

History 110: Conformity and Resistance in Nazi Germany

Professor Michelle Mouton
Office: Sage 3621
Phone: 424-7157
Email: mouton@uwosh.edu

Spring Semester 2014
Section 001/002
T & R 9:40-11:10 and 11:30-1:00
Room

Office hours: T 8:30-9:30, R 1:15-2:15 and by appointment

Course Objectives: This is a Quest II survey course intended to teach you to apply ethical reasoning in the context of Nazi Germany. We will survey Nazi history and talk about the kinds of decisions that were open to people living under the Nazi dictatorship. We will talk about what led most people to conform to Nazi demands and what caused some to resist. As part of this conversation, we will talk about the different kinds of conformity and resistance that existed and exist.

Like other history courses you have taken over the course of your lifetime, History 110 will introduce you to another country, another culture, and another time. You will be introduced to Nazi leaders, learn about events that took place in Nazi Germany, and gain a better understanding of what it meant to live through and fight in the Second World War. Rather than surveying Nazi history, however, our goal is to think about the decisions that people made about how to live ethically in Nazi Germany.

The Nazis imagined a “national community” and set about creating it in 1933 when Hitler came to power. As members of the Aryan race, most Germans were welcomed into the national community. But others like Jews, the disabled, Jehovah Witnesses, and Communists were brutally excluded. Laws were enacted to care for the Aryans and to separate them from other less desirable people. Other laws discriminated against the so called “racially unworthy.” While in power the Nazis passed legislation that affected everyone: pushing boys into paramilitary organizations, forcing women to leave the workforce, demanding that civil servants create family trees to prove their non-Jewish heritage, honoring mothers, persecuting non-Aryans, and mandating that members of the military swear an oath to Hitler. Whether you were Aryan or “racially unworthy,” you were confronted with what do in the face of government intrusion into your private life: challenge laws that discriminated against yourself or your neighbors? Abide by them? Fight against war or allow it? Our goal in this course is to think about what life was like in Nazi Germany for people who lived there: children, adults, the elderly, Jews, Christians, men and women. Who resisted? Who did not? What enabled them to do so?

The goal of History 110 is ambitious and befitting a general education course at the university. First and foremost, it is designed to make you think. In studying Nazi Germany we are examining a government that has been universally condemned as unethical and criminal. In this course, you will be challenged to think about what options were open to people as the Nazis made demands on them. Luckily those of us living in the United States today are not confronted

with such wrenching choices on a daily basis. We do make choices, however, about how to act both individually and toward each other based on what we think is right and wrong. Should a student cheat? Should a hungry person steal? Should we help a homeless person? Each of these decisions entails thinking ethically. This course is designed to help you gain a better understanding of how to reason ethically in your own life.

What is the University Studies Program? It is the introduction to a liberal arts education at UW Oshkosh. One of the goals of a liberal arts program is to produce educated people, not just people trained to do one sort of task. Ask yourself: “Would I rather be well-trained, or well-educated?” This history course can help you become well-educated in two ways. First, it will help to make you a more educated person. You will learn a lot about one of the most significant dictatorships and one of the worst wars the world has ever seen. With this base knowledge, you will be better able to understand what it means to live under a dictatorship and what it means to go to war. You will also learn what a totalitarian state really looks like so that you can question its usage in current political rhetoric. Second, you will learn to hone your critical thinking skills. Making sense of history involves looking for patterns, learning to read and interpret documents, imagining a different sort of world, and thinking about the choices people have made. Finally, this course will ask big questions, explore complex ideas, and seek to interrogate assumptions you have formed in your life so far. In so doing it will provide you with an understanding of who you are and where you fit within the world and give you skills and analytical frameworks that are timeless, and will serve you well in whatever career you choose.

This is a Quest II course. Last semester you took Quest I and learned about the campus and the UW Oshkosh community. This semester we are going to focus on ethical reasoning because this is one of the foundational stepping stones for all the other learning you will do at the university. Moreover ethical reasoning is critical for living the rest of your lives. It will help you interpret information from the news, from your communities, on the job, within your families. This important theme and course are part of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh’s University Studies Program (UPS) – a program developed to serve students’ core learning objectives early in the course of their well-rounded, purposeful college education. Like all Quest II courses here at UW Oshkosh, this course not only intends to introduce you to an important subject area – Nazi Germany – it aims to introduce you reasoning in an ethical way.

Quest II courses are designed to tackle the three USP Signature Questions:

- How do people understand and create a more sustainable world? (Sustainability)
- How do people understand and bridge cultural differences? (Intercultural Knowledge)
- How do people understand and engage in community life? (Civic Knowledge and Engagement)

This Quest II course focuses primarily (though not exclusively) on the last of these Signature Questions.

What do “Civic Knowledge” and “Civic Engagement” mean? For the purposes of the USP, they are defined this way:

Civic knowledge consists of an awareness and understanding of the various political and social processes that impact the nature and quality of life in local, state, national, or global communities. It also encompasses the cultivation of skills which may be useful in public life, like effective communication and ethical reasoning. Civic engagement means having an appreciation for and applying the values gained from civic knowledge in real world settings, directed at improving the quality of life in the communities of which one is a part. Civic knowledge and civic engagement emphasize learning, reflection, and action in order to create better communities.

Course Outcomes:

After taking this course, you will have acquired the following learning outcomes:

- Understand that throughout time we have always been embedded in relationships, a social location, and a specific historical moment.
- Understand how communities exclude, judge and restrict.
- Examine personal values and develop an ability to negotiate the intersection where worlds and values collide.
- Develop an understanding of the moral and political courage to take risks to achieve the public good.
- Familiarity with key historical struggles, campaigns, and social movements to achieve the full promise of democracy.

Early Alert Grading

Early Alert is a program that provides you with an Early Grade Report from faculty. In this class, your Early Alert grade will be calculated based on attendance, participation and quizzes 1 and 2. Early Grade Reports will indicate if you have academic performance or attendance issues and specific steps you can take and resources available to help you improve. It is common for students to be unaware of or over-estimate their academic performance in classes so this will help you be aware early on of your progress and provide strategies for success in the classroom. You will receive an email during the 5th week of classes. It is important to read the entire e-mail carefully and see me about how to improve your grade if you are deemed in trouble.

ePortfolio

As you move through your courses at UW Oshkosh, you will archive your learning in an ePortfolio. The ePortfolio can be found in D2L. The ePortfolio will help you keep track of papers, speeches, reports, projects, and other assignments in your Quest and Explore courses, so that you can see your progress and connect ideas across different classes. You can continue to use this portfolio in your major classes, so that you are ready for your Capstone course or experience as you near graduation. You can even use the ePortfolio after you graduate to show evidence of your learning to employers or graduate schools. In this course one of your essays will be uploaded to your ePortfolio. You may choose which one. More details will follow in class.

Campus Resources

The D2L site for this class has a full explanation of the following Campus Resources:

The Center for Academic Resources (CAR)
The Writing Center
The Reading Study Center
Polk Library

REQUIRED READING

Opposition and Resistance in Nazi Germany, Frank McDonough (Cambridge 2001)
A History of Nazi Germany 2nd Edition, Joseph Bendersky (Burnham, 2008)
Backing Hitler, Robert Gellately (Oxford, 2001)
The White Rose, Inge Scholl (Wesleyan, 1983)

In addition, there will be a series of articles on e-reserve at Polk Library

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance/participation (50 pts)
- One midterm exam, one final exam (100 pts each)
- One group debate (50 pts)
- Two Essays (50 pts each)
- Six quizzes on historical sources (10 pts each)

ABOUT THE COMPONENTS OF THE GRADE

Attendance/Participation: Learning about history and exploring ethical thinking requires discussion. Only by coming to class and participating can you accomplish this. Therefore I expect everyone to come to class and to participate every day. If I find that everyone is not participating, I will call on people. This is not to be mean, but to help you to overcome shyness or hesitation to speak. Keep in mind that many of the issues we talk about this semester are complicated with not obvious right and wrong. By discussing them we will delve deeper into the nuances of living under a dictatorship.

Exams: We will talk more about these when we get closer to the date.

Essays and Group debate: We will have five debates this semester. Each debate focuses on an ethical issue surrounding Nazi Germany. You will each choose two topics to write about. For one of these topics you will also participate in a debate. There will be a packet of readings for each debate with historical background, sources, and questions about the ethics involved. Your essay will briefly describe the ethical issue and then argue your perspective. Debates must be planned outside class and I will meet with each group will meet before the debate. I will distribute more information about these debates closer to the dates.

Quizzes: There will be six quizzes on historical sources related to the topic of the day. They will be short, multiple choice quizzes to see if you have read and understood. Only your best five scores will count toward your final grade. No make quizzes. If you know you will miss a day, please arrange to take the quiz early or use it as your dropped quiz.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are expected to attend class and attendance will be taken. You should complete the day's required reading before class and to bring your books and notes with you so that we can discuss the readings. We will strive to create an atmosphere that is comfortable for everyone. Keep in mind that there are many different answers to historical and ethical questions. There are rarely right and wrong questions. We will be discussing issues for which there are many right answers (and in some cases many wrong answers). The important thing is that our conversations will be richer if everyone contributes. For this reason, I expect everyone to participate. I will begin the semester not calling on students, however, if I discover that only some students talk, I will begin to call on students. Attendance is essential for learning in this class and at the university. Only a few types of absences will be excused: serious illness, mandatory sports absence, documented death in the family, religious holiday. Five or more unexcused absences constitute automatic failure in the course.

ELECTRONIC POLICY: Because many students who use laptop computers in classrooms seem to use them for activities not associated with class (many of us, to be sure, seem to be unable resist the powerful allure of remaining constantly available on Facebook or Twitter), I do not allow them in class. Exceptions will be made for students who a) have a compelling reason to take notes on a laptop, b) enter into a written agreement with me to not use your laptop for anything other than taking notes and c) agree to sit in the first two rows of the classroom. All cellphones and texting devices must be turned off during class. Students who violate this policy will be asked to leave the classroom.

OFFICE VISITS

I hold office hours Tuesdays from 8:30-9:30 and Thursdays from 1:15-2:15 and by appointment. Please feel free to drop by to ask questions about the readings, clarify points from lecture, challenge my interpretation of history, or hold other sorts of intellectual conversations. Each one of you must come by to introduce yourself once in the first three weeks of class and tell me who you are and what makes you tick. In addition, I will meet with each group twice during the semester.

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC RESOURCES: The Center for Academic Resources (CAR) provides free, confidential tutoring for students in most cases undergraduate classes on campus. CAR is located in the Student Success Center, Suite 102. Check the Tutor's List page on CAR's website (www.uwosh.edu/car) for a list of tutors. If our course is not listed, click on a link to request one, stop by SSC 102 or call 424-2290. To schedule a tutoring session, simply email the tutor, let him/her know what class you are seeking assistance in, and schedule a time to meet.

WRITING CENTER: The Writing Center helps students of all ability levels improve their writing. Trained peer consultants help writers understand an assignment, envision possibilities for a draft, and improve their writing. They even help writers learn to identify their own proofreading errors. For more information view their website (<http://www.uwosh.edu/wcenter>), call 920-424-1152, email wcenter@uwosh.edu or visit them in Suite 102 of the Student Success Center.

POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from The University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of The University; policies on scholastic

dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For more information on The University policy see http://idea.uwosh.edu/D2Lwiki/index.php/Academic_honesty

****All items on syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor****

Schedule

Day 1-3. Introduction to Nazi Germany

1. Read: Bendersky, "The Rise of Hitler and Nazism"
2. Read: Bendersky, "The Nazification of German Society, 1934-1938"
3. Read: Bendersky, "The Fuhrer as Warrior: Victory and Conquest"

Discussion: What is ethical thinking in theory and in your life?

Unit 1 Conformity in Nazi Germany

Day 4-5. Youth

*Read: "Path of the German Girl" (Dagmar Reese, *Growing Up Female in Nazi Germany*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 21-42.

*Read: "Young People: Mobilization and Refusal" (Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 145-174.

Quiz 1

Day 6. First Debate: Weighing Priorities: The Great Depression

Day 7. Professionals: Teachers and Judges

*Read: "The Swastika in the Heart of Youth, " (Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 131-162.

Quiz 2

Day 8-9. The Catholic and Protestant Churches

Read: "The Concordat in Practice" (John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope*, New York: Penguin Press, 1999), 130-156.

Day 11 The Populace

Read: Gellately, "Social Outsiders"
Docs. Nazism and the Working class"

Day 12. The Gestapo

Read: "Police Justice" (Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 34-50.

Quiz 3

Day 13. Second Debate: Getting Ahead: Participating in Nazi Society

Day 14. Midterm

Unit 2: Resistance in Nazi Germany

Day 15-16. Red Orchestra and Rosenstr.

*Read: Stolfus: "Society vs. Law: German Jewish Families and Society Restraints on Hitler" and "Society vs. Law: German Jewish Families and German Collaboration with Hitler" (Nathan Stolfus, *Resistance in the Heart*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 65-97.

Quiz 4

Day 17. *Third Debate*: Rules of War: Fighting on the Russian Front

Day 18-19. White Rose/Edelweiss Pirates

Read: "Youth in the Third Reich," Richard Bessel, *Life in the Third Reich*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, 25-40

Inge Scholl, *The White Rose* (Weslyan University Press, 1983)

Quiz 5

Day 20-21. Jewish Resistance

*Read: "The Establishment of the Jewish Fighting Organization", Israel Gutman, *Resistance: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 146-160.

*Read: "The Victims," Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 105-170

Day 22-23. July 22, 1944

*Read: "'if a man in this Reich is untrue, then he and his family will be punished': Sippenhaft and the 20 July Plot" (Robert Loeffel, *The Family Punishment*, New York: Palgrave Press, 2012), 121-165

Day 24: *Forth Debate*: The Gray Zone. How much can Jews participate in the Name of Survival?

Day 25-26. Gentile resistance

*Read: "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Decision to Resist" (Raymond Mengus, *Resistance Against the Third Reich*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 201-213.

Quiz 6

Day 26. *Fifth Debate*: Looking Back: Can we use the Results of Nazi Medical Experimentation?

Day 27. The End: The Nazi Trials and "Honoring the Righteous"

Day 28. Final Exam

