

Vesalius College

Course description

Course title: Germany Under National Socialism, 1933-1945

Course code: HIS 341E

Teacher responsible: William L. Chew III, PhD, Full Professor of History at Vesalius College

Course description:

Introduction; Debates in Research: The “Hitler Phenomenon” and European Fascism; The Creation of Totalitarian Dictatorship; The First Phase of Nazi Foreign Policy; German Foreign Policy: from Revisionism to Expansionism; The Consolidation of Nazi Rule and the Arms Industry; The Structure of the Leadership; Hitler’s Foreign Policy and Conduct of the War; Internal Developments, Racial Policy and the Treatment of Occupied Territories; Foreign and Racial Policy; Hopes of Final Victory in ‘Total War’; Nazi Terror and German Resistance; The Third Reich in German and European History; Contemporary judgments of Nazism and the Third Reich; The Verdict of Historians on the Third Reich.

The course will combine lectures with a discussion/seminar approach. Lectures and film material from the BBC documentary “The Nazis, A Warning from History,” will introduce and complement the readings, highlight aspects of special interest, indicate research trends, or provide alternative evaluations. Discussions will focus on research issues and problems. Source workshops will examine crucial documents chosen to complement secondary readings and provide depth. In the workshops, source clusters with a common theme will be presented orally by students and discussed by the seminar as a whole. Stress will be placed on the historian's approach and tools, with particular emphasis on close textual analysis and the critical method. A substantive paper will integrate primary and secondary material assigned in the course, using standard documentary method.

Course objectives:

The course will explore the ideology and policies of the Third Reich from 1933-1945, to include a discussion of the historical context and causes of the rise of the NSDAP; party ideology and racial theory; political structure of the party; governmental framework of the *Führerstaat*; the SS; social, economic and cultural policy; foreign policy; the Holocaust. Students will gain insight into the main research controversies and trends, i.e. the debate around the intentionalist (or “Hitler-centered”) vs. the structuralist/functionalist approach; whether Nazi Germany was a fascist or a totalitarian state; the issue of primacy of politics over economics; the role of racial theory in determining foreign policy; and historical judgment of the Third Reich.

Grade weighting scheme:

Midterm Exam	Final Exam	Term Paper	Participation & Workshops
20%	30%	40%	10%

Used course material (handbooks, readers, readings, newspapers, magazines) and references:

Klaus Donald D. Wall, *Nazi Germany and World War II*. 2nd ed. London: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003.

Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems & Perspectives of Interpretation*. 4th ed. New York: Arnold, 2000.

J. Noakes and G. Pridham, eds.. *Nazism 1919-1945. A Documentary Reader*. Vols. 1-3, Exeter: U of Exeter P, 1995-.

Reader