POLI120D: Germany: Before, During, and After Division (Spring 2024)

Time: MWF, 4:00p-4:50p  
Place: York 4080A

Instructor: Professor Dr. Jan Hansen  
Departments of History and Political Science, UCSD  
Office Hours: https://calendar.app.google/3nyrnQjvKyxN8yS8  
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Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to Germany’s history before, during, and after division. We will explore the factors that led to Germany's split into two states, examine key themes that shaped its trajectory from 1949 to 1990, and analyze the enduring political, economic, and societal influences on the Berlin Republic today. Various themes will be explored, including political institutions, party politics, voting behavior, the welfare state, and societal and economic debates such as migration, integration, and citizenship. Special attention will be given to understanding the significance of Germany in the lives of ordinary citizens and their roles in shaping the nation. Additionally, we will assess the methodological disparities between the disciplines of history and political science.

Learning goals:

- Develop a nuanced understanding of the legacies of Germany’s history, with a focus on the political structures of former East and West Germany.
- Acquire knowledge about political institutions, political parties, and voting trends, economic dynamics, and the pillars of the German welfare state.
- Deepen appreciation for ongoing political and societal debates, spanning migration, integration, and citizenship, religion, gender, and sexuality, as well as Germany’s evolving role in both European and global affairs.

Course Readings:


The book by Caldwell and Hanshew is available at the UCSD Bookstore and through UCSD’s Inclusive Access Program. Please note that you need to opt out of this program before the drop deadline if you don't want to use the ebook. For more information, see https://www.ucsandiegobookstore.com/inclusive-access-program.

The book by Colvin is available as a free ebook at the UCSD Library. It has been placed on course reserve. You can, of course, also buy the books used on the internet. Several of the texts can also be found in your local public library.
Films:
- “The Baader Meinhof Complex” (2008)

The films have been placed on course reserve.

Podcasts and lecture slides will be made available on the Canvas website.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Absences will seriously jeopardize your ability to succeed in this class. Please arrive to class on time and don’t leave early.

2. Weekly Quizzes:

There will be one quiz every week. Each quiz has three questions. These questions are comprehension questions, and you will be able to answer them if you have completed the reading assignments and attended the lectures of the week. You will earn one point for each correct answer. The quiz will only be available on Fridays from 4–5 pm on Canvas. You will be given a few minutes to complete the quiz at the end of each Friday’s lecture. Your score from the weekly quizzes will account for 25% of your grade.

There are no makeup assignments for quizzes that you might have missed. Instead, the two quizzes with your lowest scores will be dropped.

3. Exams and Writing Assignments:

There will be three written assignments: one short response paper/film review about one of the three films we are going to watch (1,000 words, take-home assignment, due at the end of week 8), a midterm exam on May 3 at 4 pm, and a final exam (comprehensive) on June 13 at 3 pm. Both the midterm and final exams are mandatory and in-class. Please remember to bring a blue book and pen/pencil.

Your written work must be your own, and you are expected to adhere to the university’s academic honesty code for all assignments. For more information on academic honesty and plagiarism, please refer to the history department website.

4. Grading:

The final course grade will be determined as following:

- quizzes: 25%
- film review: 15%
- midterm: 20%
- final: 40%
Letter Grade | Range
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A+ | 100% to 97%
A | < 97% to 94%
A- | < 94% to 90%
B+ | < 90% to 87%
B | < 87% to 84%
B- | < 84% to 80%
C+ | < 80% to 77%
C | < 77% to 74%
C- | < 74% to 70%
D | < 70% to 60%
F | < 60% to 0%

If you are unhappy with a grade you have received for one of the assignments, you must submit a written complaint to me no later than one week after I have returned the assignment. This will ensure a fair and standardized procedure for dealing with your complaint. I will not consider any later complaints.

5. Course Website:
Throughout the quarter, I will make extensive use of a Canvas website. It is essential that every student has regular access to this website. You will need your UCSD user ID and password to log on.

Course Schedule

Week 1: The Burden of History
April 1: Introduction: Why Care about Germany?
April 3: The Failure of the Weimar Republic
April 5: The Nazis and the Holocaust


Week 2: Divided Paths
April 8: Transitioning from War to Postwar
April 10: Ideological Clashes and Political Fractures
April 12: Two German States

Readings: Caldwell and Hanshew, pp. 17-69 (chaps. “Germany’s ‘Zero Hour’” and “New states, East and West”).

Week 3: Two Germanies in the 1950s and 1960s
April 15: Adenauer’s Germany and the Quest for Stability
April 17: Ulbricht’s Germany and the Berlin Wall
April 19: “1968” in a Global Context
Readings: Caldwell and Hanshew, pp. 70-124 (chaps. “Stability, Consolidation, and Dissent in West and East,” and “Politics and Generational Change in 1960s West Germany”).

*Week 4: Two Germanies in the 1970s and 1980s*
April 22: Ostpolitik and Mutual Recognition
April 24: Diverging Societies
April 26: Dissent and Opposition


Film: “The Baader Meinhof Complex” (2008)

*Week 5: Unification*
April 29: The Fall of the Berlin Wall
May 1: A Nation Reunited
May 3: Midterm exams


*Week 6: The Berlin Republic: Political Landscapes*
May 6: Political Institutions
May 8: Political Parties and Voting Behavior
May 10: Defining Germanness: Inclusivity and Identity

Readings: Colvin, pp. 87-132 (chaps. by Langenbacher, Saalfeld and Schoen, Williams).

*Week 7: The Berlin Republic: Economic Dynamics*
May 13: The Engine of German Growth
May 15: The Pillars of the Welfare State
May 17: The Rise of Consumer Culture

Readings: Colvin, pp. 133-146, 391-408 (chaps. by Hogwood, Hübner).

*Week 8: Society in Flux: Diversity and Dynamics*
May 20: Migration and Integration
May 22: Faith, Belief, and the Quest for Meaning
May 24: Gender and Sexuality


Week 9: Germany’s Role in Europe  
May 27: No Class/Observing Memorial Day  
May 29: Europe’s Post-national Experiment  
May 31: Towards an Ever-closer Union?  


Week 10: Germany on the Global Stage  
June 3: Navigating Foreign Relations  
June 5: A Hesitant Superpower: Germany’s Global Role  
June 7: Germany in 2024: Lessons and Legacies  