

History 4490  
3.0 Credits  
Fall Semester 2009  
TR 10-11:20  
Teacher Education Building 102

Dr. Ping

## HITLER AND NAZI GERMANY

German history in the twentieth century poses special problems of interpretation. The German historian must address a number of troubling questions: How could a modern, industrial, educated society produce a movement so destructive as that of National Socialism? Why did the German people support Adolf Hitler? What is the degree of complicity and resistance displayed by the German people in the crimes of the Nazis? In short, why did German history go so *terribly* wrong? History 4490 will be an attempt to respond to these fundamental questions. Our approach will stress political, social, and economic analysis. The Third Reich is an enormous topic and a one semester class is not long enough to pursue all aspects of Nazi Germany. We will therefore seek answers to our questions through a biographical and political analysis of Adolf Hitler as a politician and attempt to account for the success of the Nazi Party.

### Required Texts:

Joseph W. Bendersky: *A Concise History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Rowan & Littlefield, Third Ed, 2007).

Primo Levi: *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1996).

All class reading assignments will be taken from these two excellent sources. The reading will therefore be interesting, but not burdensome.

### VIDEOS and DVDs:

*THE NAZIS: A WARNING FROM HISTORY*  
*THE ARCHITECTURE OF DOOM*  
*HITLER: A CAREER. (A Film by Joachim Fest)*  
*CONFESSIONS OF A HITLER YOUTH*  
*TRIUMPH OF THE WILL*

Just as the German cinema rivaled Hollywood in the 1920s, the Nazis were among the pioneers of twentieth century media politics. Therefore the study of propaganda films is a significant part of the story of the Third Reich. You will be asked to view a number of films to study the techniques of political presentation utilized by the Nazis. You will be responsible for these videos on the exams. For example, you might very well be asked to discuss Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*.

**Office Hours:**

MWF 10:00am to 12:00pm.  
Centrum 225k  
Phone: x5457

**Course Outcome/Objectives:**

Students will be challenged to demonstrate an understanding of the methodologies, concepts, and subject matter of the historical discipline—in this case, the history of the Third Reich.

**Class Policies:**

History 4490 will be structured according to the lecture model. Your responsibilities therefore will include attending lecture and taking notes, completing the reading assignments, and taking the exams. Since the essay examinations in this class will be drawn largely from material presented in lecture, your regular attendance will improve your chances of doing well in History 4490. Please turn off cell phones during class. If you bring your laptop to class, please do not take class time to surf the web or to do your personal emails! These activities can be disruptive to your fellow students.

**Examinations and Grading:**

Your grade in History 4510 will reflect your performance on one midterm assignment, one in-class midterm exam, and a final examination. All three exams will be structured on the essay model and will require you to respond to essay and/or identification questions. The exams are scheduled as follows:

First Midterm Take-home assignment due: Thursday October 15.

Second Midterm: Thursday November 19.

Final Exam: Friday December 11 @ 11:00

Each exam will count for approximately 1/3rd of your grade. You will be responsible for all reading assignments and material presented in class upon the exams. You will find study questions on this syllabus.

**ADA DISCLAIMER:**

**Students with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring academic adjustments, accommodations or auxiliary aids will need to contact the Southern Utah University Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities**

(SDD), in Room 206F of the Sharwan Smith Center or phone (435) 865-8022. SDD determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of services.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent. You are expected to have read and understood the current issue of the student handbook (published by Student Services) regarding student responsibilities and rights, and the intellectual property policy, for information about procedures and about what constitutes acceptable on-campus behavior.

Information contained in this syllabus, other than the grading, late assignments, makeup work, and attendance policies may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### **Class Schedule, Lecture Topics, and Reading Assignments:**

**Week 1: (August 24-28)** Introduction to Nazi Germany. The German *Sonderweg*. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapter 1.

**Week 2: (August 31-September 4)** Hitler's early life: Selections from *Hitler: A Career (A film by Joachim Fest)* **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapter 2.

**Week 3: (September 7-11)** World War One and its Consequences. The political effects of the Treaty of Versailles. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapter 2

**Week 4: (September 14-18)** Revolution, Weimar, German Democracy in Crisis. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chaps 2 and 3.

**Week 5: (September 21-25)** Collapse of Weimar Democracy. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chap 5.

**Week 6: (September 28-October 2)** Who were the Nazis?

**Week 7: (October 5-9)** *Please Note: I will be out of town from Wednesday October 7 through Tuesday October 13 to attend and present a paper at the International German Studies Association Conference in Washington DC. Please see the midterm assignment.*

**Week 8: (October 12-16)** The Legal Revolution, *Gleichschaltung*, and the Röhm Purge. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chap 4. First Midterm Assignment due: Thursday October 15.

**Week 9: (October 19-23)** The Social Impact of Nazism. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapters 5 and 6 **DVD:** *The Triumph of the Will*.

**Week 10: (October 26-30)** The Hitler Cult. **DVD:** **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapter 6.

**Week 11: (November 2-6)** Hitler's path to war, Munich, appeasement. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapter 7. Begin Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*.

**Week 12: (November 9-13)** The Second World War: The *Blitzkrieg* Years. Hitler as Warlord, **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapter 7, Chap 9. Continue Levi.

**Week 13: (November 16-20)** The Holocaust: From Persecution to Murder. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapters 8 and 9. Second Midterm: Thursday November 19.

**Week 14: (November 22-27)** The Holocaust, Auschwitz and Rudolf Höss. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapters 8 and 9. Thanksgiving Recess Thursday.

**Week 15: (November 30-December 4)** A dark legacy. **Reading:** *Bendersky*, Chapter 10.

**Final Exam: Friday December 11 @ 11:00**

### STUDY ITEMS FOR MIDTERM I

1. The Weimar republic was Germany's first experiment with a democratic political system. It lasted barely 14 years. Why did it fail? Do you see a connection between economic instability and Nazi success?
2. How do you account for Adolf Hitler's appeal as a politician? What groups in German society tended to vote Nazi? Can you provide a social and psychological profile of the "typical" Nazi?
3. Did the Nazi's "seize power" as they bragged, or did they enter the government in a legal and constitutional way? What role did the Great Depression play in German politics? What was the responsibility of President Hindenburg and the Conservatives in Hitler's success?

## STUDY ITEMS FOR MIDTERM II

1. Why did Britain and France adopt a policy of appeasement in the 1930s? What were its main features?
2. Were the Nazis revolutionaries? If so, how did they change Germany? Please address Nazi economic and social policies in your response.
3. According to *Mein Kampf*, please discuss Hitler's foreign policy aims. What sort of "world order" did Hitler wish to achieve?

## Study Items for the Final Exam

1. How popular was the Nazi regime? Please evaluate the degree of resistance to the Nazis on the part of ordinary Germans. Who was most likely to resist? What forms could resistance take? In your essay, please discuss the "White Rose."
2. According to the historian Ian Kershaw, "*The road to Auschwitz was built with hate, but paved with indifference.*" How many Germans knew? How can we explain the behavior of the killers during the holocaust?
3. Can you describe the psychology of SS "desk murderers" like Adolf Eichmann and Rudolf Höss? What did you learn about the Holocaust from your reading of Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*?