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CAS HI 271

THE NAZIS

TTH 11-12:15

EPC 205

TEACHING FELLOW: COURTENEY SMITH (cesmith@bu.edu, she/her/hers,
Office Hours: M 2:30-4:30, T 1-3, and by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION Why have the Nazis become synonymous with the most efficient yet brutal form of political rule? Why have they become the epitome of evil? This course explores origins, ascendancy, and downfall of the Nazis. Because National Socialism was a movement, rather than a political party, the course will treat Nazism as a response to the crises of liberal democracy after the Great War rather than simply a vehicle for seizing power. Because National Socialism was not a monolithic movement, moreover, the course places special emphasis on identifying the different and competing strands of thought, policy, and action associated with the movement before and after 1933. Our major themes will include the racial ideology at the heart of National Socialism and the attempt to recast German society along those lines, including the production of “Nazi” culture, the creation of “Aryan” family structures, and the construction of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (racial community) as well as the prohibition of “non-German” forms of science, art, finance, politics, and eventually people. Although we will devote some time to Nazi diplomacy and the advent of World War II, our focus will be on the regime’s demographic and political reconfiguration of Europe, and especially the turn to mass murder and genocide. We will conclude by examining the incomplete “denazification” of Germany after 1945. Throughout the course, we will engage with a variety of primary sources, including film, images, fiction, diaries, memoirs, and party and state documents.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES This course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Historical Consciousness and Ethical Reasoning, and the Critical Thinking toolkit. By the end of this semester, you will demonstrate familiarity with the larger historical context of German history before, during, and immediately after Nazi rule, from the economic and political crises that brought them to power, the social organizations, confessional solidarities, and racist ideologies that kept them in office, to the xenophobic nationalism, economic predation, and racist violence that finally undid them (Historical Consciousness Learning Outcomes 1 and 3; Ethical Reasoning Learning Outcome 2). You will recognize key terms of fascist ideology, analyze the authoritarian critique of democratic practice in historical perspective; examine the racist language, laws, and policies of the Nazi regime; and evaluate the exclusionary practices on which the regime was built (Historical Consciousness Learning Outcome 2; Ethical Reasoning Learning Outcomes 1 and 2). Based on a close analysis of written and visual primary sources, you will create your own narrative about the collapse of democratic allegiances and institutions, and especially the role of economic crisis and recovery in facilitating illiberal politics; identify the fascist reconstitution of moral judgment, including the cultivation of fascist personalities and the Nazi conflation of masculinity with strength; explain the moral and social consequences of discrimination; and demonstrate the ethical significance of civil courage and tolerance (Historical Consciousness Learning Outcomes 1 and 2; Ethical Reasoning Learning Outcomes 1 and 2; Critical Thinking Toolkit Learning Outcomes 1 and 2). Through your engagement with those sources, moreover, you will identify the difference between reasoned argumentation and appeals to emotion, including your own emotional allegiances; distinguish between factual evidence and logical fallacy; recognize plausible versus implausible interpretations; and evaluate the effect of demeaning language on social interaction (Ethical Reasoning Learning Outcomes 1 and 2; Critical Thinking Toolkit Learning Outcomes 1 and 2). Through a series of individual assignments and group activities, moreover, you will explore the strengths and weaknesses of democratic politics; develop a new understanding for the importance of respecting people who have political beliefs different from your own; and recognize the consequences of using violence to build community (Ethical Reasoning Learning Outcomes 1 and 2; Critical Thinking Toolkit Learning Outcomes 1 and 2).

REQUIREMENTS Although this is a lecture course, it seeks to engage you actively in a variety of ways. There are **no midterms or finals**. Instead, you will contribute to the class through group, partner, and individual projects. You will participate in several **group activities** during class that ask you to identify, grapple with, and discuss the ethical challenges confronting Germans before and after the Nazi takeover. You will also work with a partner on two **short projects**. The **first partner project** explores the collapse of German democracy. You and your partner will create a podcast, no more than **5 minutes** long, presenting a solution aimed at saving the Republic, in the form of a **radio broadcast** from the interwar period. The **second partner project** explores the attraction Nazi party membership had for ordinary people. In addition to analyzing the social reasons people joined the party, your discussion will explore the power arrangements that structured biographical narratives under fascism (and by implication, explain what kinds of information a résumé contains in today's America).

In addition to working in groups, you will also contribute individually. You will several **response papers**, which are aimed at assessing your familiarity with key terms and concepts in the history of National Socialism, identifying their continuing significance, and asking you to develop your own interpretation of dictatorial rule and genocide. You will also write **three essays**, all of which are aimed at improving your ability to craft clear arguments about German fascism, adduce well-chosen

evidence for them, and interpret the moral and intellectual consequences of your arguments. The **first paper** (3 pages) asks you to take up a specific historical event, personality, or problem and analyze the ways in which it contributed to the stability of Nazi rule. The **second paper** (5 pages) asks you engage in greater depth with an aspect of Nazi rule, institutionalized racism, or the preparations for war. The **final paper** (5-7 pages) asks you to take up a specific topic of your choosing, using at least two documents I have assigned as well as **one book** that I have not assigned. Many books related to the Nazis can be found electronically through **Mugar Library**. If you have questions about books, please speak to me or Courteney.

Please **do not use online sources** in your papers except those provided on this syllabus or discoverable via **Mugar Library**. Given that Nazi sympathizers regularly falsify documents and make tendentious claims, we must take special care to ensure the accuracy of sources and historical claims. In addition, many websites disappear as quickly as they appear, including sites associated with educational institutions. For this reason, **the inclusion of online sources** in your papers will result in a **failing grade for the assignment**, unless approved by me or Courteney.

Please **upload all assignments – partner projects, response papers, and essays** – on time to the **Blackboard website**. “On time” means at the **beginning of class** on the day they are due. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade per day. If, however, you know that you need more time to complete the assignment, please reach out to me or Courteney to request an extension. Life often disrupts the most conscientious people, and there’s no shame in asking for more time.

Grading Breakdown Grades are based by your performance on the following required assignments:

Participation in section:	15 percent
Response papers:	10 percent
First partner project (due September 30):	15 percent
Second partner project (due October 28):	10 percent
First paper (due October 16):	10 percent
Second Paper (due November 16):	15 percent
Final paper (due December 15):	20 percent

Please note that I may depart from the syllabus during the semester if necessary. Given the complications stemming from the pandemic and our adjustment to in-person classes, it’s likely that I will.

CLASS CONDUCT Discussion is essential to learning. I want everyone to feel free to ask questions and engage in debate around important issues. It’s important, moreover, to allow for disagreement with peers as well as professors. Disagreement makes it possible for us to explore what we think and believe, and constructive criticism helps us grow as thinkers and people. But discussion can only work if everyone feels safe contributing to the conversation. Establishing a lively but inclusive atmosphere requires all of us to follow two basic ground rules. First, please **respect the dignity of other people**. That means we must respect each other’s person, however much we might disagree with their views. It also means that we must refrain from making discriminatory comments or using language that challenges a person’s identity rather than their arguments. And it means that we must remember to use the names and pronouns that others wish us to use. Of course, none of this means we – myself included – won’t make mistakes. So second, please **remember to have the courage to make mistakes**. Making mistakes is integral to

learning. It is only through mistakes that you can clarify confusions and deepen your understanding of the subject at hand. Finally, because this class covers events and topics that are emotionally difficult, I will issue content warnings from time to time. The material is important, but I'll understand if you don't want to participate at that moment.

PLAGIARISM Defined as the use of intellectual material produced by another person without appropriate acknowledgment, plagiarism is a serious infraction of scholarly conduct. It will earn an automatic F for the assignment and be prosecuted according to the Boston University Academic Conduct Code.

REQUIRED READING The following books are available for purchase at Barnes and Noble; a few are also available electronically without cost via archive.org, but have waiting periods, and the Bendersky textbook is available electronically at a discount using the promo code STUDENT30 via the publisher:

W.S. Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power* (Franklin Watts, 1984)
 Joseph W. Bendersky, *A Concise History of Nazi Germany* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2014)
 Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men* (Harper Trade, 1998)
 Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair* (OUP, 1999)
 Mark Roseman, *The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution* (Picador, 2003)
 Inge Deutschkron, *Outcast* (Fromm International, 1990)

NB: All readings marked with an asterisk (*) can be found online at the **Blackboard website**. Readings marked with a plus sign (+) can be found online through **Mugar's** electronic journal access.

Part I: Origins

September 2: **Introduction**

Film excerpt: Quentin Tarantino, *Inglorious Basterds* (2009), opening scene

September 7: no class (Rosh HaShanah)

September 9: **Weimar Germany**

Bendersky, *A Concise History*, 3-54

**Weimar Sourcebook*: Paul von Hindenburg, "The Stab in the Back;" Textile Workers, "My Workday, My Weekend;" Bund deutscher Frauenvereine, "Women's Work and the Economic Crisis;" Alice Rühle-Gerstel, "Back to the Good Old Days"

Recommended reading: *David Clay Large, "'Out with the Ostjuden': The Scheunenviertel Riots in Berlin, November 1923," in Hoffmann, Bergmann, and Smith (eds.), *Exclusionary Violence*, 123-40.

September 11: **The Nazis before 1933**

Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, 1-90

*Theodore Abel, *Why Hitler Came to Power*, 204-18, 244-74, 289-301

*Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler*, 52-66

* *Weimar Sourcebook*: Carl Schmitt, "The Concept of the Political" and "On the Contradiction"

September 14: **The Collapse of Weimar**
Bendersky, *A Concise History*, 61-98

Group parliamentary exercise

September 16: no class (Yom Kippur)

September 21: **Seizing Power**
Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, 91-147
* Ian Kershaw, *Hitler*, 62-118
"The Reichstag Fire Decree:"

http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=2325

"The Enabling Act:"

http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1496

"The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service:"

http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1520

Part II: The Third Reich

September 24: **Establishing the Dictatorship**

Bendersky, *A Concise History*, 105-150

* Noakes and Pridham, documents

Eugen Hadamovsky, "The Living Bridge: On the Nature of Radio Warden

Activity:" <http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/hada3.htm>

Karl Schotte, "Letter to an American Friend"

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/schotte.htm>

Group exercise on the "Night of the Long Knives"

September 28: **The Volksgemeinschaft**

* Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, 83-101

Werner May, "The German National Catechism:"

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/catech.htm>

Alfred Vogel, "Genetics, Genealogy, and Racial Science in Pictorial Form:"

<http://bytwerk.com/gpa/vogel.htm>

Deutsche Arbeitsfront, The KdF Car (Volkswagen),"

<http://www.bytwerk.com/gpa/vw.htm>

Wolfgang Schutz, "One Recognizes a National Socialist by His Home!"

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/interiordecoration.htm>

September 30: no class (German Studies Association conference)

Podcast (first partner project) due on September 30

October 5: **The Family**

Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 94-118

*Melita Maschmann, Account Rendered, excerpts

+Adelheid von Saldern, "Victims or Perpetrators? Controversies about the Role of Women in the Nazi State" in: David Crew, *Nazism and German Society, 1933-1945* (1994), 141-165.

Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, "To Be German Is to Be Strong:"

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/scholtz-klink2.htm>,

"The Rally of the German Women's League:"

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/pt36frau.htm>

Illustrations from *The German Girl*:

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/maedel.htm>

Jutta Rüdiger, "The Tasks of the BDM in the Year 1938:"

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/dm1-38a.htm>

Illustrations from *The Boy*:

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/pimpf.htm>

Der Morgen, "Hey, You There! Things are Different Now!"

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/dp37-1a.htm>

Primer for the Württemberg Public Schools:

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/textbk03.htm>

Otto Zimmermann, "Hand in Hand for the Fatherland:"

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/textbook05.htm>

Illustrierter Beobachter, 15 April 1933, "The New Game: The S.A. Cleans up the Liebknecht House:" <http://bytwerk.com/gpa/ib33-15.htm>

Film excerpts: Guido Knopp, *Hitler's Henchman: Baldur von Schirach* (1998, 1-21:30)

October 7: **Nazi Aesthetics**

Simon Callow review of Steven Bach's biography of Leni Riefenstahl:

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/may/12/featuresreviews.guardianreview5>

Film excerpt: Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will* (1934)

October 12: no class – substitute Monday schedule for Tuesday (Columbus Day)

October 14: **Antisemitism**

Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 17-49

Roseman, *The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution*, 1-78

*Saul Friedlander, "Redemptive Anti-Semitism," in Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, vol. 1 (1997), 73-112

*Burleigh and Wippermann, "The Persecution of the 'Hereditarily Ill', the 'Asocials', and Homosexuals," *The Racial State*, 136-197.

*Adolf Hitler, "Nation and Race," *Mein Kampf*, 284-329

**Weimar Sourcebook*: Alfred Rosenberg, "The Russian Jewish Revolution"

*Joseph Goebbels, "Why Are We Enemies of the Jews?"

*"The Nuremberg Laws," 211-214.

First paper due on October 14

October 19: **Dissent**

- *Martin Broszat, "Resistenz and Resistance," in Neil Gregor, *Nazism*, 241-52
- +Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul, "Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent? Gestapo, Society and Resistance," in Crew, *Nazism and German Society*, 261-308
- *Ian Kershaw, "The Alienation of the Catholics," *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent*, 185-223
- Leaflet of the White Rose opposition group:
http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1515
- "The Reich Concordat:"
http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1570
- "With Deep Anxiety:"
http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1571
- Gerhard Hahn, "The Cross of Christ and the Swastika:"
<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/christuskreuz.htm>

October 21: **Politics in Hitler's Germany**

- +Ian Kershaw, "Hitler: 'Master in the Third Reich' or 'Weak Dictator'?", in Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 59-81
- +Ian Kershaw, "'Working towards the Führer': Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship," *Contemporary European History* 2:2 (July 1993): 103-118
- *Speer, "A Day in the Chancellery," *Inside the Third Reich*, 117-209

Part III: Europe under the Nazis

October 26: **The Road to War**

- Bendersky, *A Concise History*, 159-172
- *Wilhelm Deist, "'Blitzkrieg' or Total War? War Preparations in Nazi Germany," in Förster and Chickering (eds.), *Shadows of Total War*, 271-83
- *"The Hossbach Memorandum"

October 28: **Outbreak**

- Bendersky, *A Concise History*, 173-185
- +Jennifer L. Foray, "The 'Clean Wehrmacht' in the German-occupied Netherlands, 1940-5," *Journal of Contemporary History* 45:4 (2010): 768-87
- *"The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact"

Second partner project due on October 28

November 2: **Conquest, 1939-1942**

- *Overy, "A War of Engines," in *Why the Allies Won*, 208-244
- *Christoph Dieckmann, "The War and the Killing of the Lithuanian Jews," in Cesarani, *Holocaust*, 262-94
- NSDAP, "Europe and America: Failures in Building an American People:"

<http://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/hsa02.htm>

November 4: **Stalingrad**

*Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (1996), 1-24, 63-85, 101-133

*T. Schulte, *The German Army and Nazi Policies in Occupied Russia*, 86-116, 150-79

Goebbels on "total war:" <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb36.htm>

Film excerpts: *Deutsche Wochenschau* episodes; "Stalingrad" in the series *The World At War*

November 9-11: **The Turn to Genocide**

Bendersky, *A Concise History*, 198-211

Roseman, *The Wannsee Conference*, 79-172

Film: Frank Pierson, *Conspiracy* (2001) screening outside class, TBA

November 16-18: **The Perpetrators**

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men* (entire)

+Peter Fritzsche, "The Holocaust and the Knowledge of Murder," *The Journal of Modern History* 80:3 (2008): 594-613

*David Bankier, "German Public Awareness of the Final Solution," in: Ceasarani (ed.), *The Final Solution*, 215-227

*Heinrich Himmler, speech on 4 October 1943 in Posen:

http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1513

*"Once Again I've Got to Play General to the Jews': From the War Diary of Blutordensträger Felix Landau," in Bartov, *The Holocaust*, 185-203

Second paper due on November 16

November 23: **The Victims**

Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 50-73, 145-238

*Günter Grau, "Final Solution of the Homosexual Question?" in Michael Berenbaum (ed.), *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined* (1998), 338-344

+Gunter Lewy, "Gypsies and Jews under the Nazis," *Holocaust Genocide Studies* 13:3 (1999): 383-404

Film: *Nazi Concentration Camps* (Allied documentary footage, 1945)

November 25: no class (Thanksgiving recess)

November 30-December 2: **The Experience of the Victims**

Inge Deutschkron, *Outcast*, 1-230

*Victor Klemperer, "The Klemperer Diaries," *The New Yorker* (April 27 & May 4, 1998): 120-135

Film: Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah* (1985), excerpts

December 4: **Defeat**

- *Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, 180-244, 282-325
- *Albert Speer, "Operation Valkyrie," *Inside the Third Reich*, 377-393
- *Hitler, "My Private Will and Testament" and "My Political Testament"

December 9: **Aftermath**

- +Lawrence Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment*, 11-37
- *Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Past*, 1-66, 97-146
- *Robert G. Moeller, "The Third Reich in Post-War German Memory," in Jane Caplan, ed., *Nazi Germany*
- *Josef Foscith, "German Reaction to Defeat and Occupation," in Robert G. Moeller, *West Germany under Construction*, 73-89

Final paper due December 14 [first day of exams]