



**Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**Department of German**  
*GERM 3450 / POLI 3449 / HIST 3059*  
*CONFRONTING FASCISM*  
Fall 2023

**Instructor:** *Dr. Julia Poertner* *J.Poertner@dal.ca*  
*902-494-1094* *McCain Building 3052*

**Office Hours:** *Mondays 12:30pm-1:30pm*  
*Thursdays 11:00am-12:00pm (or by appointment)*

**Lectures:** *Wednesdays & Fridays 10:05am-11:25am*  
*Kenneth C. Rowe Management, Room 1016*

**Brightspace:** *<https://dal.brightspace.com/d2l/home/285412>*

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## **ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

### **Course Description**

This interdisciplinary course focuses on writers, artists, filmmakers, and intellectuals whose work responded to the rise of fascism in the 20th century. Primarily, they confronted fascism and critiqued it, hence the title of the course. In 1935, appalled by the political and social changes that deformed the culturally thriving Weimar Republic into Hitler's Third Reich, German playwright Bertolt Brecht began writing a compilation of theatrical scenes inspired by his times – an artistic project created “in order to see this people, compiled of what sort of men, in which kind of condition, with what type of thoughts, that [Hitler] could gather them under his flag.” In this seminar, our inquiry will follow and expand on Brecht's line of questioning in order to gain insight to the rise of fascism as a new political mass movement that would, like no other, shape and darken the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Taking into account the movement's European roots, which would culminate in Germany, we will query the political, ideological, and antisemitic practices of fascism in order to gain a broader understanding of its national and global impact. Our historical trajectory will lead us from the early theoretical conceptions of this new kind of nationalist ideology to an exploration of the life and suffering within the Third Reich, to the atrocities of the Holocaust, and toward post-war attempts of historical Aufarbeitung [working-through the past] in and beyond Germany. Finally, we will discuss the lasting necessity to continue this work of working-through and contemporary concerns that democratic societies face in view of neo-fascist movements.

## Learning Outcomes

Through an interdisciplinary exploration of artistic and philosophical works impacted by the rise of fascism during the 20th century, this course offers a broad introduction to the ideology and politics of fascism, its impact on culture and society, as well as an outlook on the lasting necessity to keep working through the past in order to recognize and prevent its recurrence in contemporary democracies. A primary learning goal is the sharpening of analytical and close reading skills that support a critical approach to political, historical, and cultural objects; moreover, you will get acquainted with the broader framework of German Fascism and learn how to analyze and interpret cultural works of the era in their historical context.

## Assignments

- weekly **preparation** for and **active engagement** with the class
- **attendance** and **participation** in in-class discussions
- **timeline project**: 500–600-word blog entry
- **midterm essay**: independent analysis of class materials discussed so far (750-1000 words)
- **final essay**: independent research project (1000-1200 words)
  - focus of both papers: close reading & analysis, informed by class discussion, yet showing the ability to independently engage with the discussed materials
  - you will need to submit a proposal for your final essay

## Assessment

Attendance & Participation	15%	
Timeline Project	15%	September 29
Midterm Essay	25%	October 23
Final Essay Proposal	10%	November 20
Final Essay	35%	December 13

## Dalhousie Common Grade Scale for conversion of numerical grades to final letter grades:

<b>A+</b> (90-100)	<b>B+</b> (77-79)	<b>C+</b> (65-69)	<b>D</b> (50-54)
<b>A</b> (85-89)	<b>B</b> (73-76)	<b>C</b> (60-64)	<b>F</b> (0-49)
<b>A-</b> (80-84)	<b>B-</b> (70-72)	<b>C-</b> (55-59)	

## Course Materials

All readings will be provided as PDFs on Brightspace

## Attendance & Participation

All readings are mandatory. Weekly preparation and active engagement in in-class discussions are fundamental for a successful discussion-focussed seminar.

The [Student Declaration of Absence Form](#) is available for *Confronting Fascism* and replaces sick notes for absences of three (3) days or fewer that result in missed or late academic requirements. You can submit the Student Declaration of Absence Form for this course through Brightspace. To submit the form through Brightspace, click "Academic Support" in the top navigation, and then click "Student Self-Declaration of Absence". A list of your courses that accept the Student Self-Declaration of Absence Form will be available on this page. Please contact me if you have any questions.

## Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Generative writing tools like Chat GPT, Google Translate and QuillBot (etc.) are not permitted in FASS classes, unless explicitly allowed by the course instructor. However, you may use AI-(artificial intelligence) driven tools as an assistive strategy to support and enhance your learning, but remember that the objective is for you to acquire the competencies of this course, so that you can independently produce the outcomes. You are responsible for all work that you produce. If the work that you produce is suspected to misrepresent your own competencies, you may be asked to complete a supplemental assessment to evaluate your mastery of course outcomes.

## Schedule

- Week 1: September 6-8: Introduction & Course outline**  
Riemen, Rob: "The Eternal Return of Fascism" (2018, p. 17-59)
- Week 2: September 13-15 What is Fascism?**  
Introduction: Paxton, Robert O.: *The Anatomy of Fascism* (2004), ch. 1 (p. 3-23);  
Eco, Umberto: *Ur-Fascism* (1995)
- Week 3: September 20-22 The Origins of Totalitarianism**  
Arendt, Hannah: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), ch. 12 (p. 389-419) & ch. 9 (p. 290-302)
- Week 4: September 27-29 What is German? (I)**  
Cobley, Evelyn: *Temptations of Faust* (2002), ch. 1 "Neo-Romantic Roots of German Fascism" (p. 11-55)

## September 29 Timeline Project Due

- Week 5: October 4-6 What is German? (II)**  
Klemperer, Victor: *The Language of The Third Reich* (1947), [excerpts]  
Adorno, T. W., et. al.: *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), ch. 1 (p. 1-27);
- Week 6: October 11-13 Life in the Third Reich**  
Brecht, Bertolt: *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich* (1935-43) [excerpts]
- Week 7: October 18-20 Resistance & Punishment**  
Scholl, Inge: *The White Rose* (1952) [excerpts];  
Rothemund, Marc: *Sophie Scholl – The Final Days* (2005) [film]

## October 23: Midterm Essay Due

- Week 8: October 25-27 The Aesthetics of Fascism (I)**  
Hitler, Adolf: *Speech at the Opening of the House of German Art in Munich* (1937); Stollmann, Rainer / Smith, Ronald L.: *Fascist Politics as a Total Work of Art* (1978)
- Week 9: November 1-3 The Aesthetics of Fascism (II)**  
Riefenstahl, Leni: *Triumph of the Will* (1935) [film]; Sontag, Susan: *Fascinating Fascism* (1974)
- Week 10: November 8-10 The Holocaust**

Améry, Jean: *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities* (1964) [excerpts]; Heger, Heinz: *The Men with the Pink Triangle: The True Life-And-Death Story of Homosexuals in the Nazi Death Camps* (1972) [excerpts]

**November 13-17** **Fall Study Break**

**November 20** **Final Essay Proposal Due**

**Week 11: November 22-24** **Aufarbeitung [working-through the past]**  
Arendt, Hannah: *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), Ch. 1-3 (p. 3-55) & Ch. 14 (p. 220-233); Eyal Sivan: *The Specialist* (1999) [film]

**Week 12: November 29-Dec. 1** **Neo Fascism**  
Evans, Richard J: *Why Trump isn't a Fascist* (2021); Paxton, Robert O.: *I've hesitated to call Donald Trump a Fascist. Until Now* (2021)  
Koehler, Daniel: *Right-Wing Terrorism in the 21st Century: The 'National Socialist Underground' and the History of Terror from the Far Right in Germany* (2017), ch. 5 (p. 157-188); Akin, Fatih: *In the Fade* (2017) [film]

**December 13** **Final Essay Due**

**Important Dates in the Academic Year:** [https://www.dal.ca/academics/important\\_dates.html](https://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html)

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## SECTION B: UNIVERSITY POLICIES, STATEMENTS, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES for SUPPORT

**University statements:** This course is governed by the academic rules & regulations set forth on the University Calendar & Senate. (<https://academiccalendar.dal.ca/catalog/viewcatalog.aspx>)

- **Territorial Acknowledgement:**

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

- **Internationalization**

At Dalhousie, 'thinking and acting globally' enhances the quality and impact of education, supporting learning that is "interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, global in reach, and orientated toward solving problems that extend across national borders." <https://www.dal.ca/aboutdal/internationalization.html>

- **Academic Integrity**

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is

required to follow to ensure academic integrity. (read more: [http://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/academicintegrity.html](http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academicintegrity.html))

- **Accessibility**

The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for matters related to student accessibility and accommodation. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion please contact the Student Accessibility Centre ([https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/accessibility.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html)). Your classrooms may contain accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in place, undisturbed, so that students who require their use will be able to fully participate.

- **Conduct in the Classroom – Culture of Respect**

Substantial and constructive dialogue on challenging issues is an important part of academic inquiry and exchange. It requires willingness to listen and tolerance of opposing points of view. Consideration of individual differences and alternative viewpoints is required of all class members, towards each other, towards instructors, and towards guest speakers. While expressions of differing perspectives are welcome and encouraged, the words and language used should remain within acceptable bounds of civility and respect.

- **Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect**

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2). (read more: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>)

- **Student Code of Conduct**

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. (read more: [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-studentconduct.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-studentconduct.html))

- **Fair Dealing policy**

The Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Policy provides guidance for the limited use of copyright protected material without the risk of infringement and without having to seek the permission of copyright owners. It is intended to provide a balance between the rights of creators and the rights of users at Dalhousie. (read more: [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy-.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/fair-dealing-policy-.html))

- **Student Use of Course Materials**

These course materials are designed for use as part of Confronting Fascism course at Dalhousie University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as books, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law. Copying this course material for distribution (e.g. uploading to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law.