

Syllabus

Hist 314: Modern Germany

Fall 2010, George Mason University

INSTRUCTOR: Mark R. Stoneman, Ph.D.

CLASSES: Tues., 7:20–10:00 p.m., Science & Tech II 12

OFFICE HOURS: Tues., 6:00–7:00 p.m., Robinson B 373C

EMAIL: mstonema@gmu.com

COURSE BLOG: <http://hist314.wordpress.com>

BLACKBOARD: <https://courses.gmu.edu>

Description

This course will explore social, economic, cultural, and political developments in Germany from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first. Topics to consider include the dual revolutions of the nineteenth century, industrial and political, and their accompanying social and cultural effects; the creation of a German nation-state from a loose collection of independent kingdoms, principalities, and city-states; developments in war and society that led not only to the creation of a German nation-state in 1871, but also to the two World Wars that ended in Germany's division and the Cold War; the integration of West Germany into NATO and the European Union, on the one hand, and East Germany into the Warsaw Pact and Soviet economic structures, on the other hand; and, finally, reunification of the capitalist West and communist East within the context of Western economic, political, and security frameworks. The World Wars and Holocaust pose central challenges for us as we consider the shifting nature of Germany as both an idea and a state over the past two centuries; however, we will consider other lines of development in modern German history as well.

Requirements

Your success in this course will depend on the extent to which you take responsibility for your own learning. If you do the required reading, think about it, and exchange ideas with classmates and your instructor both in class and on Blackboard, you will learn a lot. If, instead, you choose to passively receive facts, you will learn much less. Why? In the first case, you will be actively using and also producing ideas. In so doing, you will be making this material your own. But if you just passively receive information, it will get lost in the swirl of other information competing for your attention every day. History has to be practiced. Only by doing it can you truly learn it. This is why this course has not only two exams and two papers, but also a mandatory attendance policy and a participation requirement both in class and on Blackboard.

Specifically, your grade in the course will be determined by the following components according to the percentages that follow them:

- Class and Online Participation 20%
- Analytic Papers (2 @ 4–5 pages each) 30%
- Midterm Exam (map, identification, essay) 25%
- Final Exam (map, identification, essay) 25%

CLASS AND ONLINE PARTICIPATION

This part of your grade, worth 20%, will be determined by a mix of your attendance, your participation in class, and your participation on Blackboard. Simply attending class and offering a basic comment on Blackboard 100% of the time will earn you a B-. To move this grade higher, offer thoughtful participation in class that still allows others a chance to share their ideas. Offer thoughtful comments on Blackboard too. Especially useful in both real and virtual discussions are not only your own original ideas, but also responses to others' comments that help move the conversation further. Of course, your contributions

must also be informed by the reading, not superficial guesses, but do not be afraid to go out on a limb based on what you have read. Here are the formal details:

Class:

- Come to class on time and with the required reading for that day already read.
- Bring the required reading with you to class, so you can refer to it as necessary.
- If the assignment includes an online source, please either bring a copy to class (electronic or printout) or bring good notes that include important examples of the author's language.
- See also my classroom policies below (p. 3).

Blackboard:

- You need to contribute to Blackboard discussions at least one day prior to each class; that means no later than Monday night. The reason for this deadline is that I need time to read the last contributions to incorporate them into Tuesday evening's class. The only exception to this requirement is the first class. No online participation is required for it, although I encourage you to add any ideas or questions you have after the first class.
- I will try to add discussion prompts at least five days before each class. If you get there before me, you can also start your own prompts (except for the first class). Please also visit each week's discussion more than once.
- While you must contribute no later than a day before each class, you are also welcome to add follow-up feedback afterwards, based on what happened in class and any new ideas you have that you were not able to express in class.
- If you do not understand how threaded discussions on Blackboard work, please use the help files, ask a classmate with more experience, or visit me during office hours.
- Normal professional rules of civility apply. It is okay to disagree with each other, but try to do so without being disagreeable. Negative disruptions will adversely impact your grade.

Attendance:

- I will overlook one unexcused absence, although you will still be responsible for any material that you missed. I would appreciate an emailed explanation, but please do not ask me what you missed. Find out that information from one or more of your classmates.
- Every unexcused absence after the first will lower your participation grade by half a letter grade (5 percentage points).
- If you have more than four unexcused absences, however, you will automatically fail the course. (If you sign up for the class after the semester starts, however, this number goes down by the number of classes you missed prior to registering for the course.)
- Unexcused absences are those for which you do not have either (1) written attestation from your doctor or clinic the next week or (2) attestation from your coach for a university-sanctioned competition, which you must give me before the event.
- There will be a ten-minute break about halfway through each class. I will make a note of anyone who does not return to class afterwards. Mandatory attendance means for the whole class, not just the first part. Leaving early will adversely impact your grade. So will coming to class late.

ANALYTIC PAPERS

There will be two analytic papers, each 4 to 5 pages long, based on primary sources, and each paper will be worth 15% of your course grade.

Directions will be posted one week prior to the due dates. I will link these directions to the schedule and announce them in a new blog post.

Late work submitted during the semester will be marked down by as much as five points per day. No late work will be accepted after the final exam.

See also the my notes on the university's all-important honor system below (p. 4).

MIDTERM EXAM

The midterm exam, worth 25% of your course grade, will include a historical map, names and terms for you to identify and explain the significance of, and a blue book essay. I will provide a study guide one week prior to the exam. This guide will help you to study for the exam, but it will not offer any shortcuts around doing all the reading ahead of time as per the class schedule.

You must take your exam on the day and at the time it is scheduled. The only way you may do a make-up exam is if (1) you give me written attestation from your doctor or clinic for a medical condition that kept you from class or (2) you give me a note from your coach for a school-sanctioned event. In both cases, you must contact me in a timely fashion, that is, immediately for an illness and well ahead of time for an approved event.

See also the my notes on the university's crucial honor system below (p. 4).

FINAL EXAM

The final exam, worth 25% of your course grade, will follow the same basic format as the midterm exam. With the possible exception of the blue book essay, it will not be cumulative. Of course, the same make-up and honor system policies also apply.

Grading System

Grades for all assignments are based on a 100-point scale. You will either see that number on your assignment or you will see a letter grade. If you see a letter grade, please note that I record that letter grade in my spreadsheet thus: A = 95 (occasionally higher for particularly excellent work), A- = 92.5, A-/B+ = 90, B+ = 87.5, B = 85, B- = 82.5, B-/C+ = 80, C+ = 77.5, C = 75, C- = 72.5, C-/D+ = 70, D = 65, F = 55, and not submitting an assignment = 0.

I calculate course grades according to the weighting in the requirements section above. If you have more than four unexcused absences, you will fail the course automatically. (If you sign up for the class after the semester starts, however, this number goes down by the number of classes you missed prior to registering for the course.) Otherwise, the cutoff for an A in the course is a 93 average, for an A- a 90 average, for a B+ an 87.5 average, for a B an 83, for a B- an 80, for a C+ a 77.5, for a C a 73, for a C- a 70, and for a D a 60. Like everything else in this syllabus, these cutoff scores are nonnegotiable.

Communication

The best way to reach me outside of class and office hours is via email to mstonema@gmu.edu. Also, you should contact me from your own Mason address to ensure I get your message. Please do not try to call me, as I have no campus phone.

I will normally make announcements via the course blog, which you need to check a few times per week. You should also check your university email account regularly, because that is how I will contact individual students.

I have set up the course on Blackboard too, but I am only using that for things I need to password protect, namely copyrighted material and our online discussions. I will still announce new Blackboard items on this blog.

Classroom Policy

Taking notes with your laptop is okay. Checking out Facebook, surfing the internet, and instant messaging are not. It does not matter how good you think you are at multitasking. I can tell the difference, and I will

mark down your participation grade accordingly. You will also find yourself scoring lower on the exams, because you were not paying attention as well as you thought you were.

Texting is not allowed either. You do not need your smart phone or other device for anything during class, not even fact-checking, so do not let me see them.

Whenever I show film footage, I will ask that even laptops be turned off, because the light is distracting to others. During those times, any notes you take will have to be on paper, though you should be able to get by with writing down key thoughts afterwards, since we will talk about the material too.

Due to the length of the class, we will usually hold a ten-minute break around 8:30 p.m. Please try to restrict your bathroom visits to that time, so as not to disturb your neighbors.

Of course, you are also expected to treat your classmates well, not only in terms of how you engage them in discussion, but also by not distracting them with irrelevant conversations, playing on gadgets, and so on.

Honor System

Academic honesty is essential not only to the success of the course, but also to your academic and professional careers. Hence, you are expected to know what plagiarism is and abide by the GMU Honor System and Code at <http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>. Unfortunately, I regularly catch and report violations of this code in student papers and online discussions. If you are at all unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please talk to me.

The midterms and finals are “blue book” exams. You must purchase blue books for them at the bookstore and bring them to class completely empty. Any writing in the blue books from prior to the exam and any missing pages can be construed as an honor code violation. Bring clean, blank copies, and do not tear any pages out during the exams.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring an academic accommodation should see me immediately and also contact the Office of Disability Services at <http://ods.gmu.edu> or (703) 993-2474.

Readings

REQUIRED BOOKS

There are four required books for this course, which you need to purchase, either at the bookstore or online:

- Frank B. Tipton, *A History of Modern Germany since 1815* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). [ISBN 0520240499]
- Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise with Related Documents*, translated and edited by Ronald Schechter (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004). [ISBN 0312442432]
- Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest*, translated by Hugh Rorrison and Helen Chambers (London: Penguin Books, 2000). [ISBN 0140447660]
- Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading*, translated by David Porter (New York: New Direction Publishing, 1971). [ISBN 0811200116]

ONLINE SOURCES

In addition, I will assign primary sources online, mainly from German Historical Documents (<http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/>), a free online resource published by the German Historical Institute, although I will supplement this collection with other online material as necessary.

In the course schedule, you will see these reading assignments listed as “to be announced.” I will make these announcements on the blog’s main page and add them to the schedule too, as we move through the

semester. Unless your book reading load is very light that week, these primary source assignments should not take you more than about 30 minutes to read.

Schedule

Class meets on Tuesday evenings, 7:20–10:00 p.m., in Science and Tech II, room 12. We might meet in a different location on a couple days when I intend to show film footage. I will announce any such changes on the blog.

If the university cancels class due to inclement weather, it will announce this cancellation on its home page (<http://www.gmu.edu>). If I have to cancel class because I am ill, I will post a notice on the course blog and also send everyone an email. If class is cancelled for either of these two reasons, please check the blog for instructions on what to do. Normally, the makeup work would entail a more lengthy Blackboard discussion than our usual weekly forums, though it could also involve an additional short reading assignment.

The reading assignments in this schedule must be completed before the class under which they are listed, and you must contribute to the topic's online discussion no later than one day prior to each class. (The one exception to both these rules is the first class.) Please refer to the class and online participation policies above for further information (pp. 1–2).

08/31 (T): INTRODUCTION

- If you have taken little or no history at university, please read Gerald W. Schlabach, “A Sense of History: Some Components” (<http://courseweb.stthomas.edu/gwschlabach/sense.htm>). History majors should also reflect on this piece.
- If you have never taken History 100 or studied modern European history in another context, please read the brief overview on Wikipedia from the Enlightenment to recent times (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Europe#Enlightenment). It is not perfect, but it will help you to orient yourself quickly. Doing so is important, because you need a little context for the German history we will be learning.
- No required Blackboard discussions this week, but please feel free to bring up any ideas or questions you have on Blackboard after this first class is over.

09/07 (T): THE ENLIGHTENMENT, FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND NAPOLEON, CA. 1700–1815

- Read: Lessing, *Nathan the Wise with Related Documents*, pp. vii–ix, xi–xiii, 1–153. (If the theology in this play interests you, please also read pp. 153–164.)
- To help you orient yourself in time and prepare for discussion on Blackboard and in class, please also refer to the chronology on p. 165 of the same book and look at the “Questions for Consideration” on p. 166.
- Normally your first Blackboard (<https://courses.gmu.edu>) discussion contributions are due a day before class, but this week I just ask that you submit them by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, because of Labor Day. That will still give me a little time to digest your comments before office hours and class, although it will certainly help if comments come earlier.

09/14 (T): FORGING A GERMAN NATION-STATE, 1815–1871

- Read: Tipton, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 1–127.
- Read: selected documents online (to be announced).
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.
- This is the last day that is possible to add courses this fall.

09/21 (T): IMPERIAL GERMANY IN PEACETIME, 1871–1914 (1)

- Read: Tipton, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 129–248.

- Read: selected documents online (to be announced).
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

09/28 (T): IMPERIAL GERMANY IN PEACETIME, 1871–1914 (2)

- Read: Fontane, *Effi Briest*. You need to read both the novel and the introduction, but I leave it to you in which order you do them. If you encounter a term or reference you do not understand, try consulting the notes in the back. They are not numbered, but they are organized by page number.
- There will be handouts distributed in class today, so you do not have to read additional online sources ahead of time for this class.
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

10/01 (F): PAPER ONE IS DUE VIA EMAIL BY MIDNIGHT.

- The paper will be based on sources you have read.
- Directions will be posted one week prior to this date.
- For further information, see the policies page.
- On an unrelated note, this is the last day that it is possible to drop courses this fall.

10/05 (T): IMPERIAL GERMANY AT WAR, 1914–1918

- Read: Tipton, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 249–321.
- Read: selected documents online (to be announced). The selection will take you longer this week, but no more than 1 to 2 hours.
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

10/12 (T): *COLUMBUS DAY SCHEDULE CHANGE: NO TUESDAY CLASSES: MONDAY CLASSES MEET INSTEAD.*

10/19 (T): MIDTERM EXAM

- A study guide will be posted one week prior to this exam.
- Please remember to bring your blue books.
- For further information, see the policies page.

10/26 (T): THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC, 1918–1933 (1)

- Read: Tipton, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 323–368.
- Read: selected documents online (to be announced).
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

11/02 (T): THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC, 1918–1933 (2)

- Read: Tipton, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 370–417.
- Read: selected documents online (to be announced).
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

11/09 (T): NAZI GERMANY, 1933–1945 (1)

- Read: Tipton, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 420–455.
- Read and explore: “Propaganda,” an online exhibit at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <http://www.ushmm.org/propaganda>. Please note that this exhibit is still downstairs at the museum. I strongly encourage you to go in person, if you can spare the time.

- Read: selected documents online (to be announced).
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

11/16 (T): NAZI GERMANY, 1933–1945 (2)

- Read: Tipton, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 457–493.
- Read: selected documents online (to be announced).
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

11/23 (T): DEFEAT AND OCCUPATION, 1945–1949

- Read: Short biography on p. xi of Borchert, *The Man Outside*, so you know who the author is. (You can read more of the forward and introduction, of course, but see also the dates when they were written.)
- Read: Borchert, *The Man Outside*, 77–135.
- Read: In addition to the above pages of this book, spend at least another one or two hours reading some of Borchert's other short stories, choosing the ones that feel most compelling. They all tend to be about the war, "Skittle-Alley" (141–142), for instance, or the war's aftermath, "There are Voices in the Air—at Night" (23–26), for example.
- There will be handouts distributed in class today, so you do not have to read additional online sources ahead of time for this class.
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

11/24–11/28: *THANKSGIVING RECESS*

11/30 (T): DIVIDED GERMANY, 1949–1989

- Read: Tipton, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 496–611.
- Read: selected documents online (to be announced).
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

12/03 (F): PAPER TWO IS DUE VIA EMAIL BY MIDNIGHT.

- The paper will be based on sources you have read.
- Directions will be posted one week prior to this date.
- For further information, see the policies page.

12/07 (T): REUNIFICATION AND AFTER, 1989–2010

- Read: Tipton, *History of Modern Germany*, pp. 614–665.
- Read: selected documents online (to be announced).
- Your first contributions to this week's Blackboard discussion are due no later than a day before this class.

12/14 (T): FINAL EXAM (SAME PLACE, BUT FROM 7:30 TO 10:15 P.M.)

- A study guide will be posted one week prior to this exam.
- Please remember to bring your blue books.
- For further information, see the policies page.