

HUMANITIES 4000.06E

PERSPECTIVES ON NAZISM

"Nobody has doubted that the 'good' man represents a higher value than the 'evil, in terms of promoting and benefiting mankind generally, even taking the long view. But suppose the exact opposite were true. What if the 'good' man represents not merely a retrogression but even a danger, a temptation, a narcotic drug enabling the present to live at the expense of the future."

Friedrich Nietzsche, GENEALOGY OF MORALS,  
Preface, vi

Course Director: Professor Matthew Corrigan  
Division of Humanities  
Vanier College 230

## HUMA. 4000E PERSPECTIVES ON NAZISM

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Few would argue that Nazism is one of the most mysterious and evil events in the history of civilization; a conundrum for enlightened consciousness. Was Nazism a unique event, indigenous to a certain time, place, nationality, or something more extensive; part of a larger movement or larger movements within the Modern 'industrialized' Western world? What role did the German psyche and people play in such an event? The rest of Europe? How dependent was Nazism on the figure of Adolf Hitler? What is the nature of Nazism's 'evil'? In what senses do personal and collective guilt apply? What lessons can civilization hope to learn from such an event? Can human consciousness comprehend such an event?

The questions are unending and in many cases unanswerable; but civilized human beings must not desist from posing such questions. Different perspectives offer different answers, different kinds of answers. This course will examine the phenomenon of Nazism from a number of perspectives within the social sciences, humanities, and arts (historical, psychological, theological, philosophical, and artistic). The perspectives will be scrutinized to test their scope, biases, validity, and, of course, insights; but the overall aim will be to reach as synthetic, deep, and complete an understanding of the phenomenon of Nazism as possible.

### FORMAT

Three consecutive seminar hours

## EVALUATION

Three short reports (each worth 10%)  
 One major report on a topic of your choice (30%)  
 End of year essay OR course journal (essay topic to be chosen by student): 30% (paper approximately 30 typed, double-spaced pages; journal approximately 35 pp.)  
 General seminar participation 10%

## COURSE READINGS:

\*Note: the following readings\* are collected in a bound, xerox course package, available from the York bookstore.

\*Friedrich Heer, THE INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF EUROPE (Stuttgart 1953; World Publishing 1966). (This edition Anchor Books, New York, 1968.) Forward and Chapter 20: "The Nineteenth Century"

\*H. G. Schenk, THE MIND OF THE EUROPEAN ROMANTICS (Wiesbaden 1956; Constable 1966). (This edition Anchor Books, New York 1969.) Introduction, Parts 1, 2, 4, plus Epilogue

\*Ernst Nolte, THREE FACES OF FASCISM. Part Five: "Fascism as a Metapolitical Phenomenon" (New American Library)

\*Hugh Trevor-Roper, "Hitler's Place in History"

\*Friedrich Meinecke, THE GERMAN CATASTROPHE (first two chapters)  
 (Harvard, 1950) (This edition Beacon Press, Boston, 1963)

\*Alice Miller, "Hitler's Childhood," from FOR YOUR OWN GOOD:  
HIDDEN CRUELTY IN CHILD-REARING AND THE  
ROOTS OF VIOLENCE  
trans. Hildegarde and Hunter Hannum (Noonday, New York,  
1990)

\*Emil L. Fackenheim, TO MEND THE WORLD:  
FOUNDATIONS OF POST-HOLOCAUST THOUGHT  
(Second edition 1989) (Schocken Books, New York 1989).  
Chapter IV, Section 5 and 6

\*George Steiner, Essays: "Postscript," "Heidegger's Silence,"  
"Lieber's Lament," and "The Defence of A. H." from A  
GEORGE STEINER READER (Oxford, New York 1984)

\*Thomas Mann, "Germany and the Germans (1945)" (Library  
of Congress, 1963)

\*Fritz Stern, Essays: "National Socialism as Temptation," in  
DREAMS AND DELUSIONS (Vintage Books, New York  
1987)

Lucy S. Dawidowicz, "Lies about the Holocaust,"  
COMMENTARY, December 1980

Saul Friedlander, "West Germany and the Burden of the Past:  
The Ongoing Debate," THE JERUSALEM QUARTERLY,  
No. 42, SPRING 1987

Christopher R. Browning, "Beyond 'Intentionalism' and  
'Functionalism' . . .", THE PATH TO GENOCIDE  
(Cambridge, 1992)

PLUS THE FOLLOWING PAPERBACK BOOKS:

Joachim Fest, HITLER (Harcourt Brace)

Gerald Fleming, HITLER AND THE FINAL SOLUTION  
(Univ. of Cal., Berkeley)

Albert Speer, INSIDE THE THIRD REICH: MEMOIRS  
(Macmillan)

Hannah Arendt, EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM (Viking)

Robert Ericksen, THEOLOGIANS UNDER HITLER (Yale)

J. P. Stern, THE FUEHRER & THE PEOPLE

Joachim Fest, HITLER

John Lukacs, THE HITLER OF HISTORY

Ian Kershaw, HITLER Vol. I & II

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO WORLD WAR 2

IMPORTANT FILMS (for classroom or home viewing):

L. Visconti, THE DAMNED (dramatic film)

Istvan Szabo, MEPHISTO (1981) (dramatic film adopted from  
Klaus Mann's novel)

Alain Renais, NIGHT AND FOG

EUROPA, EUROPA

THE WANNSEE CONFERENCE (docu-drama)  
(two versions of this exist--German and American)

Reitz, HEIMAT (docu-drama)

Hava Kohav Beller, THE RESTLESS CONSCIENCE

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF DOOM

## COUNTDOWN TO WAR

THE FATAL ATTRACTION OF A. HITLER (Thames production)

Various documentary films: eg., WORLD AT WAR Series (BBC); WHY HITLER LOST THE WAR; ALBERT SPEER INTERVIEW (CBC); THE NAZIS: A WARNING FROM HISTORY (six volumes)

## MAJOR THEMES OF COURSE:

These themes will constitute the crux of the course (though others may develop along the way). Student presentations will take us through the main points of the week's reading, and class discussion will follow upon that.

The rise of Nazism (Fascism) in the Modern World (contributing factors (causes?), appeal, role of fate, (emotional-)ideology, characteristics, ramifications)

The importance of Hitler

Insider perspectives: the case of Albert Speer

The role and meaning of the Holocaust in the Nazism *Weltanschauung*.

The case of Eichmann

Psychological perspectives

Philosophical and theological considerations

Artistic perspectives

Appraisals & overviews

Present day considerations

Tentative conclusions (full class participation)

**SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Lucy Dawidowicz, **THE WAR AGAINST THE JEWS: 1933-45**

Raul Hilberg, **THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EUROPEAN JEWS**

Arno Meyer, **WHY DID THE HEAVENS NOT DARKEN?**  
(on holocaust) Michael Marrus, **THE HOLOCAUST IN HISTORY**

Sidra DeNoven Ezrahi, **BY WORDS ALONE: THE HOLOCAUST IN LITERATURE** (Chicago 1980)

G. Fleming, **HITLER AND THE FINAL SOLUTION**

Gunther Grass, **THE TIN DRUM** (novel)

Michel Tournier, **THE ERL-KING** (novel)

Rolf Hochhuth, **THE DEPUTY** (play)

Friedrich von Reck-Malleczewen, **DIARY OF A MAN IN DESPAIR**

William Sheridan Allen, **THE NAZI SEIZURE OF POWER: THE EXPERIENCE OF A SINGLE GERMAN TOWN**

Joachim C. Fest, **THE FACE OF THE THIRD REICH**

Hedley Bull (ed.), **THE CHALLENGE OF THE THIRD REICH**

Martin Broszat, **THE HITLER STATE**

Andreas Hillgruber, **GERMANY AND THE TWO WORLD WARS**

David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, **THE PECULIARITIES OF GERMAN HISTORY**

Georg Iggers, **THE GERMAN CONCEPTION OF HISTORY**

(from Herder to present) and NEW DIRECTIONS IN  
GERMAN HISTORIOGRAPHY  
H. W. Koch (ed.), ASPECTS OF THE THIRD REICH  
(especially Broszat and Nolte essays)  
Karl Jaspers, THE QUESTION OF GERMAN GUILT  
Max Weinreich, HITLER'S PROFESSORS  
Pierre Joffroy, A SPY FOR GOD (Kurt Gerstein)  
Michael Kater, THE NAZI PARTY: A SOCIAL PROFILE OF  
MEMBERS AND LEADERS  
Ian Kershaw, POPULAR OPINION AND POLITICAL  
DISSENT IN THE THIRD REICH  
Ian Kershaw, THE NAZI DICTATORSHIP: PROBLEMS  
AND PERSPECTIVES OF INTERPRETATION  
Detlev Peukert, INSIDE NAZI GERMANY: CONFORMITY,  
OPPOSITION AND RACISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE  
Richard Bessel (ed.), LIFE IN THE THIRD REICH  
Richard Grunberger, A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE THIRD  
REICH  
Marc Bloch, STRANGE DEFEAT  
Matthias Schmidt, ALBERT SPEER: THE END OF A MYTH  
William Hamsher, ALBERT SPEER: VICTIM OF  
NUREMBERG?  
Ann Tusa and John Tusa, THE NUREMBERG TRIAL  
George L. Mosse (ed.), NAZI CULTURE  
A. J. P. Taylor, THE ORIGINS OF THE SECOND WORLD  
WAR  
Jill Stephenson, WOMEN IN NAZI GERMANY  
David Welch (ed.), NAZI PROPAGANDA: THE POWER  
AND THE LIMITATIONS Henry Turner (ed.), HITLER:  
MEMOIRS OF A CONFIDANT (Otto Wagener) Donald  
Gordon, EXPRESSIONISM: ART AND IDEA  
M. Kay Flavell, GEORG GROSZ  
Peter Hoffmann, THE HISTORY OF THE GERMAN  
RESISTANCE 1933-45 Special Issue of CRITICAL  
ENQUIRY, Winter 1989, "Symposium on Heidegger and  
Nazism"  
Victor Farias, HEIDEGGER AND NAZISM  
Fritz Stern, THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL DESPAIR



AESTHETICS AND POLITICS: BLOCH, LUKACS,  
 BRECHT, BENJAMIN, ADORNO, ed. R. Taylor (selections  
 pertaining to the debate on Expressionism vs Realism in the  
 late thirties in DAS WORT)  
 Siegfried Kracauer, FROM CALIGARI TO HITLER: A  
 PSYCHOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE GERMAN FILM  
 Werner Maser, HITLER: LEGEND, MYTH, AND REALITY  
 Werner Maser (ed.), HITLER'S LETTERS AND NOTES  
 August Kubizek, THE YOUNG HITLER I KNEW  
 Hermann Rauschning, THE VOICE OF DESTRUCTION  
 Konrad Heiden, DER FUEHRER  
 William Shirer, BERLIN DIARY  
 Ernst Hanfstaengl, THE MISSING YEARS (Hitler)  
 A. Hitler, MEIN KAMPF  
 A. Hitler, TABLE-TALK  
 Rudolf Binion, HITLER AMONG THE GERMANS (psycho-  
 biography)  
 E. Jaeckel, HITLER'S WELTANSCHAUUNG  
 Percy Ernst Schramm, HITLER: THE MAN AND THE  
 MILITARY LEADER  
 Sebastian Haffner, THE MEANING OF HITLER  
 Sigmund Freud, CIVILIZATION & ITS DISCONTENTS  
 Theodor Haecker, JOURNAL IN THE NIGHT (theologian-  
 philosopher) Emil Fackenheim, GOD'S PRESENCE IN  
 HISTORY (Part Three: "The Commanding Voice of  
 Auschwitz)  
 Karl Barth, AGAINST THE STREAM: SHORTER POST-  
 WAR WRITINGS, 1946-52  
 Helmut Lehmann-Haupt, ART UNDER A DICTATORSHIP  
 (Nolde, Dix, Grosz, and other Expressionists)  
 Suitable problems re Expressionism; possibly from Donald  
 Gordon, EXPRESSIONISM: ART AND IDEA  
 B. Hinz, ART IN THE THIRD REICH  
 Igor Golomstock, TOTALITARIAN ART  
 Stephaie Baron, ed., DEGENERATE ART: THE FATE OF  
 THE 'AVANT GARDE' IN NAZI GERMANY  
 Suitable readings on Richard Strauss's "Metamorphosen"  
 (1945)

Alan Bullock, *HITLER: A STUDY IN TYRANNY*  
 Alan Bullock, *HITLER AND STALIN: PARALLEL LIVES*  
 Charles S. Maier, *THE UNMASTERABLE PAST*  
 Richard J. Evans, *IN HITLER'S SHADOW*  
 Christopher Browning, *ORDINARY MEN: RESERVE  
 POLICE BATTALION 101 AND THE FINAL SOLUTION  
 IN POLAND*  
 J. P. Stern, *HITLER: THE FUEHRER & THE PEOPLE*  
 Carol Rittner & Sondra Myers, ed., *THE COURAGE TO  
 CARE: RESCUERS OF JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST*  
 Milton Meltzer, *RESCUE: THE STORY OF HOW  
 GENTILES SAVED JEWS IN THE HOLOCAUST*  
 Dietrich Bonnhoeffer, *LETTERS AND PAPERS FROM  
 PRISON*

#### USEFUL REFERENCE GUIDES:

J. Noakes and G. Pridham (eds.), *NAZISM 1919-45, A  
 DOCUMENTARY READER* (three volumes, University of  
 Exeter paper)  
 James Taylor and Warren Shaw, *A DICTIONARY OF THE  
 THIRD REICH* (Grafton paper)  
 Louis L. Snyder, *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE THIRD REICH*  
 (Paragon paper)  
 Louis L. Snyder, *HISTORICAL GUIDE TO WW II*  
 George Stein (ed.), *HITLER* (an excellent selection of basic  
 materials for study) (out of information (out of print,  
 unfortunately)  
*THE OXFORD COMPANION TO WW II*

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