NEJS 150a

The Jews in Weimar and Nazi Germany:
From Equal Citizens to Victims of Genocide

Professor: Dr. Laura Jockusch
Semester: Fall 2017
Class Meetings: M, W, Th 10-10:50 am
Room: Lown 302
Office: Lown 310
Email: jockusch@brandeis.edu
Hours: W and Th 3-4 pm
Phone: 62959

Course Description

This course explores the history of the German Jewish community in the years 1918 through 1945, a period characterized by the dramatic change from the solid social, professional, and cultural integration of the Jews into German society to their disfranchisement, discrimination, and ultimate destruction. It studies the interlocking histories of Jewish and non-Jewish Germans, exposing some of the internal social and political dynamics in German and Jewish histories. Beginning with the cataclysmic end of World War I, the feelings of hurt national pride, defeat, and revenge, readings will examine the political, economic and social changes in German society as well as parallel developments among German Jews. They will describe the German Jewish “success stories” of the Weimar years—increasing Jewish integration into society, the professions, and culture—as well as the ongoing and increasing problem of anti-Semitism and racism. Readings will then focus on the rise of Nazism and its devastating effects on the social, political, economic, and cultural lives of the Jews in Germany. They will discuss the gradual elimination of civic rights and protection of the Jews by the German state, the increasing social marginalization of the Jews, the theft of Jewish property, leading into policies of forced emigration, persecution, terror, deportation, and mass murder. The course focuses both on Jewish responses to persecution as well as on the roles of non-Jewish bystanders.

Required Books


Recommended Books

Michael Brenner and Derek Penslar, In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).


**Learning Goals**

- Identify the major events, persons, problems, concepts and ideas in the history of German Jews in the twentieth century
- Read historical texts and primary sources critically and contextualize their significance to relevant problems
- Write short interpretive essays that speak critically about events and ideas.

**Course Requirements**

1. Serious and consistent class participation (this means attendance is essential because your participation is part of your grade)
2. Regular introductions of the homework readings
3. Three written assignments of 4-5 pages
4. A mid-term exam
5. A final exam

**Grading**

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<td>Essays</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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**Late work policy**

Unless there are legitimate reasons (e.g., serious illness or personal circumstances), work will not be accepted more than one week past the due date. Work turned in late will be docked 5 percent per day.

**Preparation Time**

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

**Academic Honesty**

You must complete all assignments alone. In your writing, you must follow rules of attribution, meaning that you must cite all sources consulted in preparing your papers. As stated in the *Student Handbook*, “Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. A student shall not receive credit
for work that is not the product of the student’s own effort.” Examples of penalties for a student found responsible for an infringement of academic honesty are no credit for the work in question, failure in the course, and the traditional range of conduct sanctions from disciplinary warning through permanent dismissal from the University.

Students with Documented Disabilities

Students with disabilities certified by the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs and First Year Services will be given reasonable accommodations to complete required assignments. Disabilities that are not documented and approved by the Office of Academic Affairs will not be given accommodations.

Weekly Topics and Reading Assignments

August 30, 2017  INTRODUCTION

Part One: The Years of the Weimar Republic 1918-1933

August 31, 2017  Beyond Glitter and Doom: What was the Weimar Republic?


Richard Bessel  “Germany from War to Dictatorship,” in *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Arnold 1997), 235-257.

September 4, 2017  Labor Day—No Class

September 6, 2017  Between Bolshevist Revolution, Right-wing Violence, and Parliamentary Democracy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 7, 2017</td>
<td>Weimar Jewry: A Demographic, Social, and Economic Profile</td>
<td>Avraham Barkai</td>
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<td>“Population Decline and Economic Stagnation,” in *German-Jewish</td>
<td>History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, 30-44.</td>
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<td>Sharon Gillermann</td>
<td>“The Crisis of the Jewish Family,” in *In Search of Jewish Community:</td>
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<td>Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria*, ed. Michael Brenner and</td>
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<td>September 11, 2017</td>
<td>At Home in Germany: Jewish Society in its German Environment</td>
<td>Avraham Barkai</td>
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<td>“Jewish Life in its German Milieu,” in *German-Jewish History in</td>
<td><em>Moderan Times</em>, vol. 4, 45-71.</td>
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<td>Peter Longerich</td>
<td>“Antisemitism in the Weimar Republic,” in idem, *The Holocaust:</td>
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<td>The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (New York: Oxford</td>
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<td>September 13, 2017</td>
<td>Beyond Liberalism and Zionism: The Organizational Landscape of the</td>
<td>Avraham Barkai</td>
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<td>Jewish Community</td>
<td>“The Organized Jewish Community” in *German-Jewish History in Modern</td>
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<td>Times*, vol. 4, 73-101.</td>
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<td>Choose one of the following:</td>
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<td>Michael Brenner</td>
<td>“The Jüdische Volkspartei. National Jewish Communal Politics during the</td>
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<td>Jacob Borut</td>
<td>“Was there a Zionist subculture in Weimar Germany?” in: Brenner and</td>
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<td>Avraham Barkai</td>
<td>“Between Deutschtum and Judentum. Ideological Controversies inside the</td>
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<td>Centralverein,” in: Brenner and Penslar, *In Search of Jewish</td>
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<td>Community*, 74-91.</td>
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<td>September 14, 2017</td>
<td>Politics of Caution and Self-Defense: Political Orientations and</td>
<td>Avraham Barkai</td>
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<td>Crisis Consciousness among German Jews</td>
<td>“Political Orientations and Crisis Consciousness,” in *German-Jewish</td>
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<td>History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, 102-126.</td>
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September 18, 2017  A Jewish Renaissance? Jewish Cultural and Intellectual Life

Paul Mendes-Flohr  “Jewish Cultural and Spiritual Life,” in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, 126-156.


Paul Mendes-Flohr  “Between Germanism and Judaism, Christians and Jews,” in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, 156-169.


September 21, 2017  Rosh Hashanah – No Class

September 25, 2017  Agents of Weimar Culture? Jews Within German Culture

Paul Mendes-Flohr  “Jews within German Culture,” in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, 170-194.

Elizabeth Harvey  “Culture and Society in Weimar Germany: The Impact of Modernism and Mass Culture,” in *German History since 1800*, 279-295.

September 27, 2017

Expressionist Films: Sections from *Der Golem, Metropolis, Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*

September 28, 2017  Weimar Germany as a Center of East European Jewish Culture


October 2, 2017  Jews, Gender and Sexuality in Weimar Germany


Eric D. Weitz  “Bodies and Sex,” in idem, Weimar Germany, 297-330

October 3, 2017 (Tuesday: Brandeis Thursday) The Decline of the Weimar Republic: Structural Weaknesses and Political Radicalization

Jill Stephenson  “The Rise of the Nazis: Sonderweg or Spanner in the Works?” in German History since 1800, 298-317.


October 4, 2017  Review for Mid-Term Exam

October 5, 2017  Sukkot – No Class

October 9, 2017  Mid-Term Exam

Part Two: The Years of the “Third Reich” 1933-1945

October 11, 2017  (Tuesday: Brandeis Thursday) Hitler’s Rise to Power

October 12, 2017  Shmini Atzeret—No Class

October 16, 2017  Turning Germany into a Dictatorship: Legislation, Gleichschaltung, and Terror

October 18, 2017  Inside Nazi Germany: Propaganda, Cult, and Mass Hysteria
Film: Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will/ Triumph des Willens* (Germany, 1934).

October 19, 2017  Continuities and Discontinuities of German Anti-Semitism: The Role of Anti-Semitism in Nazi Politics

October 23, 2017  Nazi Anti-Jewish Policies 1933-1939: From Legislation to Terror

October 25, 2017  

October 26, 2017  A Community under Siege: Jewish Life under Persecution, 1933-1939

Avraham Barkai  “Jewish Life under Persecution,” in German-Jewish History in Modern Times, vol. 4, 231-257.


October 30, 2017  German Jewish Leadership in the Face of the Persecution


November 1, 2017  Jewish Cultural Life under the Nazi Regime


Choose one of the following:


November 2, 2017  Jewish Self-Help and the Dilemma of “Stay or Go”

November 6, 2017

Marion Kaplan


Michaels, Jennifer E.

“The struggle to survive: German and Austrian refugees’ depiction of daily life in their Shanghai exile,” in Exile and Everyday Life (2015) 131-153

November 8, 2017

The Persecution of German Jews in Context: World War II and Nazi Policies against the Jews of Occupied Europe, 1939-1942

Christopher Browning


November 9, 2017 (No Class)

November 13, 2017

A Ghetto without Walls: Jewish Life in Wartime Germany, 1939-1942

Avraham Barkai

“In a Ghetto without Walls,” German-Jewish History in Modern Times, vol. 4, 332-359.

Diana Schuelle


November 15, 2017

Marion Kaplan

“Jewish Daily Life in Wartime Germany,” in Probing the Depth of German Anti-Semitism, 393-412.

David Bankier

The Germans and the Final Solution, 116-138.

November 16, 2017

German Jews in the Face of Death: Deportation, Internment, and Mass Murder, 1942-1945

Avraham Barkai

“The Final Chapter,” in German-Jewish History in Modern Times, vol. 4, 360-388.

**November 20, 2017**  Survival inside Nazi Germany: Mixed Marriages and Life in the “Underground,” 1942-1945


**November 22-23, 2017**  Thanksgiving—No Class

**November 27, 2017**


**November 29, 2017**


Annegret Ehmann  “From colonial racism to Nazi population policy : the role of the so-called Mischlinge,” in *The Holocaust and History*, 115-133.

**November 30, 2017**


December 4, 2017  Liberation and Beyond: Survivors, Refugees, and Remigrants in Allied-Occupied Germany

Steven Lowenstein  “The German Jewish Diaspora,” *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, 389-402.


December 6, 2017  Summing Up

December 7, 2017  Review for Final Exam