

What gives? How can one country not only be so bifurcated but so extreme in its bifurcation? How could the same country that gave us Mozart and Mercedes also have given us Adolf and Auschwitz? Recently, Günther Grass, German novelist we will study, considered to be among the greatest novelists of the last 100 years, revealed that he was in the Waffen-SS. The VW-Beetle, the best selling car in the world over the last 50 years and one of the coolest cars ever made, was designed by Hitler himself. Are these clues to understanding modern Germany? Could it be that the good and the bad are somehow intertwined? That, as another famous German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, once said: “Where the danger grows, so also grows the saving power”?

This is the big question that will underlie our investigation this semester. Each reading, discussion, lecture, and assignment will be shaped with an eye to answering this paradox. The closer you can get to an answer, the more thought you give this paradox, the higher your grade will most likely be.
Course Goals

At the end of this class, you should be able to explain Germany’s role in both World Wars, the roots of Nazism, communism and democracy in Germany’s 20th century, the roots of the cold war, basic aspects of life on both sides of the Berlin Wall, the causes and the effects of the fall of the Wall, and the challenges facing a contemporary democratic, capitalist, and ethnically diverse German society.

Writing:
This is a baccalaureate writing level class. It is the highest level class in the History Department’s undergraduate curriculum, and thus the highest level of work is expected of you. There are three writing assignments, all of them substantial in length (at least ten pages utilizing both primary and secondary sources). In accordance with baccalaureate writing policy, you will have the opportunity to rewrite your first two papers for a higher grade. These papers must be turned in by Thursday, December 9th, 5 pm in my mailbox at the latest. Each of the paper assignments is worth 100 points. Each day that they are late is 10 points. I prefer that they not be e-mailed to me; if it is absolutely necessary, I require that they be in the following file formats: .doc; .docx; .rtf; .txt; .pdf. I cannot open .wps documents. I will also give you detailed information on what is expected of you in these papers, and how these expectations correlate to your grade on them. You will be graded by deducting points for various inadequacies, counting backwards from 100. Each deduction will be explained in a separate document. In some cases, papers that are unacceptable for this level of coursework will be returned with no grade and I will simply ask you to start over. We will also spend time in class discussing writing and its requirements. As a general rule, the writing assignments will be based on the class readings, and some use of outside sources will be required as well.

Final Exam
You will be given a take home exam, which will be due at the end of the semester. This is worth 100 points. It is cumulative, and written, not multiple choice. You will receive this on the last day of class and will have one week to finish it.

Class structure
As a general rule, Tuesdays will be devoted to lecture and Thursdays to reading discussion. Sometimes, there will be activities involved. For each discussion, there will people chosen to give reactions to the reading in class, generally, three people per class. There will also be discussion questions distributed by e-mail about the readings a few days before discussion. We will at one point be watching a film related to the course, Goodbye Lenin. You are required to come to class both days. You are allowed two unexcused absences, after that, you need a valid excuse to miss class.

Class participation
You have a class participation grade of 100 points. You are graded differently for lectures and discussions: for lectures, you must show up on time, and behave
respectfully during lecture. This means no laptops or other electronic or wireless devices unless I give you permission. No sleeping, talking, or other distracting behavior. You can earn a maximum of 4 points for each lecture. For discussions, you must come on time and exhibit good behavior; you must also bring your reading materials and have them out so I know you have them, you must bring your answers to the discussion questions and have these out and visible, and you must participate in the discussions actively. You can earn a maximum of 4 points per discussion. There are 14 lectures and 13 discussions, and this equals more than 100 points (108 to be exact)—the extra 8 points are your free unexcused absences; you can therefore earn extra credit for showing up for all class periods.

**Extra Credit**

In addition to getting 8 extra point for coming to all classes, there is also a very important lecture. If you attend this lecture, you will get **50** extra credit points, which is enough to raise your grade an entire grade. Yes, it’s that important. The talk is by Dr. Mark Roseman, historian of Indiana University and Senior Research Fellow at the United States Holocaust History Museum in Washington, DC. He is one of the leading scholars on the history of Nazism and the Holocaust in the entire world. The History Department, and myself personally, have invited him. The talk is entitled “Hitler’s Henchmen” and should be a preview of his cutting-edge research on Nazi perpetrators in the Holocaust. It is Thursday, Sept. 23rd, from 4-5:30 pm, in the Black and Gold room of the Bernhardt center.

**Grading**

There is therefore a total of 500 points you can acquire (508 points if you come to every class, 558 if you go to every class and the Roseman lecture). To determine your final grade, I simply double your total points and convert that to the University’s grading scale, which is:

100-93 = A  
92-88 = BA  
87-83 = B  
82-78 = CB  
77-73 = C  
72-68 = DC  
67-60 = D  
Under 60 = E (Failing)

So for example if your total grade were a 450, you would have a 900, or, a 90, which equals a BA as a final grade.

**Required readings (for sale in the WMU bookstore):**

Hans Fallada: *Every Man Dies Alone* (Melville House)


Anonymous: *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City* (Picador)

Gitta Sereny: *Into that Darkness: An Examination of Conscience* (Vintage Books)

Eli Rubin: *Synthetic Socialism: Plastics and Dictatorship in the German Democratic Republic* (University of North Carolina Press)

Martin Klimke: *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton University Press)

Schedule of Lectures, Discussions and Assignments

**Week One**
Tuesday, September 7th
Lecture: World War One and its Aftermath

Thursday, September 9th
Discussion: Introduction. Reading: *Impossible Border* Introduction and chapter 2, “Now We Were the Border”

**Week Two**
Tuesday, September 14th
Lecture: Weimar I: Politics and Crisis

Thursday, September 16th
Discussion: Weimar Political Speed Dating-- Reading: Weimar Republic Sourcebook documents 13, 15, 42, 43, 47, 49, 126, 127, 136, 140

**Receive First Writing Assignment**

**Week Three**
Tuesday, September 21st Lecture: Weimar II: Cultural Revolt and Modernism

Thursday, September 23rd
Discussion: Fun with Weimar Art! / Reading: Weimar Republic Sourcebook, documents 166, 167, 174, 178, 188, 190, 195, 228, 233
Talk: Mark Roseman, Indiana University / United States Holocaust History Museum: “Hitler’s Henchmen” 4-5:30 pm Brown and Gold Room, Bernhardt Center

**Week Four**
Tuesday, September 28th
Lecture: Collapse of the Weimar Republic and Rise of Nazism

Thursday, September 30th
Discussion: Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* pps. 1-230

**Week Five**
Tuesday, October 5th
Lecture: Inside the Third Reich

Thursday, October 7th
Discussion: Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* pps. 230-end

**Week Six**
Tuesday, October 12th
Lecture: World War Two from Poland to Stalingrad

Thursday, October 14th
Discussion: Reading: Fallada, *Every Man Dies Alone*

First writing assignment due in class Thursday; receive second writing assignment

**Week Seven**
Tuesday, October 19th
Lecture: The Holocaust from the Ghettos to the Gas Chambers

Thursday, October 21st
Discussion: Sereny, *Into that Darkness*

**Week Eight**
Tuesday, October 26th
Lecture: Defeat, Destruction, Rape and Justice/New Research

Thursday, October 28th
Discussion: Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin*
**Week Nine**
Tuesday, November 2nd
Lecture: When worlds collide: the beginning of the Cold War, 1946-1953/
Americanization and Miracles, West Germany from 1950-1968

Thursday, November 4th
Discussion: Rubin *Synthetic Socialism*

**Week Ten**
Tuesday, November 9th
Lecture: / Consumption, Stabilization and Ostpolitik in East Germany

Thursday, November 11th
Discussion: Rubin *Synthetic Socialism*
**Second writing assignment due; receive third and final writing assignment**

**Week Eleven**
Tuesday, November 16th
Lecture: From 1968 to the German Autumn: leftwing radicalism in West
Germany and across the Atlantic (guest talk by Dr. Martini, Dept. of History, 
WMU)

Thursday, November 18th
Discussion: Klimke, *The Other Alliance*

**Week Twelve**
Tuesday, November 23rd
Lecture: *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (Memory Battles)

Thursday, November 25th
No class: Thanksgiving

**Week Thirteen**
Tuesday, November 30th
Lecture: Multiculturalism

Thursday, December 2nd
Discussion: (Begin film viewing: Goodbye Lenin)
Week Fourteen
Tuesday, December 7th
Lecture: The Fall of the Wall

Thursday, December 9th
Discussion: Film viewing, finish Goodbye Lenin

Third writing assignment due.

Receive Take-Home Final Exam

Thursday, December 15th
Take-home exams due by e-mail to me at eli.rubin@wmich.edu