

# HUMANITIES 5695

## Fascism

Fall 2019

Fri., 3:00–5:50pm, Rm 5560

### INSTRUCTOR

Prof. Joshua DERMAN (hmderman@ust.hk)

Office: Academic Building, Room 3352

Office Hours: by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims to provide students with an introduction to the study of fascism. It situates fascism in its historical epoch (ca. 1919–1945) while raising questions about its aftershocks and significance for contemporary politics and society. This semester we will focus on a variety of themes and questions that are central to the study of National Socialism, yet at the same time relevant for the comparative study of twentieth-century political societies around the world. The weekly readings and discussions revolve around classic and contemporary texts in the historiography of National Socialism. Attention will be paid to political leadership, social mobilization, coercion and collaboration, political violence and mass killing. Students will attain a general understanding of the narrative development of National Socialism, as well as the historiographical and theoretical perspectives that have been applied to interpret it. The course does not presuppose any prior background in European history.

### ASSESSMENTS

Participation (attendance is compulsory): 15%

- Asking questions and engaging with your classmates' comments are key elements of the seminar experience. Adequate preparation is essential.

Two short in-class presentations on the weekly readings: 20%

- Students are required to make two short presentations, possibly in a group setting. Each student's contribution should last around 10 minutes. You should assume that everyone has done the reading; detailed summary or recapitulation of facts is unnecessary. Instead, you should focus on providing an overview of the argument of the text in question, ideally comparing and contrasting it with other readings from the course. You are encouraged to raise open-ended questions that can help guide discussion. PowerPoint presentations are welcome but not required.

10 pp. midterm paper: 30% due October 25

- Please address the following topic based on your analysis of the assigned readings: Explain the Nazi Party's political success prior to January 1933. What was the movement's appeal? What were its tactics? Which circumstances did it exploit to come to power?

15 pp. final paper: 35% due December 9

- Please address the following topic based on your analysis of the assigned readings: What was National Socialism's vision of a "people's community"? Did the Nazis succeed in creating one in Germany between 1933 and 1945?

ASSIGNED TEXTS

The readings are available on reserve in the university library and/or as PDFs on the course's Canvas website. You are strongly encouraged to bring hard copies—that is, photocopies or print outs, rather than purely digital versions—to class for discussion.

EXPECTATIONS

Incompletes will not be granted in this course. Please note that this course enforces a zero-tolerance policy on cheating. If a student is found to have cheated or committed plagiarism, he or she will receive an automatic F in the course, and the case will be referred to the university administration for further action. If you have any questions or concerns about working with sources, please do not hesitate to ask me.

COURSE OUTLINE**Sept. 6 / Introduction****Sept. 13 / Modernism**

Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), preface, prologue, chaps. 1, 2, 4, 6–7, 9–10.

**Sept. 20 / Sociability**

William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922–1934*, rev. ed. (New York: Watts, 1984), prefaces, chaps. 1–9.

**Sept. 27 / Ideology**

Theodore Abel, *Why Hitler Came Into Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, [1938] 1986), entire.

**Oct. 4 / Populism**

Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), entire.

**Oct. 11 / Coordination**

Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, chaps. 10–20.

**Oct. 18 / Racism**

Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), introduction, chaps. 1–6, 8, conclusion.

**Oct. 25 / Resistance**

Detlev J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), chaps. 3, 5, 7–11, 13, and epilogue.

**Nov. 1 / Charisma**

Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), entire.

**Nov. 8 / Family**

Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), preface, chaps. 1–6.

**Nov. 15 / Economics**

Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London: Penguin, 2006), chaps. TBA.

**Nov. 22 / Subjectivity**

Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), introduction, chaps. 1, 2, 4.

**Nov. 29 / Killing**

Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London: Penguin, 1992), entire.