours: TH 3:30–5pm, 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.

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- Use nontraditional sources (art, film, literature etc) as historical documents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.

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:

1. Project Description (*due January 31*) Research Assignment #1
2. Preliminary Bibliography (*due February 14*) Research Assignment #2
3. Final paper Draft (*due March 13*) Research Assignment #3
4. Critique of a Peer’s Paper (*due March 20*) 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), 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 April 3rd.

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 *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 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)

TOPICAL OUTLINE/CALENDAR

Week 1: Introduction

T, 1/10: 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:

T, 1/17: 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

T, 1/ 24: 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

What should the project description (prospectus) look like?

Assignment:

Five possible research questions due

Week 4

T, 1/31: 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 Heyserling, “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 Dr. Stephen Dew

Week 5

T, 2/7: 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

Week 6

T, 2/14: 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*

Assignment:

Class Presentations on progress

Research Assignment #2 Due (Bibliography)

Watch film on reserve: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920)

Week 7

T, 2/21: 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)

Week 8

T, 2/28: 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

Assignment:

Historiographical Essay Due

Week 9: UNCG SPRING BREAK

Week 10

T, 3/13: 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:

Research Assignment #3 Due (First Draft)

Week 11

T, 3/20: History Writing "Workshop"

Assignment:

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

Sign up for student conferences

Week 12

T, 3/27: Drafts Returned / Student Conferences

Week 13

T, 4/3: SPEAKING CENTER WORKSHOP, TBA

Week 14: (PASSOVER/EASTER HOLIDAY)

T, 4/10: **NO CLASS– REVISE PAPERS**

Week 15

T, 4/17: 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). If the university is open, I will hold class.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours will be held on Thursdays from 3:30–5pm. 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.

Grading will be weighed according to the following formula:

Attendance (including punctuality)	5%
Participation	10%
Quizzes: (average)	10%
First Paper:	15%
Second Paper:	15%
Third Paper:	15%
Final Exam:	20%
Oral presentations:	10%

Have a great semester!