Description:

This course introduces students to the rise, the fabric, and the collapse of the “Third Reich.” Starting with an investigation of how the Nazis came into power and why the first German democracy failed, the course focuses on two related issues. Both revolve around the success and the impact of Nazi politics in Germany and in Europe: How could Hitler and the Nazi Party establish its power in a country that was seen as a heart of Western culture? And: Why did so few Germans oppose Hitler and his racially based terrorist regime? To explore these questions, the course will look at the various aspects of the Nazi ideology (racism, leader cult, people’s community), on the techniques and the agencies of propaganda, seduction and terror. Many Germans supported Nazi politics, but they did so in different ways and in different degrees. To understand the complex basis of Nazi totalitarianism, special attention will be paid to its impact on the working class, the youth, family life and politics, on gender relations and the ideals of motherhood and masculinity, and not least on opposing and resistant groups. The response of the victims (both Jewish and non-Jewish) to discrimination and persecution will be a central aspect of the second part of the course, which examines why only Total War and the Holocaust guaranteed the realization of Nazism and Nazi ideology. The downfall of the “Third Reich” from 1943 on and its self-destruction will also be discussed.

In the process of exploring the history of Nazi Germany, you will become familiar with the skills you need to study history in general. You will learn how to access, gather, read, understand, analyze and criticize various primary and secondary sources (and you will learn what the difference between them is); you will learn how to pull the main points out
of a reading and how to write your own historical paper; furthermore, you will learn how to develop and to present your own arguments orally.

**Required Books:**


All other required texts will be provided as photocopies or be accessible online.

**Further Reading:**

- Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews. The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939* (New York, 1997)

Most of these books are on reserve in the Goddard Library and also available in the Rose Library, Strassler Family Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

**Grading:**

The grading is based on various short papers, in-class quizzes, participation in class discussion, attendance, a couple of practical assignments, and a research paper of ten to twelve double-spaced pages.
In a small class like this one, class attendance and participation values more than in larger classes. The short papers are supposed to facilitate class discussion. They are due in class, and they will be graded on a pass/fail basis. The in-class quizzes comprise brief questions on the readings and are to be answered within a few minutes on a page or less.

The final paper explores a topic related to one of the sessions and one basic book. Typically, this paper is shaped as a larger, thorough book review; you are supposed to include further literature (minimum: one book and four scholarly articles, or two books not mentioned on the syllabus) to evaluate different scholarly views. You may choose the topic but you need to discuss it with the instructor during office hours no later than Oct 15; prepare a short bibliography by Nov 15 and submit it to the instructor electronically. Missing either of these deadlines will be penalized. The final paper is due in class on Dec 5; late papers are penalized by a deduction of 3 points per late day.

In order to familiarize yourself with life on campus and as an undergraduate, you will also be asked to complete a series of four tasks before Thanksgiving. For each one you get two points towards your final grade if you report on each of them in a brief email to me. (A few sentences will do it. You can summarize what you did and whom you met, what you learned and what you liked, or what you missed or didn’t like.) The assignments are: 1) Getting an appointment with, and visiting, the Writing Center; 2) going to the office hours of one of your professors (other than me); 3) attending the Study Abroad Fair or one of the Study Abroad information sessions; 4) attending one talk on campus, for instance the symposium on Sexual Violence and the Holocaust on Oct 15 (see below), or any other of your choice.

There will be no final exams.

A maximum of 100 points can be achieved with
- 52 points for 13 passed short papers and quizzes (4 points each; late papers cannot receive more than 2 points)
- 8 points for the four activities (2 each)
- 15 points for continuous attendance and active participation in class discussion
- 25 points for the final paper

100-96 points=A, 95-91 points=A-, 90-86 points=B+, 85-81=B, 80-76 points=B-, etc.

You are supposed to attend class on a regular basis. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet. One absence will not inflict your grade; you are still required to submit the assignment or to make up the quiz. Further absences without convincing documentation will result in a deduction of three points each.

Laptops, cell phones and other electronic devices distract you and others from discussion. They are to be switched off during class.
Course Outline:

Session 1, Aug 29
**Introduction: Hitler’s Testament and the Nazi Volksgemeinschaft**
Hitler’s Political Testament, 29 April 1945, and selections from Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness. A Diary of the Nazi Years* (New York, 1998) to be read and discussed in class.
Section 1 of BBC Documentary “The Nazis: A Warning From History” (1997) to be watched in class in preparation of following session.

Session 2, Sept 5
**Weimar Germany, the Cult of Violence, and the Rise of Nazism**
Reading: Bergen, chapters 1 and 2; Kühne, chapter 1.
Assignment 1: one-page elaboration on the reasons of the rise of the Nazi movement, bullet points allowed.
Selections from Rudolf Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz*, transl. by Constantine FitzGibbon (London, 2000) to be read in class.
Parts of the 1930 movie *All Quiet On the Western Front* to be watched in class.

Session 3, Sept 12
**“Seizure of Power” and Consolidation of Power: the Nazi State**
Reading: Bergen, chapter 3, pp. 51-69; Benz, chapters 2 and 3.
Quiz 1, related to the readings.
Parts of the Leni Riefenstahl movie *Triumph of the Will* (1935) to be watched in class.

Session 4, Sept 19
**Social Harmony and Racial Terror: Inclusion and Exclusion**
Reading: Bergen, chapter 3, pp. 70-78; Benz, chapters 5, 6, and 7.
Quiz 2, related to the readings.
Selections from Martin Doerry, ed., *My Wounded Heart. The Life of Lilly Jahn, 1900-1944* (New York, 2004) to be read in class.
Documentary movie *In the Shadow of the Third Reich: Nazi Medicine* (1997) to be watched in class.

Session 5, Sept 26
**Hitler: Pathology, Personality, and Charisma**
Assignment 2: one-page paper, “What Was Hitler’s Charisma About?”
Hitler’s Berlin Sports Palace Speech, 10 February 1933, to be watched in class.

Session 6, Oct 3
Youth in Nazi Germany: Pleasure and Indoctrination
Quiz 3, related to the readings.

Session 7, Oct 10
Lebensraum and Rehearsals for Genocide: Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland
Reading: Bergen, chapter 4 and 5.
Quiz 4, related to the readings.
Section 4 of BBC Documentary The Nazis: A Warning From History (1997) to be watched in class.

Special Event, Oct 15 (Monday), 3-6 pm, Strassler Center, Rose Library
Sexual Violence and the Holocaust
Symposium with Professor Dagmar Herzog, City University of New York; Dr. Regina Mühlhäuser, Hamburg Institute for Social Research, Germany; and Professor Pascale Bos, University of Texas, Austin.
Attendance is highly recommended and counts toward your final grade (see remarks on grading above).

Session 8, Oct 17
The Perpetrators: Why They Did What They Did
Assignment 3: one-page paper, “Why Did the Holocaust Perpetrators What They Did?”
Parts of BBC Documentary Auschwitz—Inside the Nazi State (2005) to be watched in class.
Session 9, Oct 24
The Holocaust as Process: Decision-making and Power Chaos in the Third Reich
Reading: Bergen, chapter 6; Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (Hanover, 1987), 31-54.
Assignment 4: Try to concisely summarize both the “intentionalist” and the “functionalist” view on the Holocaust on one page in total.
Section 5 of BBC Documentary *The Nazis: A Warning From History* (1997) to be watched in class.

Session 10, Oct 31
Ordinary Soldiers between Genocide and Total War
Reading: Kühne, chapter 4; Bergen, chapter 7; Benz, chapter 12; selected primary sources: the Criminal Orders to the Wehrmacht.
Quiz 5, related to the readings.
Parts of *Shooting the War*, BBC 4 documentation on World War II (2010) to be watched in class.

Session 11, Nov 7
German Women in Nazi Germany: Liberation or Subjugation?
Reading: Kühne, chapter 5; selections from Alison Owings, *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich* (New Brunswick, 1993), and from Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Germany* (Harlow, 2001).
Assignment 5: two-page paper on the question in the title of this session.

Session 12, Nov 14
German and Jewish Resistance Against the Nazi Regime
Quiz 6, related to the readings.
Parts from movie *Rosenstrasse* (2003) to be watched in class.

Session 13, Nov 26
The Downfall: From Stalingrad to Potsdam
Reading: Bergen, chapter 8; Benz, chapter 15; Goebbels’ Sportpalast speech, 18 Feb 1943, online [http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb36.htm](http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb36.htm).
Quiz 7, related to the readings.
Parts from movie *Downfall* (2004) to be watched in class.
Session 14, Dec 5

Legacies and Lessons from Nazism and Holocaust


Quiz 8, related to the readings.

Selections from documentary movie *VERDICT ON AUSCHWITZ: THE FRANKFURT AUSCHWITZ TRIAL 1963-1965* (2007) to be watched and discussed in class.
"The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" exposes the darkest chapter in history, from Adolf Hitler's rise to power as a Nazi demagogue to his ultimate fatal mistakes. Researchers spent See full summary Â· Â· THIRD REICH: THE RISE & FALL tells the story of Hitler's Germany through rarely seen films of the people who were there. Immersive and evocative, it takes viewers inside the Germany of the 20s, 30s, and early 40s, through the use of rare and never-before-seen home movies, Nazi propaganda films and other contemporaneous material. The narrative consists of personal recollections culled from German's diaries, journals and letters. The end result is an intimate, richly nuanced and authentic portrait of the Third Reich and its people. Written by Anonymous.