

GERM 15 / JWST 37 / COLT 64
2-hour, Location: Wilson Hall 219
FALL 2023

Prof. Michael McGillen
Dartmouth Hall 209C
Office hours M, 3:30–4:30 pm
Th, 10:30–11:30 am

Nazis, Neonazis, Antifa and the Others: Exploring Responses to the Nazi Past

Since early in their appearance on the world stage, the National Socialists (Nazis) of Germany have served for much of the rest of the world as a symbol, if not the epitome of evil. This course is designed to help students learn who the Nazis were, what crimes they perpetrated, and what the different stages and forms of response to the Nazi past on the part of postwar Germans and other societies have been. Equally as important, this course also aims to help students make the connection between Nazism and other forms of colonialism, slavery, racism, and white supremacy, pre- and postdating the cataclysms of the twentieth century and up to our present day.

Crimes committed by National Socialist Germany include disenfranchisement of parts of its own population; genocide of European Jewry, Roma-Sinti, and the disabled; waging war; bombing civilian populations; displacement and enslavement of Slavic and other peoples. We will also consider crimes committed by the Allies, especially in the course of the air war.

Important moments in the *processing* of the Nazi Past include controversies generated by the Nuremberg, Frankfurt, Eichmann and Barbie trials; the campaigns to build memorials to the victims of the Holocaust, Roma-Sinti, and homosexuals in Berlin; the Wehrmacht photo exhibition; campaigns to remember German civilian casualties and losses; and financial remuneration to the victims. Most recent reactions to the Nazi past include “postfascism” and the anti-fascist wave also known as “antifa,” and recent resurgencies and multiplications of various Neonazi and other white supremacy groups, most recently in the USA in response to the Black Lives Matter and antiracist movements, and including the events in Charlottesville, VA in August 2017 and at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

We will approach our topic with interdisciplinary and comparative tools and methodology. That is, by studying history, journalism, video testimony, music, literature, and art, including film, photography and architecture (monuments), students will develop their own perspectives on the formation of postwar German identity and why Nazis remain the epitome of evil for most of us and regrettably, a group to emulate for a growing number of individuals today. A midterm project allows students to practice the skill of reporting on independent research related to archived survivor testimony, and a final group project invites students to solidify what they have learned in the course about the formation of national identity by creatively staging with classmates a contemporary debate related to the Nazi past.

WCult: CI. Can count toward major or minor in German Studies, major or minor in Jewish Studies, or major in Comparative Literature.

Required texts for rent or purchase:

Bergen, Doris War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust (history, survey), 3rd ed (2016)
ISBN-10: 1442242280, ISBN-13: 978-1442242289

Browning, Christopher Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland (history, case study) get revised ed. (2017)

ISBN-10: 0062303023, ISBN-13: 978-0062303028

(all other required reading will be posted on Canvas and are noted as (C) in the syllabus)

Recommended books for rent or purchase (you must read **one** of these in its entirety; required *excerpts* from each will be posted on Canvas):

Klüger, Ruth Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered (memoir)

ISBN-10: 1558614362, ISBN-13: 978-1558614369

Modiano, Patrick Dora Bruder (paramemoir/creative nonfiction)

ISBN-10: 0520218787, ISBN-13: 978-0520218789

Schlink, Bernhard The Reader (novel) (any edition okay)

ISBN-10: 9780375707971, ISBN-13: 978-0375707971

Vonnegut, Kurt Slaughterhouse Five (novel) (any edition okay)

ISBN-10: 0385333846, ISBN-13: 978-0385333849

Required films: on Nuremberg and Eichmann trials; Hotel Terminus; Holocaust, and BlacKkKlansman (on reserve in Jones Media Center and streamed; a PBS documentary on German Neonazism is also required, currently available on YouTube)

Requirements for the course include

- careful preparation of readings and viewing of films, attendance at lectures, and participation in discussions; please note that while actual contribution to in person class discussions is important, I will take into account all attempts to participate, including, for instance, in office hours and via an email to me after a class session of something you wanted to say and didn't have the opportunity to share (10%);
- preparation and completion of pre-class activities (25%)
- map and history quiz (5%);
- careful reading of your selected book, contribution to small group and full class discussion of it; 2-4pp response paper to it (discussion 5%; individual written response 10%);
- following and reporting on the work of a watchdog group; choose from Southern Poverty Law Center, The Antidefamation League, or the Equal Justice Initiative (5%)
- (midterm) survivor project: listen to survivor testimony from two of the following archives: the Fortunoff, the USHMM, the Boder, or the Oral History archives and report on stories you've heard and the differences you noticed in websites of the two archives and their interview style to a small group; 2-3pp reflection on the *efficacy* of Holocaust video testimony for your generation: does it help you understand the past? if yes, what does it help you understand; does understanding the past ensure anything about the future? (15%);
- final project: group dramatization of one of the situations covered in our course **or** individual paper comparing one book from our readings with one that is written/produced from a non-German standpoint (10-12pp); first group option is *highly encouraged* (25%);
- there is no final exam.

Course is conducted entirely in **English**; those who read German or French are urged to read some texts in the original.

By nature of its subject, **this course contains a large amount of distressing material**. I do not issue trigger warnings, as what might be particularly upsetting to one person might not be to others. I cannot know what might be too great an emotional challenge for you unless you tell me. Please read through the syllabus carefully and if there are one or two things you think you need to skip, please discuss an alternate assignment with me. If there are more than one or two readings/viewings you think are going to be a problem, you should reconsider taking this class.

That said, it is particularly imperative that **we exercise care with one another**. Especially in our current uncertain and generally stressful environment, it is important that we create together **an inclusive space** in which all identities and perspectives are honored. You should treat your classmates and me with respect, and you should expect the same in return. *Please no social media during class-time.*

Religious Observances

Dartmouth has a deep commitment to support students' religious observances and diverse faith practices. Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me as soon as possible—before the end of the second week of the term at the latest—to discuss appropriate course adjustments.

Student Accessibility Services

Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; [Apply for Services webpage](#); student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS or its [Testing Center](#) may play in accommodation implementation. This process works best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Honor Principle: For the purposes of this class, group or partner discussions of any material is *highly encouraged*. A team dramatization (instead of an individual written paper) for the final project is also highly encouraged. Any writing you do turn in, including all writing related to assignments, must be the result exclusively of your own effort. Make sure you avoid plagiarism. The use of AI tools such as ChatGPT is not permitted. See <https://writing.dartmouth.edu/support/sources-and-citations/academic-integrity>

Mental Health: The academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, our terms are intensive, and classes are not the only demanding part of your life. The on-going challenges of the pandemic add to the usual level of stress. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including your undergraduate dean (<https://students.dartmouth.edu/undergraduate-deans/>), the Counseling Center (<https://students.dartmouth.edu/health-service/counseling/about>), and the Student Wellness Center (<https://students.dartmouth.edu/wellness-center/>).

Please note that I am required by law to share disclosures to me regarding inappropriate conduct under **Title IX** with Dartmouth's Title IX Coordinator. For confidential resources, please see <https://sexual-respect.dartmouth.edu/reporting-support/title-ix-resources/confidential-resources>

Struggling with time management? Looking to improve **academic skills** like notetaking? Check out the resources at the Academic Skills Center (<https://students.dartmouth.edu/academic-skills/>).

Grading criteria

I assume that you are taking this class because you are highly motivated to engage with course materials. I aim to help you succeed to your full potential. Your grade will mainly reflect your effort and engagement, not where you started in relation to the material or skills practiced. Here is the grading rubric:

A = achievement outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements, demonstrated deep engagement with course materials, clear logic, very good writing, and integration of different ideas and topics.

B = achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements, above average meeting of expectations for the assignments and for the course.

C = achievement meeting the basic requirements in every respect.

D = achievement worthy of credit even though it does not meet the basic requirements.

E = performance failing to meet the basic course requirements.

How to read the course plan: the preparation listed under a certain date refers to work that should be completed *before* that class session. **Student Input** activities should be completed and posted on Canvas by *12 hours before start* of class.

Week One: Introduction, Terminology, Viewpoints, Contexts

M Sept 11 – The Nazis: History's enduring criminals

Personal introductions

Familiarizing ourselves with syllabus and how it works

Introduction to key terms for the course

Student Input: (for this assignment only, due by Monday midnight, *not* before class): name three topics you are particularly interested in knowing more about by the end of term

W Sept 13 – Overview of NS-period, Second World War, the "Holocaust"

A conversation with Marc Caplan, scholar of Yiddish literature and Comparative Literature, on Yiddish culture and antisemitism in Europe

Familiarize yourself with maps (C);

Read: "Chronology of Genocide" (C);

Read: "Introduction: Cell 5" from *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* by Olugosa and Erichsen (C)

Skim: Doris Bergen's book *War and Genocide* (3rd edition)

F Sept 15 – Overview of NS-period, Second World War, the "Holocaust" (continued)

Read: at least two chapters of Doris Bergen's book (you need to have whole book finished by start of Monday's class, so pace yourself)

Week Two: Deepening our Concrete Historical Knowledge about what the Nazis did

M Sept 18 – Reviewing history and geography of Nazi period and its crimes

Read: Finish reading Bergen

Student Input: Name three dates and three place names that seem significant to you at this stage in your knowledge of the Nazi period; formulate one question you have about facts or arguments in Bergen

W Sept 20 – Review history and geography with short practice quiz at end of class

Review: all materials so far

F Sept 22 – Division of Germany, Denazification, Guilt

Read: Mary Fulbrook, *Germany National Identity after the Holocaust*, pp. 18-24 (C);

Read: Read: Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, pp. 31-37 (C)

Student Input: In a short list or 2-3 full sentences, share impressions you have at this point in time about postwar Germans' processing of NS period

Week Three: Representation of War Crimes in Documentary Film

[M Sept 25 Yom Kippur – Class Cancelled]

W Sept 27 – War Crimes Trials: Nuremberg, Eichmann, and Frankfurt Trials

Preparation: View videos on Nuremberg and Eichmann Trials

Read: Hannah Arendt, “The Eichmann Case and the Germans” (C);

Student Input: make a few comments about the style of presentation of one documentary; how is the material being mediated?

Th Sept 28 (x-hour) – Ophuls, *Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie* (1988)

Read handout on “How to view a film” by Gerd Gemünden

View film: it's long and truly gripping; pace yourself

Student Input: Based on the film, list ten character-traits of Klaus Barbie and ten of the filmmaker, Marcel Ophuls

F Sept 29 – Map and history quiz

Group work: **Select two elements from this list:** chronology, music, camera angles, editing, voiceover, use or non-use of translation and translators; discuss with your group what difference your two elements make with regard to how viewers understand the story told in the film; be as specific as you can be

Week Four: War Crimes Revisited

M Oct 2 – Police Battalions and the Einsatzgruppen

Preparation: read Browning – entire

Student Input: using *Ordinary Men*, google maps or another tool, locate the main sites where Police Battalion 101 was deployed and note the distances between them

W Oct 4 – Browning's analysis, cont.; Browning/Goldhagen debate

Review: Browning and your notes

F Oct 6 – Wehrmacht Photo Exhibit

Read Niven, “The Crimes of the Wehrmacht,” pp. 143-174 (C)

Student Input: look on the internet for mention of this exhibit; always make sure to consider what site you are on and what its biases might be

Week Five: Remembering the Holocaust through Literature, TV, Video Testimony

Oct 9 is called by some Columbus Day and by others Indigenous Peoples' Day

M Oct 9 – Schlink, *The Reader*

[This is one of your choices to read in entirety; everybody read excerpts from C]

Those who have selected this as their book meet to compile questions to guide class discussion and submit to professor as per usual 12 hours before class starts

W Oct 11 – *Holocaust*, TV miniseries that changed German attitudes

Preparation: you are welcome to watch the entire miniseries, but the requirement is to watch (only) 2.5 hours; get a feel for the plot and the production quality

F Oct 13 – Holocaust Video Testimony

Preparation: listen to survivor testimony from two different archives; be prepared to report on what the site is like and on one testimony you've viewed in groups; 2-3pp write-up due before beginning of class; this counts as **your midterm**

Week Six: Remembering the Holocaust in Public Monuments

M Oct 16 – **no class:** use time to do the readings and the two inputs to be completed by midnight Tuesday for Wed.

W Oct 18 – Monuments, esp. Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin

Read: James Young, *The Texture of Memory*, pp. vii-xiii, 1-15 (C)

Read: Peter Carrier, "Holocaust Monuments and National Memory" (C)

Student Input: locate three examples of Holocaust monuments in three different countries (look around a bit; don't settle on the first ones your computer pulls up)

Student Input: do a short interview with someone who has visited the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (professor has names to suggest); did they search it out specifically or did they bump into it accidentally? did the look of the monument surprise them? what feelings did that person have as they stood or walked through the space of the monument? did they find the information center? did they go there? what did they think of how it was set up?

F Oct 20 – Reconsiderations of the German Dead: The Case of Dresden

Preparation for everybody: Read excerpts from *Slaughterhouse Five* (C)

Student Input: Browse the internet for images of / articles about the *Militärhistorische Museum der Bundeswehr* in Dresden;

Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five*

[this is one of your choices to read in entirety; everybody read excerpts from C]

Those who have selected this as their book meet to compile questions to guide class discussion and submit to professor as per usual 12 hours before class starts

Week Seven: "The Grace of Being Born Later"- Generational and National Responses in Europe

M Oct 23 – Antisemitism then and now

Klüger, *Still Alive: Holocaust Girlhood Remembered*

[this is one of your choices to read in entirety; everybody read excerpts from C]
 Those who have selected this as their book meet to compile questions to guide class discussion and submit to professor as per usual 12 hours before class starts

W Oct 25 – Neonazism, right extremism in Europe, German Victimhood Discourse
Student Input: browse for information on AfD, Pegida, right extremism in the Bundeswehr

View: PBS frontline documentary “German Neonazis and the far right” dir. Evan Williams (54 min.)

Read: poem “Suspicious” by Trish Schultz (C)

Read: selections from Enzo Traverso’s book *The New Faces of Fascism* (C)

F Oct 27 – What is Co-witnessing? W.G. Sebald and Patrick Modiano

Modiano, *Dora Bruder*

Guest speaker: Irene Kacandes, Professor of German Studies and Comparative Literature

[this is one of your choices to read in entirety; everybody read excerpts from C]

Those who have selected this as their book meet to compile questions to guide class discussion and submit to professor as per usual 12 hours before class starts

Final Project: by this date you should have selected your project-mates and together written a scenario that you turn in at the beginning of this class

Week Eight: The new far right and the pushback against it in North America and elsewhere

M Oct 30 – North American overview and Charlottesville 2017

Preparation: view Spike Lee’s *BlacKkKlansman*;

Student Input: browse for information on Charlottesville 2017

*groups will receive feedback on their scenarios; rewrite if necessary and start rehearsing

W Nov 1 – Antifa: myths and facts

Preparation for Wed’s class comes from things we’ve been tracking in current news

Read: excerpts from Mark Bray’s book *Antifa* (C)

Discuss **in groups** your research on groups/websites that track the far right in the USA

Th Nov 2 (x-hour) – Jan. 6, 2021: what happened? what is still happening?

Read: newspaper articles that have been posted on Canvas

F Nov 3 – The Future of Holocaust Memory

Guest Speaker: Doris Bergen, Professor of Holocaust Studies

Week Nine: Presenting What You’ve Learned About Responses to the Nazi Past

M Nov 6 – group presentations; November 9 in German history

W Nov 8 – group presentations; paper option due by beg this class

****Th Nov 9 (x-hour)** – group presentations (if this time slot is needed)

F Nov 10 – group presentations

Week Ten: Vergangenheitsbewältigung? How can we use this information in our daily life?

M Nov 13 – “Doing Something”: concluding reflections

Student Input: Make of list of concrete actions that can be taken to co-witness and address injustice and suffering