

# Confronting Fascism

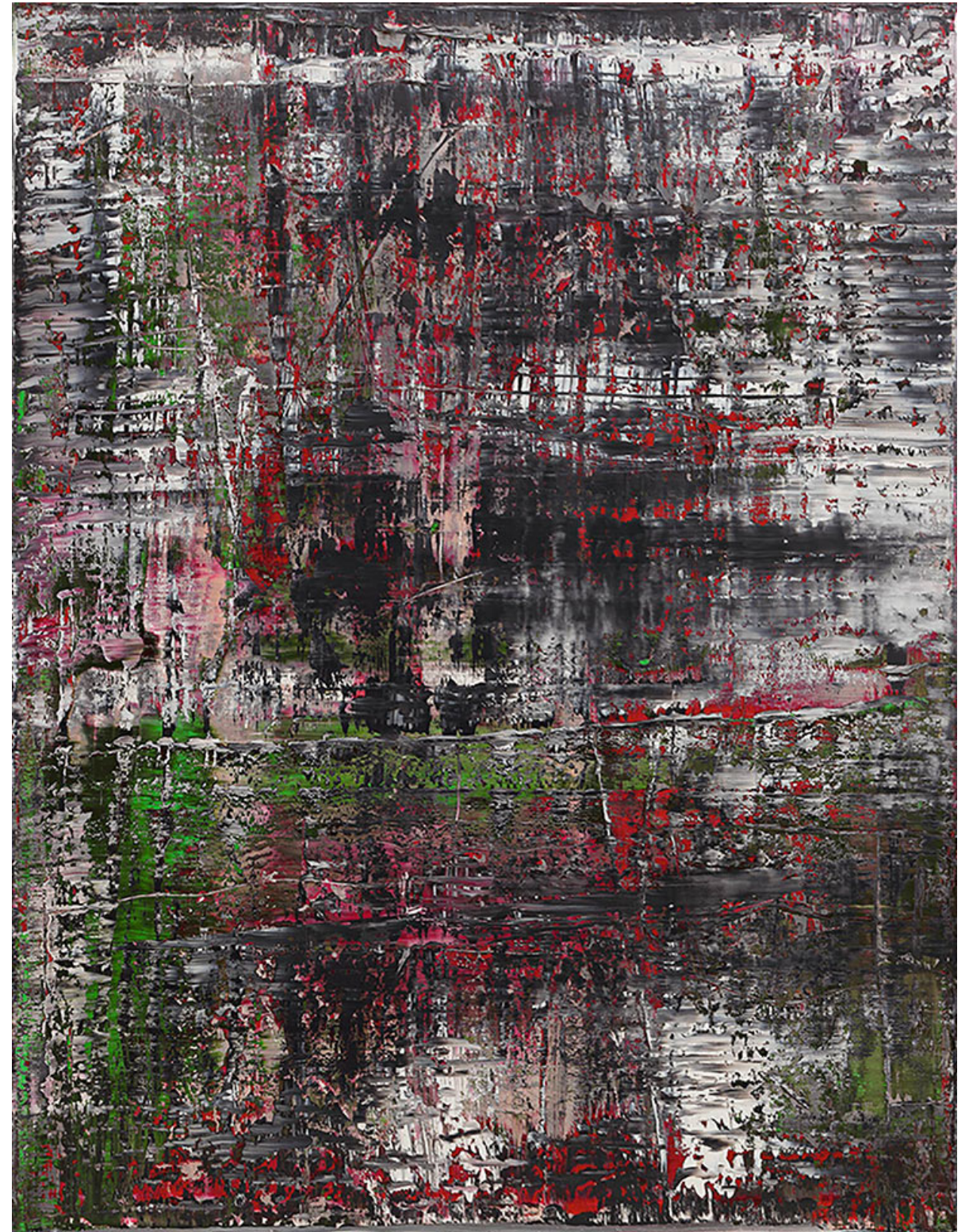
**Dr. Rebecca Haubrich**

T - R, 16.05-17.25 pm

## Course Description

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 20th 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. Focus of our interdisciplinary examination will be the works of writers, philosophers, artists, and filmmakers whose works have been variously impacted by the politics and social dynamics of their time. 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, its deterministic notions of art, gender, and familial life, 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.



Gerhard Richter: *Birkenau* (2014)



## 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.



*Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Eisenman, Berlin)*

## Course Organization

- face-to-face-delivery
- all readings will be provided as PDFs, except for Art Spiegelman, *Maus* (to be acquired by mid October)
- contact: [rebecca.haubrich@dal.ca](mailto:rebecca.haubrich@dal.ca)
- office hours: Tue., 3-4 pm (and by appointment)

## Assignments

- weekly **preparation** for and **participation** in class
- completion of reading / viewing assignments will be checked through occasional **pop quizzes**
- **timeline project**: 500-600 word blog entry, in-class presentation
- **midterm paper**: independent analysis of class materials discussed so far (750-1000 words)
- **final paper**: independent research project (1200-1700 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 be required an individual meeting with me to plan the topic of your papers

## Grading

- |                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| • Preparation and participation: | 20% |
| • Asynchronous activities:       | 25% |
| • Writing Assignments:           | 30% |
| • Final paper:                   | 25% |

### \*\*\* Trigger Warning \*\*\*

The content and discussion in this course will necessarily engage with racism, anti-Semitism, and violence. Authentic texts, video and image material will be emotionally and intellectually challenging to engage with. In order to discuss this potentially disturbing content appropriately and productively, I ask all students to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity. If you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to this material, either with the class or with me, I welcome such discussion as an appropriate part of our coursework.

Date			
	<b>Week 1: What is Fascism?</b>		<b>Week 8: The Holocaust (II)</b>
<b>Tue., Sept. 7</b>	Introduction	<b>Tue., Oct. 26</b>	Resnais, Alain: <i>Night and Fog</i> (1956) [film]; Didi-Huberman, Georges: <i>Images in Spite of All</i> (2003) [excerpts]
<b>Thu., Sept. 9</b>	Paxton, Robert O.: <i>The Anatomy of Fascism</i> (2004), ch. 1 (p. 3-23); Eco, Umberto: <i>Ur-Fascism</i> (1995)	<b>Thu., Oct. 28</b>	Didi-Huberman, cont.; Spiegelman, Art: <i>Maus</i> (1980)
	<b>Week 2: The Origins of Totalitarianism</b>		<b>Week 9: The Holocaust (III)</b>
<b>Tue., Sept. 14</b>	Arendt, Hannah: <i>The Origins of Totalitarianism</i> (1951), ch. 12 (p. 389-419) & ch. 9 (p. 290-302)	<b>Tue., Nov. 2</b>	Spiegelman, cont.
<b>Thu., Sept. 16</b>	Arendt, cont.	<b>Thu., Nov. 4</b>	Spiegelman, cont.
	<b>Week 3: What is German?</b>	<b>Nov. 8-11: Fall Study Break</b>	
<b>Tue., Sept. 21</b>	Adorno, T. W., et. al.: <i>The Authoritarian Personality</i> (1950), ch. 1 (p. 1-27); Ross, Alex: <i>The Frankfurt School knew Trump was coming</i> (2016)		<b>Week 10: Aufarbeitung [working-through the past] (I)</b>
<b>Thu., Sept. 23</b>	Klemperer, Victor: <i>The Language of The Third Reich</i> (1947), [excerpts]	<b>Tue., Nov. 9</b>	Arendt, Hannah: <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i> (1963), Ch. 1-3 (p. 3-55) & Ch. 14 (p. 220-233)
	<b>Week 4: Timeline</b>	<b>Thu., Nov. 11</b>	Eyal Sivan: <i>The Specialist</i> (1999) [film]
<b>Tue., Sept. 28</b>	Klemperer, cont.		<b>Week 11: Aufarbeitung (II)</b>
<b>Thu., Sept. 30</b>	<b>[presentations] timeline project</b>	<b>Tue., Nov. 16</b>	Arendt, Hannah: <i>Auschwitz on Trial</i> (1966)
	<b>Week 5: Life in the Third Reich</b>	<b>Thu., Nov. 18</b>	Hamacher, Werner: <i>Working through Work</i> (1996)
<b>Tue., Oct. 5</b>	Brecht: <i>Fear and Misery in the Third Reich</i> (1935-43) [excerpts]		<b>Week 12: Neo Fascism (Germany)</b>
<b>Thu., Oct. 7</b>	Scholl, Inge: <i>The White Rose</i> (1952) [excerpts]; Rothmund, Marc: <i>Sophie Scholl – The Final Days</i> (2005) [film]	<b>Tue., Nov. 23</b>	Koehler, Daniel: <i>Right-Wing Terrorism in the 21st Century: The 'National Socialist Underground' and the History of Terror from the Fra Right in Germany</i> (2017), ch. 5 (p. 157-188)
	<b>Week 6: The Aesthetics of Fascism</b>	<b>Thu., Nov. 25</b>	Akin, Fatih: <i>In the Fade</i> (2017) [film]
<b>Tue., Oct. 12</b>	Hitler, Adolf: <i>Speech at the Opening of the House of German Art in Munich</i> (1937); Stollmann, Rainer / Smith, Ronald L.: <i>Fascist Politics as a Total Work of Art</i> (1978)		<b>Week 13: Neo-Fascism (North America)</b>
<b>Thu., Oct. 14</b>	Riefenstahl, Leni: <i>Triumph of the Will</i> (1935) [film]; Sontag, Susan: <i>Fascinating Fascism</i> (1974)	<b>Tue., Nov. 30</b>	Salmon, Christian: <i>Trump, fascism, and the construction of "the people": An interview with Judith Butler</i> (2016); Evans, Richard J: <i>Why Trump isn't a Fascist</i> (2021); Paxton, Robert O.: <i>I've hesitated to call Donald Trump a Fascist. Until Now</i> (2021)
	<b>Week 7: The Holocaust (I)</b>	<b>Thu., Dec. 2</b>	<b>Final Paper Workshop [final paper due: Wed. Dec. 8]</b>
<b>Tue., Oct. 19</b>	<b>Midterm paper due.</b> Améry Jean: <i>At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities</i> (1964) [excerpts]		
<b>Thu., Oct. 21</b>	Heger, Heinz: <i>The Men with the Pink Triangle: The True Life-And-Death Story of Homosexuals in the Nazi Death Camps</i> (1972) [excerpts]		

## University Policies & Statements

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This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and the Senate. Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

**Academic Integrity:** At Dalhousie, we are guided in all of 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 of 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: [http://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/academic-integrity.html](http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html)

**Accessibility:** The Student Accessibility Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students on the Halifax campus who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD): [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/accessibility.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.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: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-life-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-life-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html)

**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. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity and dedicated to achieving equity. We are committed to being a respectful and inclusive community where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our university prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness: <https://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>

### University Policies and Programs:

- Important Dates in the Academic Year: [http://www.dal.ca/academics/important\\_dates.html](http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html)
- Dalhousie Grading Practices Policy: [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html)
- Grade Appeal Process: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/appealing-a-grade.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/appealing-a-grade.html)
- Sexualized Violence Policy: [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/health-and-safety/sexualized-violence-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/health-and-safety/sexualized-violence-policy.html)
- Scent-Free Program: <http://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

### Learning and Support Resources:

- General Academic Support – Advising: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html)