

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Course Syllabus
Department of German
GERM 3450 / POLI 3449 / HIST 3059
CONFRONTING FASCISM
Fall 2022

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

Office Hours: *Tuesdays 3:00pm-4:00pm*
Thursdays 11:00am-12:30pm

Lectures: *Mondays & Wednesdays 1:05pm-2:25pm*
Killam Library 2600

Brightspace: *<https://dal.brightspace.com/d2l/home/232299>*

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 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. 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%
Midterm Essay	25%
Final Essay Proposal	10%
Final Essay	35%

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

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

Course Materials

All readings will be provided as PDFs on Brightspace

Schedule

Week 1: September 7:	Introduction & Course outline Timothy Snyder on Language and “Not-Even-Fascism”
Week 2: September 12-14	What is Fascism? Introduction: Paxton, Robert O.: <i>The Anatomy of Fascism</i> (2004), ch. 1 (p. 3-23); Eco, Umberto: <i>Ur-Fascism</i> (1995)
Week 3: September 19-21	The Origins of Totalitarianism

Arendt, Hannah: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), ch. 12 (p. 389-419) & ch. 9 (p. 290-302)

Week 4: September 26-28

What is German? (I)

Adorno, T. W., et. al.: *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), ch. 1 (p. 1-27);
Ross, Alex: *The Frankfurt School knew Trump was coming* (2016)

September 29

Timeline Project Due

Week 5: October 3-5

What is German? (II)

Klemperer, Victor: *The Language of The Third Reich* (1947), [excerpts]

October 10:

Thanksgiving

Week 6: October 12

Life in the Third Reich

Brecht, Bertolt: *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich* (1935-43) [excerpts]

Week 7: October 17-19

Resistance & Punishment

Scholl, Inge: *The White Rose* (1952) [excerpts];
Rothmund, Marc: *Sophie Scholl – The Final Days* (2005) [film]

October 24:

Midterm Essay Due

Week 8: October 24-26

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: October 31-Nov. 2

The Aesthetics of Fascism (II)

Riefenstahl, Leni: *Triumph of the Will* (1935) [film]; Sontag, Susan: *Fascinating Fascism* (1974)

November 7-11

Fall Study Break

Week 10: November 14-16

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 21

Final Essay Proposal Due

Week 11: November 21-23

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 28-30

Neo Fascism (Germany)

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]

Week 13: December 5 & 6

Neo Fascism (North America)

Salmon, Christian: *Trump, fascism, and the construction of "the people": An interview with Judith Butler* (2016); 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)

December 12

Final Essay Due

Important Dates in the Academic Year: https://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html

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)

- **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). 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)

- **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)

- **Student Use of Course Materials**

These course materials are designed for use as part of the Beginner German 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.