

Hessen: ISU Course Outline

German History and Politics of the 20th Century

CLASS HOURS: 20 contact hours

Academic Director of the Culture Module: Dr. Kai Földner, University of Kassel,
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Lecturer:

Dr. Christian Toft, Lecturer and Fellow, Kassel University.

My academic training and career has a classic interdisciplinary and international outlook and orientation, which includes political science, economics, sociology, and history as well as several languages.

I have a PhD from the Faculty of Economics and Politics in Cambridge, UK, and in addition to Germany I have worked at universities in Scandinavia, Great Britain, Italy, Estonia, the United States, Canada, and China.

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1) INFORMATION ON THE COURSE CONTENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, students will analyze the specifically German elements of 20th Century History. How was it possible that a “Kulturnation”, a people who brought forth outstanding results in music, philosophy, literature, and science, initiated the worst known crime in history, the Holocaust? Was there an especially German approach to dealing with the challenges of modern and post-modern societies? How were questions of gender inequality and racial minorities answered in 20th Century Germany? How did German identity develop, change, invent, and re-invent itself from 1871 to present? How did defeat in two world wars, division of the country into two hostile blocs, successful reunification of the two Germanies, integration into the European Union, and the pressures of global capitalism lead to the German nation as we experience it today?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The course will use a mixture of lecture and seminar-style method. Students will read primary and secondary sources. The content will be usually presented via power point presentation and class discussion. The class will explore historical sites in Kassel and will visit the former Nazi concentration camp in Breitenau.

The participants will gain insight into the significance of cultural and historical events in German history.

They will be able to exhibit awareness of cultural and historical differences between the culture of German-speaking countries and the student’s native culture.

COURSE MATERIALS

The core textbook is

Eric Kurlander, Douglas T. McGetchin, and Bernd-Stefan Grewe (2023): Modern Germany. A Global History. Oxford University Press.

Another useful volume (with 35 short contributions) is

Helmut Walser Smith (Ed.): 2011: The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History. Oxford University Press.

For those of you who would like to dig into more specific aspects of German history, I recommend the volumes in the Oxford University Press series “Short Oxford History of Germany”.

A useful volume (with 37 short contributions) bringing us up-to-date on developments is

Klaus Larres, Holger Moroff, and Ruth Wittlinger (eds.) (2022): The Oxford Handbook of German Politics. Oxford University Press.

COURSE PLAN

Thursday 6. July: 1.15 pm to 4.45 pm (4 hours) Introduction: Germany in the global context KMG Chapter Eight: Wilhelmine Germany and "World Policy," 1890-1914 KMG Chapter Nine: The First World War, 1914-1918 KMG Chapter Ten: The Weimar Republic, 1918-1933
Monday 10. July: 10.30 am to 4.45 pm (6 hours) KMG Chapter Eleven: The Third Reich, 1933-1945 KMG Chapter Twelve: The Second World War, 1939-1945 KMG Chapter Thirteen: The Holocaust and Ethnic Cleansing, 1941-1945 Excursion: Breitenau Memorial Site („Gedenkstätte Breitenau“)
Tuesday 11. July: 10.30 am to 4.45 pm (6 hours) KMG Chapter Fourteen: German Republics, 1945-1969 KMG Chapter Fifteen: Transcending Divisions, 1969-1991 KMG Chapter Sixteen: Germany and the World, 1991-Present
Wednesday 12. July: 10.30 am to 12.00 am (2 hours) <i>Readings will be chosen in consultation with the students in the class</i>
Thursday 13. July: 1.15 pm to 2.45 pm (2 hours) <i>Readings will be chosen in consultation with the students in the class</i>

2) INFORMATION ON CLASS PARTICIPATION, ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

ASSIGNMENTS

regular attendance, active participation, in-class presentation, homeworks

PROFESSIONALISM & CLASS PARTICIPATION

attendance lists, contribution to discussions and a presentation is expected

MISSED CLASSES

No more than 10% of the contact hours can be missed for successful completion of the class.

COURSE WORK

Course work will consist of three equally weighted activities:

- 1: Please write a short 750 words paper on the holocaust and the Breitenau concentration camp.
- 2: Please moderate and facilitate one class discussion of a key event or a key feature of German historical and political developments.
- 3: Please write a short 750 to 1000 words paper on a topic of your choice relating to German historical and political developments.

3) INFORMATION ON GRADING AND ECTS

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Upon successful completion, 3 ECTS will be awarded for the class.

According to the rules of ECTS, one credit is equivalent to 25-30 hours student workload.

GRADING SCALE:

Description of the grading scale

Percentage	Grade		Description
90-100%	15 points	1.0	very good: an outstanding achievement
	14 points		
	13 points	1.3	
80-90%	12 points	1.7	good: an achievement substantially above average requirements
	11 points	2.0	
	10 points	2.3	
70-80%	9 points	2.7	satisfactory: an achievement which corresponds to average requirements
	8 points	3.0	
	7 points	3.3	
60-70%	6 points	3.7	sufficient: an achievement which barely meets the requirements
	5 points	4.0	
0-60%	4 points	5.0	not sufficient / failed: an achievement which does not meet the requirements
	3 points		
	2 points		
	1 point		
	0 points		

This course description was issued on: May 25, 2023. Program is subject to change.