

**HIEU 171/271:
Democracy and Dictatorship in 20th Century Germany**

Instructor: Frank Biess

Time: Th, 3-6 pm

Place: John Marino Room, 6th floor

Office Hours: HSS 4070, Th, 12-2pm;

Special Office Hours for this class, Th 2-3pm

Course Description

This seminar seeks to take a broad view of 20th century German history. It explores the historical conditions under which democracy flourished as well as the reasons why democracy collapsed. We will seek to examine popular attractions to both democracy and dictatorship. Why did Germans abandon democracy at certain moments and flocked to authoritarianism? Why did they embrace democracy at other times? The historical analysis of these questions then hopefully will help us understand the current crisis of democracy in the West. Readings will combine historical treatments of various episodes of German history with novels as well as observations by contemporary intellectuals on the state of German democracy.

Course Requirements:

This seminar class can only succeed if everybody attends regularly and participates in class discussions. Each student will introduce the readings for one week in a brief presentation (10 min). The presentation should summarize the main arguments of the readings and raise some questions for the discussion. Each student will submit a blog entry of about 500 words (except weeks 1,5,10, on the TritonEd Website under "Discussion"). These blog entries should summarize your understanding of the main arguments of each week's readings. In addition, you should submit two questions that you think would be worth discussing in class. The main writing assignment is a 15-20 page research paper on a topic of your own choosing that you will develop in consultation with the instructor. The paper should focus on one aspect of the course theme and explore this topic in greater depth. Grading will consist of 30 percent class participation, 30 percent blog entries, 40 percent research paper.

Learning Goals:

- (i) Understand and be able to discuss critically the crisis of democracy in the interwar period; the appeal and functioning of fascism; the resurgence and transformations of democracy after 1945; and the prospect for liberal democracy in the 21st century.
- (ii) Read, process, and discuss critically a variety of texts (historiography, commentary, autobiography, novel). This means identifying an argument or core message; contextualizing this argument within a broader debate; and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of this argument

(iii) Define, research, and write an essay of 15-20 pages on one specific subject. This means identifying a feasible research question; identifying appropriate primary and secondary sources; and synthesizing the material into a well-organized, well-written essay with a clear thesis.

Course Readings:

Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2014* (optional)
Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler. Recivilizing Germany*
Fritz Stern, *Five Germanies I Have Known*
Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*
Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*
Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*
Heinrich Böll, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*
Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny*

Additional readings on e-reserve

Course Schedule

1) April 6: Introduction

Max Weber, "Science as Vocation"

2) April 13: The Crisis of Weimar

Readings:

Mark Mazower, "The Deserted Temple"
Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (pp. xii-50)
Fritz Stern, *Five Germanys I Have Known*, Chapter, 3-88

3) April 20: The Appeal of Nazism

Readings:

Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*
Fritz Stern, *Five Germanys I have Known*, 89-130

4) April 27: The Nazi Dictatorship – Consent and Coercion

Readings:

Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (selections TBA)
Fritz Stern, *Five Germanys I Have Known*, 131-67
Jeremy Noakes, "Hitler and the Nazi State: Leadership, Hierarchy, and Power"

Workshop on finding an actionable research focus, Writings Commons, 3-4pm (with Matt Nelson)

5) May 4: Visit by Prof. Michael Geyer

What It Means to be German: A Family's Journey through Twentieth Century German History, 1910-2011

3-5 pm, Seuss Room, Geisel Library

Paper Proposals Due

6) May 11: The Reestablishment of Democracy after 1945

Readings:

Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler. Recivilizing Germans*, 3-153

Fritz Stern, *Five Germanys I Have Known*, 168-303

Frank Biess, "Fear and Democracy"

Workshop on research proposal drafts, 3-4 pm (with Matt Nelson)

7) May 18: 1968

Readings:

Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler. Recivilizing Germans*, 156-84

Theodor Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past"

Heinrich Böll, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*

8) May 25: East Germany

Readings:

Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler. Recivilizing Germans*, 185-238

Fritz Stern, , *Five Germanys, Chapters*, 304-43

Paul Betts, "Tyranny of Intimacy: The Stasi and East German Society" in *Within Walls. Private Life in the German Democratic Republic*, 21-50

9) June 1: The Berlin Republic

Readings:

Wolfgang Streeck, "How Will Capitalism End," *New Left Review* 87 (May-June 2014):

Dan Stone, "The Fall of the Postwar Consensus" (Chapters 7,8, Conclusion from *Good Bye to All That. A History of Europe since 1945*), pp. 231-95

Fritz Stern, *Five Germanys I Have Known*, 460-520.

Workshop on effective peer review and strategies for crafting effective sentences, 3-4pm
(with Matt Nelson)

10) June 8: What to Do?

Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny. Twenty Lessons from the 20th Century*

Discussion of Paper Drafts

Final Paper Due June 15 – Party at my House!