

Hessen: ISU Course Outline

German History and Politics of the 20th Century

CLASS HOURS: 20 contact hours

Academic Director of the Culture Module: Prof. Dr. Kai Földner, University of Kassel, Director of the Museum of Natural History and the Museum of the History of Kassel

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Lecturer:

Dr. Margrit Frölich

INSTRUCTOR: I earned my PhD in German Studies at Cornell University and taught at a variety of universities both in the United States and in Germany, including Ohio State University, Ohio University, Leipzig University and Goethe University Frankfurt. From 2012 until 2017 I held an appointment as DAAD professor of history, culture, and media at the University of California, San Diego. Presently, I serve as Director of Studies at the Protestant Academy of Frankfurt, an open-minded institution affiliated with the Lutheran church, offering outreach programs to the public on a wide range of issues in history, culture, economics, and contemporary politics.

If you need to consult with me, please contact me via email:

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1) INFORMATION ON THE COURSE CONTENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to familiarize students with German history and politics since 1900. We will explore the relationship between social, political, and cultural factors of German history during the 20th century whilst paying attention to how German history has always been intertwined with larger European and global developments. Particular emphasis will be given to the following: the rise and demise of Germany's first democracy, the Weimar Republic; the challenges of modernity during the Weimar Republic (1918-1933); Germany's path into a dictatorship and the subsequent genocidal politics during the Third Reich. The course will furthermore trace developments related to the division of the two German states in the postwar period from 1945 until German unification in 1990. The course will finally examine Germany's role within Europe and the world in light of the most recent historical and political developments of the 21st century. This course combines lectures and discussions. In addition to classroom meetings, this course also features an excursion to the memorial site of Breitenau (located ca. 12 miles south of Kassel), originally a medieval monastery that in 1933 was turned into a Nazi concentration camp and today offers public visitor programs about its eventful history.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn to identify, analyze, and discuss major themes and developments in 20th and 21st century German history and politics
- Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of German history and politics in its intertwinement with European and global developments
- Through oral presentations and writing assignments, students will learn how to communicate clearly and effectively their knowledge of modern German history and politics
- Students will deepen their critical reading and writing skills in exploring relevant historiographical writing about German history and its global contexts

COURSE MATERIALS

Core Textbook:

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

Additional Readings:

David Blackbourn (2023): *Germany in the World: A Global History 1500 – 2000*. Liveright Publishing Corporation.

Mary Fulbrook (2019), *A Concise History of Germany*. Third Edition. Cambridge University Press.

Ulrich Herbert (2019): *A History of 20th-Century Germany*. Oxford University Press.

Reference Books:

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

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

COURSE PLAN / SCHEDULE:

1st day (4 hrs): Introduction: Germany in the World / Germany around 1900 / World War One (1914-1918)

The Weimar Republic 1918 – 1933: Challenges of Modernity / From Democracy to Dictatorship

Readings: Chapters 8, 9, 10 in: Kurlander, McGetchin, Grewe (pp. 311-473).

2nd day (6 hrs): The Third Reich (1933-1945): Consolidating Nazi Dictatorship/Germany and Global History (1939-1945)/ The Holocaust

The Defeat of Nazi Germany / The End of World War Two (1945) / The Nuremberg Trials (1945-1946)

Readings: Chapters 11, 12, 13 in: Kurlander, McGetchin, Grewe, (pp. 475-647); Chap. 11 in: Blackbourn (pp.465-550)

3rd day (6 hrs): 10:30 am Excursion to Breitenau Memorial Site (“Gedenkstätte Breitenau“) <https://gedenkstaette-breitenau.de>

Meeting point: 10:30am in front of classroom building

4th day (2 hrs): Divided and Unified: Germany between 1945 and 1990 / The Fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) / German Unification (1990) and European Integration

Readings: Chapters 14, 15, 16 in: Kurlander, McGetchin, Grewe (pp. 649-804); Chapter 12 in: Blackbourn (pp. 551-645)

5th day (2 hrs): Germany in Europe and the World: “Historical Turning Point” – Russia’s Attack of Ukraine (24 February 2022) / Recent Challenges and Developments

Readings: Epilogue in: Blackbourn (pp. 647-660)

2) INFORMATION ON CLASS PARTICIPATION, ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

ASSIGNMENTS

Regular attendance, active participation, in-class oral presentation, completion of all writing assignments and in-class final exam.

PROFESSIONALISM & CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students need to sign attendance lists in person; students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and give one oral presentation; students are required to complete and submit writing assignments on time; students are expected to have the assigned readings completed by the day they are listed in the syllabus.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is unacceptable in this class and in any academic context. The willful or accidental use of someone else's words, ideas, or evidence without proper attribution is considered plagiarism and will lead to failing this course.

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 the following activities:

- 1: Please moderate and facilitate one class discussion of a key event or a key feature of German historical and political developments, preparing and raising a range of questions relevant to the subject. (20%)
- 2: Please write a short 1000 words paper on a topic of your choice relating to German historical and political developments. (40%)
- 3: Complete in-class final exam on the last day of classes (40%)

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: April 26, 2024. Program is subject to change.