GERMAN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY
from
NIETZSCHE TO THE PRESENT

Course Description
This course examines some major issues and figures in German intellectual life beginning around 1870, at the time of German national unification, and continuing through to the present. During this time, Germany has gone through a remarkable and often catastrophic series of ruptures: the imperial nation-state of 1871 was destroyed by the Great War and transformed into a democratic, parliamentary republic; this “Weimar Republic” was in turn overthrown by a genocidal and self-destructive National Socialist regime; in the wake of the Holocaust and a second World War, two German states, east and west, epitomized the divisions of the Cold War; and now, in our own time, a reunified but still troubled Germany has become part of a larger, emerging Europe. We will look at how German intellectuals have responded to these events by exploring a series of key episodes in cultural criticism, social theory, aesthetic rebellion, Jewish renewal, psychoanalysis, radical conservatism, Bauhaus design reform, the German intellectual emigration, the Frankfurt school, and debates on guilt, public memory, and national identity.

As we move through the term, I will provide an outline of major developments in German history during this period, and we will be reading a very brief history of the period. But the course is not primarily a survey of that history. Rather, my goal is to engage you in close reading and discussion of the authors’ works and the issues they raise.

How the Course Will Work
The course will combine lecture and discussion: as a rule, lectures will be held on Tuesdays and the first part of Thursday, with questions always welcome. The second part of Thursday’s class will be reserved for discussion and/or viewing of visual materials. Please consider: the course will work only if you come to class every Thursday prepared for an active and informed discussion of the readings.

Level and Prerequisites
This course is intended primarily for juniors, seniors, and graduate students from a wide variety of majors. Some previous knowledge is expected, but it need not be in German history. It may come from any of a wide variety of fields, including modern European history, the history of modern literature, political theory, social theory, or philosophy.

Required Work (for undergraduates)
Midterm exam 20%
Essay (8-10 pages) 30%
Final exam 30%
Participation 20%
100%
(Graduate students: please see me)

**Essay Assignment**
The essay will be an 8-10 page paper on a topic chosen from among a list of possibilities that I will distribute in advance. It will ask you to revisit and rethink an issue we have addressed in the course. Your sources will be the readings assigned for the course. That is, it is not a research paper that requires outside reading; rather, it is a “think piece” that asks you to return, read more closely, and reflect on an issue that has concerned you.

**Exam Dates and Due Dates NOT YET SET**
Midterm exam:
Essay: due *(please note: you may turn it in earlier at any time)*
Final exam:

**Intellectual Honesty**
In submitting any work for this course—just as for any course you take at the University of Oregon—you are also promising that that work is your own. If you are in any doubt about when or how to give credit to sources that you consult, please ask me.

**Texts**
All readings for the course will be available on reserve at Knight Library. The following are available for purchase at the University Bookstore:
- A *course packet*, which includes many *required* readings (see the schedule, below)
- Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*
- Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*
- Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
- Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*
- Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy*
- Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford edition)
Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction: Modern German Intellectuals and Society (January 6, 8)

Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, excerpts
Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (course packet):
  “Introduction: The Mandarin Type,” 1-13
  “The Origins of the Educated Middle Class,” 14-25
  “The Mandarin Tradition in Retrospect,” 81-127
Carl Schorske, “The Ringstrasse,” pp. 24-62 only, in Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*
  (only on reserve, not in course packet)

Week 2: The German Empire and Visions of Regeneration: Nietzsche (January 13, 15)

Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, excerpts
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* (entire book)
(Nietzsche, excerpts in course packet (also on reserve!!!!!!))

Week 3: Wilhelmine Germany and Mandarin Sociology: Simmel and Weber (January 20, 22)

Georg Simmel, “Fashion” (course packet) (from *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*)
Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Week 4: Rebels with Many Causes: Social Democrats, Cultural Pessimists, Aesthetes, Feminists, Sexologists, Zionists, and Others (January 27, 29)

Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, excerpts
Martin Buber, “The Spirit of the Orient and Judaism” (course packet) (in *Buber, On Judaism*)
Carl Schorske, “Politics in a New Key,” in Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*
(on reserve only, not in course packet)

Week 5: The Great War, Psychoanalysis, and Society: Freud (February 3, 5)

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Thursday: mid-term exam (in class)

Week 6: The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of “Classical Modernity” (February 10, 12)

Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, excerpts
Kaes, Jay, and Dimendberg, *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook:*
  “Revolution from the Right,” 330-354

“Designing the New World: Modern Architecture and the Bauhaus,” 429-453

Week 7: National Socialism and the Radical Conservatives: Jünger and
Heidegger (February 17, 19)
Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, excerpts
in Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy*:
Ernst Jünger, “Total Mobilization”
Martin Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the University (1933)"
"Political Texts, 1933-1934"
"Overcoming Metaphysics (1936-1946)"
"Only a God Can Save Us': Der Spiegel's Interview with
Martin Heidegger (1966)"

**FILM:** “Architecture of Doom”

**Week 8: Exiles: The “Frankfurt” School, Benjamin, and Arendt** (February 24, 26)
Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as
Mass Deception,” in Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility” (course packet)

**Week 9: Coming to Terms with Catastrophe: Reconstructions after Nazism, War, and Holocaust** (March 2, 4)
Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, excerpts
Horkheimer and Adorno, “The Concept of Enlightenment,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt* (course packet)

***Reminder: your essay is due***

**Week 10: Before and After the Wall: Unification and National Identity** (March 9, 11)
Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany*, excerpts
Karl-Heinz Bohrer, “Why We Are Not a Nation—And Why We Should Become One”
Jürgen Habermas, “Yet Again: German Identity”
(both in course packet)

**Final Exam:**