



HISTORY 333

20th-Century German Culture and Politics

History 333 covers the central role of Germany in the modern world, including its politics and culture!

Not only was Germany at the center of the First World War, the rise of Totalitarianism, the Second World War, the Holocaust, and the Cold War--German writers, artists, composers and filmmakers responded to all of these developments by constructing modernist responses to modernity.

Great literature, art, music, and films provide the best way to *feel* the impact of 20th century history, and this *blended* course will raise your understanding of all these.

Taking advantage of many of the new technologies available to educators today, this course involves independent study of online lectures and course materials (allowing you to go through them on your own time, at your own pace) , combined with individual and in class discussion of these materials with Professor Dennis.

As a result, this course will constitute a rich synthesis of learning methods: full video lectures and, essentially, an "honors" discussion section with the professor. This is an exciting and effective model for integrating online and in-class teaching of History and other fields.

COURSE PROCEDURE FOR *BLENDED* COURSE

Online Lectures

Through the week, according to the course schedule, you will be asked to *watch and listen* to recorded lectures, in the form of videos that cover key visual, literary, and musical examples. **You will be able to watch and study these lectures on your own time, when and wherever you wish. You will also be able to stop, repeat, and review the lectures as you require, allowing you to take much clearer notes and incorporate that information into your study of the course materials.**

Online Forum Participation:

After watching the Video Lectures and completing the quiz, you are required to post questions and comments based on your study of these materials on the Course Unit Forum in the Sakai site.

These posts will be the basis for your MAIN GRADE, the online Forum Contribution Grade.

Discussion Sections

Given that you will have experienced and studied the course lectures online, on your own schedule, we will be able to use class meeting times in order to more freely explore related issues, answer questions, discuss further materials, and generally fine tune what you have learned via the lecture videos.

You will have made your Forum entries by this time, so I will take that feedback into account in preparing these sections, concentrating on questions or issues that you have raised.

Optional Take Home Exams

The Midterm and Final Exams (Papers) are OPTIONAL--each counting as up to a potential of 4 points of "extra credit" on your overall grade.

Extra Credit Cultural Activities

Chicago institutions consistently include German cultural events related to our course. See the Reader or similar arts and culture listings for ideas. Extra-credit can be earned with proof of attendance and a brief essay explaining in a couple of paragraphs how the experience related to our work.

COURSE UNITS

Lecture Videos may be previewed at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWgB2EUCAT5xLa2jnKkicd_Hvx4aG8E14

UNITS 01-03 Introduction - 18th and 19th Century German Background [1770-1900]

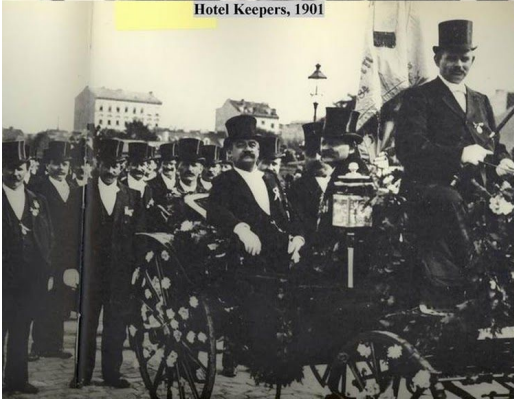
Here are some of the creative geniuses you will learn to know and appreciate, along with German historical events. How many can you identify already?



UNITS 04-06 : Wilhelmine Era-Heinrich Mann, The Subject [1900-1914]



Hotel Keepers, 1901



UNITS 07-09 WWI and Erich Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front [1914-18]



UNITS 10-12: Weimar Culture and Politics - Alfred Doebelin, Berlin Alexanderplatz
[1918-33]



UNITS 13-17: Nazism-The Third Reich-Hitler, Mein Kampf [1918-33]



UNITS 18-19: The Holocaust-Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz [1933-45]



UNITS 20-21: West Germany [BRD] and Rainer Fassbinder, Marriage of Maria Braun [1945-1989]



UNIT 22: East Germany (DDR) and The Lives of Others [1945-1989]



UNIT 23: Die Wende (The Transition) 1989-90



SAMPLE VIDEOS AND UNITS:

VIDEO 02 18th and 19th Century German Background A



IMAGES

- [Classicism.htm](#)
- [Storm & Stress.htm](#)
- [Romanticism.htm](#)
- [Biedermeier.htm](#)
- [Realism.htm](#)
- [Impressionism.htm](#)
- [Gruenderzeit.htm](#)
- [Volkish.htm](#)
- [Symbolism.htm](#)
- [Secession.htm](#)
- [Expressionism.htm](#)
- [Abstraction.htm](#)

VIDEO 04 Wilhelmine Era-Mann-The Subject A



PRIMARY SOURCES COVERED

Heinrich Mann, *The Subject (Der Untertan)*

MAIN THEMES

Search for Authority

Search for Community/Unity

Anti-Semitism

Rejection of Modernity

Militarization of Society/Culture

Cult of the Emperor

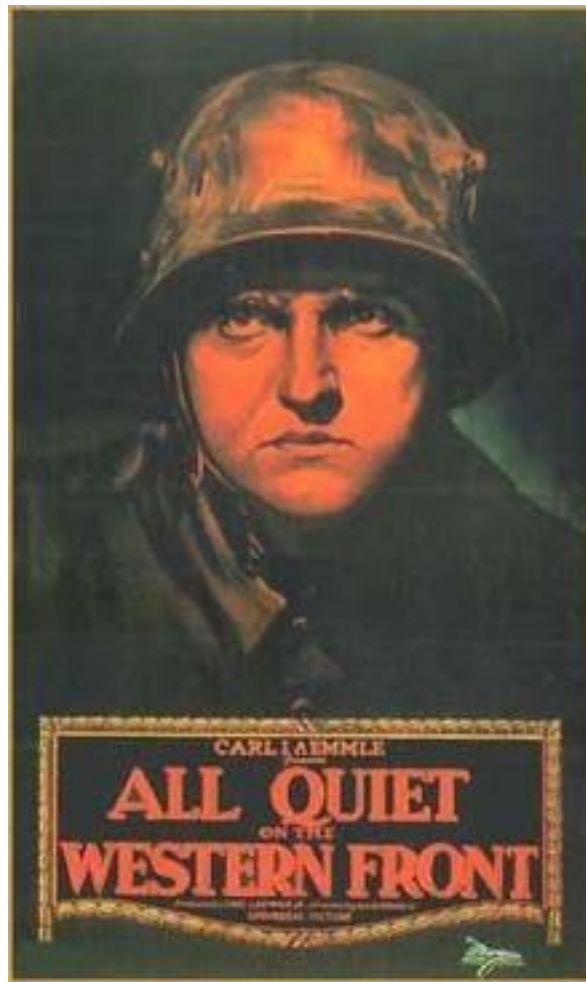
Liberal/Socialist Critique or Opposition

Anti-Liberalism/Socialism

“Romantic” National Culture

War Enthusiasm

VIDEO 07 WWI and Remarque Intro A



PRIMARY SOURCES COVERED

Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front

Ernst Friedrich, Krieg dem Kriege [War Against War]

Ernst Juenger, Storms of Steel (text)

MAIN THEMES

War Enthusiasm/Volunteerism

Value of Front Experience

Camaraderie

Leadership Principle

Militarization of Society/Culture

Impact of Technological Warfare

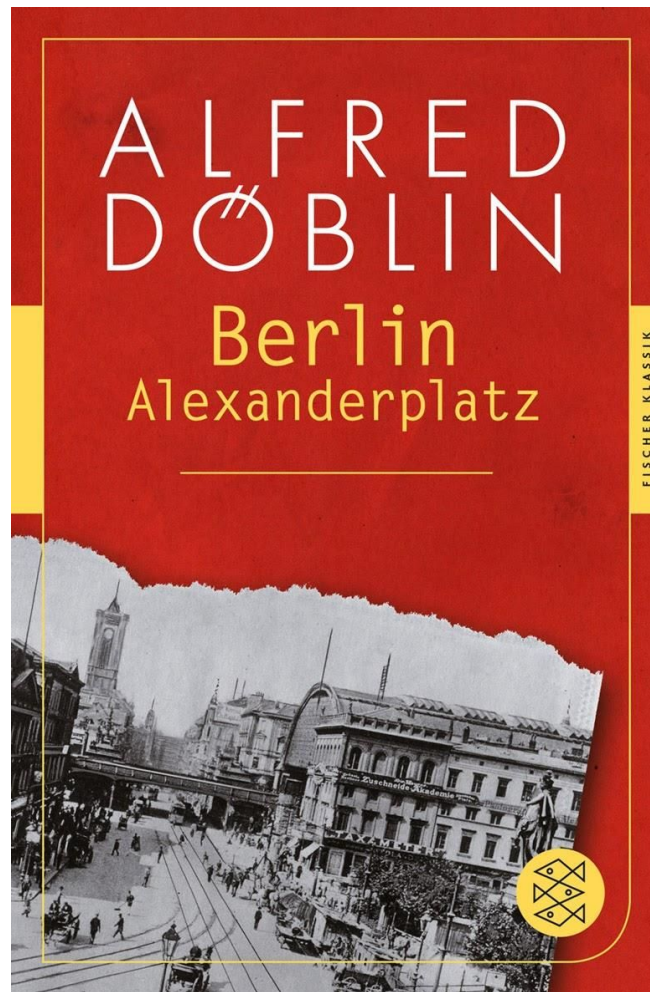
Mass Death

Brutalization of Culture/Society

Dehumanization of Individual

Front vs. Command and Home

Lost Generation



PRIMARY SOURCES COVERED

Alfred Doebelin, Berlin Alexanderplatz

MAIN THEMES

Modernist Expression/Technique

Impact of WWI

Brutalization of Society

Brutalization of Politics

Isolation/Alienation of Individual

Popular Culture

Urbanization

Crime

Decadence

Weimar Economy/Unemployment

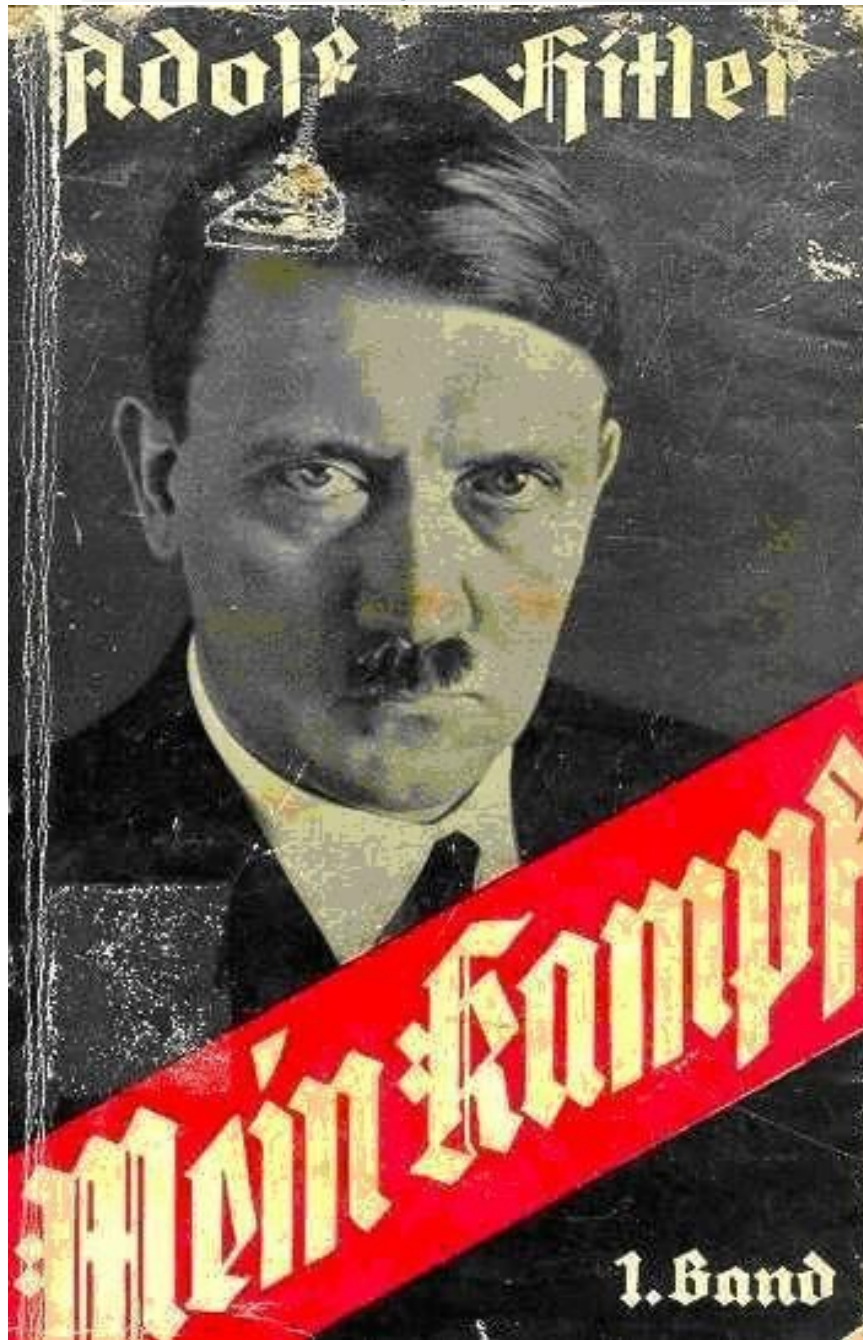
Anti-Semitism

Critique of Republic

Political Disunity/Apathy

Search for Order

VIDEO 13 Nazi Germany-Mein Kampf Introduction A



PRIMARY SOURCES COVERED

Hitler, Mein Kampf

Triumph of the Will

MAIN THEMES

Anti-Modernity (Urbanism/Industrialization)

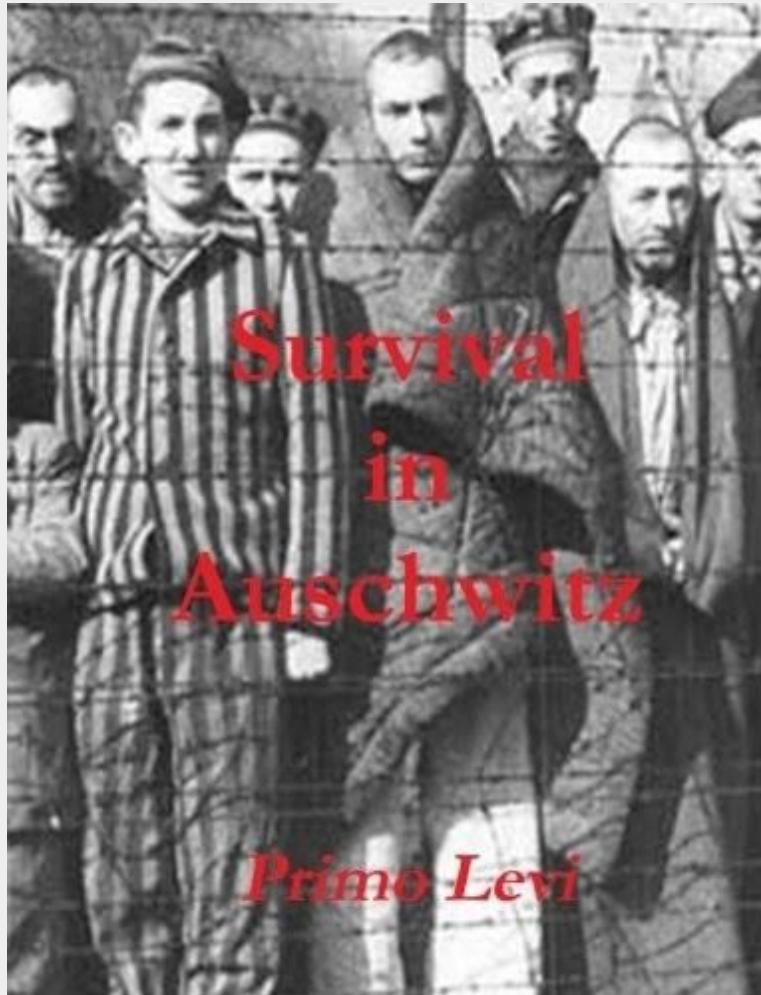
Anti-Modernism (Cultural)

Racial Anti-Semitism

Leader Principle

Search for Order
Search for Unification/Community
Brutality of Politics
Dehumanization of Enemies
Impact of First World War
Emotionalism/Anti-Intellectualism
Neo-Classical Aesthetics
Invocation of Romantic Political Culture

VIDEO 18 Background to the Holocaust A



PRIMARY SOURCES COVERED

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

Musical response: [Schoenberg_A Survivor From Warsaw_op_46.mp3](#) [Text]

MAIN THEMES

- Racial Anti-Semitism
- Bureaucracy/Process of "Jewish Policy"
- Dehumanization of Jews
- Complicity of Victims
- Banality of Evil
- Existentialist Themes
- Limits of Language
- Moral Relativism ("Gray Zone")
- Existence precedes Essence
- Atomization/Selfishness
- Hopelessness
- Loss of Tradition/Faith

VIDEO 20 West Germany [BRD] and Fassbinder, Marriage of Maria Braun, Introduction
Watch or listen to this before watching film.



FILM COVERED

Rainer Fassbinder, *The Marriage of Maria Braun*

MAIN THEMES

- Conditions at "Zero Hour"
- Rejection/Indifference to Traditional Culture
- Capitalism/Anti-Labor
- Materialism/Greed
- Atomization/Selfishness
- Post-War Political Leadership
- German-American Relations
- Women in Post-War German Society
- Post-War Leftist Criticism ("The Third Way")

VIDEO 22 East Germany (DDR) and *The Lives of Others* Intro



FILM COVERED

Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, *The Lives of Others*

MAIN THEMES

- Economic Conditions in the DDR
- Marxist-Leninist Ideology in the DDR
- “Totalitarian” Culture in the DDR
- Political Repression/Terror in the DDR
- “Stasi” Surveillance Techniques
- Economic/Professional “Terror” in the DDR

UNIT 23 Die Wende [The Transition]



