The Nazi Era
The Politics and Culture of Totalitarianism

Dr. Dennis B. Klein

Hist 3244:01
Class meetings Wednesdays 1:55-4:25 pm
Hist 3244:02
Class meetings Tuesdays 4:30-7:15 pm

Inside this syllabus – Information you will need:

• How to reach Dr. Klein
  Call first.
• Key themes in this course
• Course requirements
  Article summaries a must – follow guidelines. Guidelines for term paper and extra credit papers too. Plus occasional presentations in class. Special event (required): April 15 at 7:30 pm in Little Theatre.
• Evaluation criteria
  This is a discussion-based course - participation counts.
• Course policies and procedures
  Special accommodations – class cancellation policy
• Using technology in this course
  Blogs, podcasts, and Dr. Klein’s web page
• Required books
  The campus bookstore will keep assigned books on the shelves for only two weeks at the beginning of the term
• Schedule of class assignments
  Required reading and summaries shown for each class session

How to reach Dr. Klein—

Use only the phone if you require assistance. If you have a question or require information about a class you missed, call Dr. Klein the day after class in order to give you ample time to prepare for the next class. Avoid calling on class days or, if possible, the day before class. Call 201-692-1444 (home office).

Make an appointment or confirm, in advance, Dr. Klein’s office hours for a specific day when you want to discuss your progress in this course or to seek more substantial assistance. Hours M 7:30-8:30 pm; T 3:20-4:20 and 7:30-8:30 pm; W 4:30-6:30 pm; and TH 1:00-2:00 and 3:30-5:30 pm, and by appointment in Willis 205G. Hours subject to change.
Use **Email** only to submit extra credit paper proposals. Email address: **dklein@kean.edu**. For any other matter, you must use the phone or make an appointment to see Dr. Klein.

Use **Kean Wise** to determine your final course grade.

**Key themes in this course**

“Naturally, the common people don’t want war, but after all, it is the leaders of a country who determine the policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. This is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.” – Hermann Goering, Nazi leader, founder of the Nazi Gestapo (Secret Police), and commander of the German Air Force, at the postwar Nuremberg trials

Nazism, the German Third Reich that ruled Germany from 1933-45 and most of continental Europe in World War II, offers a glimpse not only into the evolution of German Europe in the 20th century, but also into the emergence of the total state in the modern world. In order to understand these twin phenomena, we will first take a close look at the millennial dream of empire (“Reich”) in German Europe. We will also consider the origins of Hitler’s totalitarian regime against the background of total war (hot and cold), from the beginning of World War I in 1914 to the end of World War II in 1945.

A key aspect of this course will be an inquiry into the Nazis’ resolute mobilization of the masses. To acquire an understanding of this unprecedented and multifaceted program, we will screen period films, evaluate the Nazis’ techniques of mass suggestion, and consider the role of Nazism’s racial ideology.

This is a course based essentially on informed discussion. I will occasionally offer lectures to establish historical context, but the material of this course appears to raise more questions than provide answers. Consequently, we will examine source documents, including films, in order to achieve credible interpretations of pivotal historical events and developments.

This course exists at Kean with three undergraduate courses exploring Germany’s shaping influence on modern European history.

- “History of Germany, 1805 to the Present” (Hist 4238 and 5238) examines the origins and ascendancy of a modern national power
- “Weimar Germany” (Hist 4241) looks at Germany as a nation negotiating the vast repercussions of world war and mass politics
- “The Nazi Era” (Hist 3244 and 5244, and MAHG 5000) considers Germany as an example of extensive, or totalitarian, nationalism.
In addition, Kean University offers “The Holocaust, Genocide, and Modern Humanity” (ID 1800), a course exploring the origins and the virulence of genocide in Cambodia, Rwanda, Europe, and the United States.

Dr. Klein teaches all these courses.

**Course requirements**

An article summary for each assigned document (see the class schedule below). To receive full credit, you must observe the following guidelines:

- Find the “Article Summary Form” in your *Source Reader*, type it into your computer, and submit a hard copy of one completed, typed form for each assigned document at the beginning of the class when it is due. You must limit each summary to one page. Be sure to staple all document summaries together as one set.
- Be sure to complete one summary for each assigned document, even if you don’t understand a particular assignment. Submitting anything less than the number of summaries due each class will result in lower scores (at least 1/3 off) than submitting all summaries that are due even if they are imperfect.
- Even if you can’t complete summaries before they are due, come to class anyway. Missing class means losing the continuity of course themes and missing important announcements as well as assignments.
- Be sure to keep a second copy for class discussions and for information you will need for your term papers. *It is imperative that you bring two summary copies to each class* – occasionally I will ask to see your second copy. Bring both copies, as well as the assigned reading and this syllabus, to each class session.
- You must submit your article summaries only at the beginning of class in order to receive credit. Articles summaries form the basis of class discussion. I will therefore not accept summaries after class begins (rare exceptions at Dr. Klein’s discretion; a 10 percent penalty will apply) or after the class when they are due. Nor will I grade summaries submitted by students who leave class before it ends. This is a strict policy (I do not need to see doctors’ notes); adherence to it will assure productive and rewarding class discussions. Keep in mind that missing one of these deadlines will not affect your final course grade. Eventually complete these summaries anyway: they are essential for your term paper.
- Please note that I will not accept summaries from another student – you must submit only your own work.
- *It is your responsibility to check in with me about your weekly progress in this course.* I will return submitted summaries and provide progress reports only very occasionally. (For help in interpreting Dr. Klein’s comments, consult “Key to Dr. Klein’s Comments on Article Summaries” in your *Source Reader.* If you wish to discuss one or more of your summaries, make an appointment to see me and bring the copies you want to discuss with you.
A special note on the section “Historical Context”: In this section you must succinctly relate each document to its larger historical context. For context, explicitly compare the document you are summing up with other assigned documents already discussed in class. Occasionally, it is appropriate to set the document you are summing up against its historical background; use your notes on class lectures for this.

A special note on films –
- Use the Article Summary Form for films screened in class. For the section requiring quotations, you may paraphrase.
- To submit a summary of a film screened in a class you missed, get a copy of the film, see it, and then submit your summary when it is due – usually at the beginning of the next class. To find a copy of the film, check the library first.

A term paper: See below for guidelines.

Participation is an important part of this course – and indeed a significant, if overlooked, aspect of our present lives – and I consider it just as valuable a skill for honing as reading and writing. For reticent students, here are a few tips:

- You can ask questions anytime for clarification. Very legitimate.
- You can read a passage from your summaries - this always opens up conversations into unexpected and productive directions.
- You can return to a point any time - a lot of us need to think a bit longer about just what to say and feel, but believe that, once we formed an opinion, the "appropriate" time has passed. Any time is appropriate.

Participation in class, in response to the assigned articles, will improve your final grade. For regular and informed participation, I will raise your final grade by one or two increments.

Class presentations I will assign you a class or two in advance to sum up the topics covered in the previous class. If you missed the previous class you can then sum up the readings assignments for that class.

Evaluation criteria

Requirements

| Article summaries * | 50% |
| 10-12 page term paper | 50% |
| Participation (regular and informed) | +1 or 2 increments |
| Class presentations | Required |
| April 15, 7:30 pm lecture in Little Theatre | Summary/double pts. |

* For students who have taken either my History of Germany course or my Weimar Germany course, please note the following guidelines for alternative papers:
Students who have taken my *History of Germany* course will need to submit a 5-page paper, instead of summaries of readings, for each of three parts into which this course is divided. Using all the assigned readings, films, and lectures (for context), respond to the question for Part I, How did war define Germany’s quest for power even before National Socialism came to power?; for Part II, How did race, totalitarianism, and mass politics define the Nazi movement?; and for Part III, How did racial politics during World War II lead to Germany’s self-destruction? Each paper is due when other students will be submitting their summaries of the last assignment of each part. On each paper, type “Alternative Paper” and Part I, Part II, or Part III.

Students who have taken my *Weimar Germany* course will need to submit a 3-page paper, instead of summaries of readings, for Part I and a 3-page paper, instead of summaries of readings, for Part II, weeks 4 and 5. For Part I: What was Germany’s main political aim between 1871 and 1918 – nation-building or international power, or both? For Part II (weeks 4 and 5): How did WWI become a war of words during and after the war? The first paper is due when other students will be submitting their summaries of Week 3 assignments. The second paper is due, along with a summary of *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* film, when other students will be submitting their summaries of Week 5 assignments. On each paper, type “Alternative Paper” and Part I or Part II (weeks 4 and 5).

Please note –

- Please see Dr. Klein at the beginning of the term to establish your alternative track.
- For alternative papers, you must observe citation protocol - be sure to consult the paragraph below, “Style Counts.”
- Bring to each class a copy of each summary you wrote for me in either the German history or Weimar history course. This will significantly support your involvement in class discussions. Participation in this class counts a lot.
- You are responsible for keeping track of alternative-paper due dates.

*Term paper “History Lessons: The Power of Political Persuasion.”*

- Just after World War II Nazi leader Hermann Goering observed cynically, “It is always a simple matter to drag people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. This is easy. [Even if people don’t want war] all you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in every country.” (For the complete passage, see the first page of this syllabus.) Divide your paper into four parts, using only assigned readings for the first two parts, only external readings for the third part, and both kinds of readings for the last part:
- Show how the Nazis used propaganda to denounce “traitors” and promote loyalty.
- Show how Bismarck, Treitschke, and Wagner amplified social conflict or used war to compel obedience and defeat dissent, and answer the question, What are the differences and similarities between the way 19th and 20th German leaders used war or social conflict to achieve political power?
- In a conclusion, answer the following question: Is it true, as Goering claimed, that sowing social discord – the politics of fear – worked the same way in the Second and Third Reichs to achieve effective political control?

- This paper requires ample quotations from 10 or more assigned readings plus all films screened in class in support of your clearly stated argument.
- Use class lectures for historical context. You need not explicitly cite class lectures, but you must use the information from them for thematic coherence.
- Be sure to consult the “Style Counts” paragraph below for guidelines on source citations.
- By participating in the “VALE Reciprocal Borrowing” program, graduate students who need to consult external sources can borrow books from other New Jersey academic libraries. To participate in this program, obtain a signed VALE Reciprocal Borrowing application form, available at the Kean University Library, before borrowing at one of the participating libraries. Contact: Kimberly Fraone at 7-4616 or at kfraone@kean.edu prior to requesting an application form.
- Length: 10-12 pages plus a works-cited page.
- Undergrads: 12 pages plus a works-cited page; use only assigned readings (skip the third part).
- Due: May 6th.

Lecture on Thursday, April 15 at 7:30 pm Renowned scholar Hasia Diner will present a lecture that is directly relevant to this course. Entitled “Not a Silent Generation: Post-War American Jews and the Memory of the Holocaust,” Dr. Diner will explore the surprising American engagement with the Holocaust even before the landmark 1961 Eichmann trial. Attendance at this lecture is mandatory and will be monitored. Mark your calendars now. Use the summary template and submit a summary of the lecture at the beginning of your next class. The score on your summary will be doubled.

Extra credit papers - Students interested in submitting papers for extra credit (1-2 additional increments for solid work) on a topic of their own choice must first email a two-paragraph proposal to Dr. Klein and receive his approval. You must email your proposal at least two weeks before your term papers are due.

For extra-credit-paper guidelines, you must consult “Writing Effective Essays” in your Source Reader, paying special attention to the section at the end called “An Important Note on Extra Credit Papers,” as well as to the section on the first page called “Constructing a Successful Essay.” These guidelines include instructions on sources (your paper must quote amply from two assigned readings for comparison), how to cite
sources. procedures for integrating course themes into your extra-credit paper, and the paper’s length.

*Style counts:* Before writing each of your papers review style guidelines located in your *Source Reader* called “Writing Effective Essays” paying special attention to the section, “Constructing a Successful Essay.” These guidelines include proper form for mandatory in-text citations and for the additional mandatory “Works Cited” page.

**Course policies and procedures**

Please observe customary classroom protocol by arriving to class and submitting original work on time (late and plagiarized papers will incur penalties) and – this is important – remaining in class throughout the period (avoid making appointments during class hours). Please do not use your cell phone/PDA device or consume food during class (drinks are acceptable).

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the university’s academic integrity policy and its codes of student conduct. Consult, respectively, www.kean.edu/forms/AcademicIntegrity.pdf and www.kean.edu/~conduct.

Students requiring special accommodations who are registered with disability services must see Dr. Klein during the first week of the semester in order to make appropriate arrangements.

Due to a fall, 2009, Center for Disease Control (CDC) alert regarding the H1N1 (flu) virus, the university is asking students who have a fever over 100’ and a sore throat and cough to remain home until you see improvement. Please remember that missing one or two article summary deadlines will not affect your final course grade. Eventually complete these summaries anyway: they are essential for your term paper. Also keep up with reading assignments: Consult a classmate or call Dr. Klein for these assignments.

Class will not meet on Tuesdays, March 16 and March 30, and on Wednesdays, March 3, March 17, and March 31. Class will not meet on other possible dates as needed and announced in class. For cancellations due to unforeseen weather conditions or other circumstances, please note:

- This class will not meet due to unanticipated circumstances only if the university announces that it is closed or will open after the hour when our class customarily meets. Consult the Kean University home web page, or receive text messages and landline and email alerts (you must first register at www.mir3.com/kean) to determine if the university is open or closed, or if it will open later in the day – you need not contact me directly. No matter how prohibitive the weather is, if the university is open we will meet and I will collect article summaries.

- If the university is closed and we cannot meet, there will not be any new assignment for the next scheduled class. Review your completed assignment that
was due for the university-canceled class in preparation for the next scheduled class.

**Using technology in this course**

The Student Technology Laboratory is open for students on a walk-in basis. Its primary purpose is to provide technological support to all Kean University undergraduate and graduate students, an especially useful advantage when writing extra-credit papers. The STL is located in the Nancy Thompson Library, Room 133, and can be reached by dialing 74669 from an on-campus telephone or 908-737-4669 from an off-campus phone; or by sending an e-mail message to Holly Hoffman, the Student Technology Lab administrator, at hhoffman@kean.edu.

**Required books**

The books listed below are available for purchase at the Kean University bookstore. These books will be returned to their publishers two weeks after the start of this course. For current prices sold at the university bookstore, call 908-737-5230. For discount prices, including prices for used books, check online (allow one week for delivery) or posted notes around the university.

Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice and Seven Other Stories*  
Knopf 0679722068

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*  
Houghton Mifflin 0395925037

Dennis B. Klein, *The Nazi Era: A Source Reader*  
Kean University 2008

Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife*  
Harvard 0674576403

W.G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*  
Random 0375504842

**Supplies**

Nothing required, except a stapler (which you will need for your summaries).

**Schedule of Class Assignments**

*The class schedule amounts to a course outline and is essential for helping you organize key themes and supporting sources. Please bring it to each class and consult it regularly. Changes to the class schedule will be announced in class. Students who miss class are responsible for ascertaining subsequent class meetings and assignments by consulting*
another student calling Dr. Klein. Please note: since this is a discussion-based course, weeks noted in the schedule are approximate.

SR = Source Reader. Please note that some documents in the Source Reader do not show page numbers, even though the syllabus and our class discussions will occasionally refer to specific pages. Number pages on your own, starting each document with page 1. Also note that it is imperative that you bring your Source Reader to each class, even if there are no assignments from it for any particular class.

* = Look for an asterisk after selected reading assignments indicating the existence of important background notes, which you will find toward the beginning of your Source Reader. Without reading these notes you will be woefully lost.

**Part I** Empire, War, and State: Germany’s Ascendancy

**Week 1**
Introduction: Discussion of course, books and assignments

Lecture: History and Memory: The German Struggle for the Holy Roman Empire (962-1871)

**Week 2** The “Sonderweg” Question

Readings:

In class:
4. “The Use and Abuse of History” Reflections on the Place of the Third Reich in German History—The Historical Relationship Between Bismarck and Hitler” (SR/In-Class)

Lecture: Weltpolitik: Germany and the European Balance of Powers (1871-1918)

**Week 3** Total War and the Politics of Redemption (World War I)

Readings:
5. Ernst Junger, *The Storm of Steel: From the Diary of a German Storm Troop Officer on the Western Front* (1919) (SR)

**Part II** Mass Politics in Weimar and Nazi Germany (1919-1938)

Lecture: Weimar Culture and the Culture of War (1-6)

**Week 4** Militant Politics in Weimar Germany

Readings:

Lecture: Thomas Mann and Fritz Lang: The Specter of Political Manipulation

**Week 5** Hypnotic Power and Its Discontents

Readings: 10. Mann, “Mario and the Magician” (finish: 144-178)

Film: 11. *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1932) (120 min.)

Lecture: The Rise of National Socialism (6-7)

**Week 6** Gleichschaltung: The Totalitarian State


Film: 14. *Hitler Youth Quex* (1933) (110 min.)

**Week 7** The Psychology of Totalitarianism

Readings: 15. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Volume II (1926), Chapters 1,4,6,8

Film: 17. *Olympia: Festival of the Nations* (1938) (115 min./ excerpts)

Lecture: The Consolidation of Power (7-12)

**Part III** Racial Politics and Mass Destruction (1933-1945)

**Week 8** The Racial State

19. “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” (c. 1898) (SR)
20. First Racial Definition (1933) (SR)
22. Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor (1935) (SR)

Lecture: The Art of Politics: Antisemitic propaganda (powerpoint)

**Week 9** The Racial Empire (1938-45)

Film: 26. Jew Suss (1940) (98 min.) or The Eternal Jew (1940)

Lecture: Race and War (12-21)

**Week 10** World War II and the Final Solution

Readings: 27. Himmler, Speech before SS Group Leaders, Posen, Poland (1943) (SR)
29. Goldhagen Vs. Browning: Antisemitism and the Holocaust (handout)

Lecture: Race and Politics: The Holocaust and the German Quest for World Empire [Bergen, 6-8]

**Week 11** Germany’s end time: Escapism and self-transcendence (time permitting)


Film: 31. Baron Munchhausen (1943) (time permitting)

**Week 12** The rubble years: Final reflections


EC papers: In-class reports on extra-credit papers

Term papers and approved extra credit papers are due by 5 pm on May 6th in Dr. Klein’s office mailbox (Willis Hall 205). Hard copy only – no email. Absolutely no extensions. Be sure to include a cover page showing your name, the name of this course, type of paper (term paper or extra credit), and the submission date.

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