Fascism and the Radical Right in Twentieth Century Europe
Spring 2013
University of Massachusetts-Lowell
Professor Patrick Young
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office hours: Tuesday 12:30-2, Thursday 4:45-5:45

Course Description:

This course will explore the deep and enduring appeal of fascism and radical right wing politics in twentieth century Europe. Beginning with the nationalist revival and cultural crisis of the late nineteenth century and the cataclysm of World War I, we will trace the rise of the far right to political prominence in Europe in the 1920’s and 1930’s. While retaining a Europe-wide perspective throughout, we will analyze in particular depth the successful Fascist and National Socialist seizures of power in Italy and Germany, and examine their efforts of national mobilization. Issues covered will include fascist political ideology, communication and governance; terror and “normality” in everyday life; labor and youth policy; racism and racial purification; and gender and reproductive politics, among others. In the final section of the course, we will contemplate the historical legacy of fascism, focusing on the politics of memory in post-war Germany, Italy and Europe more generally, as well as on the troubling resurgence of right wing extremist political tendencies in the 1980’s and 1990’s.

Course Materials:

The following are the required books for the course and can be purchased at the bookstore. Other course readings will be posted as pdf files on the course website, or will be provided via internet link, as indicated below. All visual resources for the class will also be housed on the course website.


Course Objectives:

The aim of the course is to enable students to:

- identify and discuss the main historical issues surrounding fascism, its impact and legacies in Twentieth Century Europe
• critically analyze a variety of primary and secondary historical evidence and use that evidence to make historical arguments in essays and class discussions
• develop critical skills in interpreting visual culture (film, propaganda posters, architecture, etc.) and works of fiction as historical sources
• demonstrate measurable improvement in written work

Course Website:

The course website can be accessed at http://continuinged.uml.edu/online. Click “Blackboard and Online Course Login” on the upper right hand corner of the page, and follow the instructions to obtain a user name and password.

The website is a vital component of the course, and it employs the Blackboard Learn course management software. All of the essential assignments, class readings, images and other course materials will be posted there. You should go to the web address as soon as possible, bookmark it, confirm your registration to obtain a user name and password, log on and familiarize yourself with the website’s content.

Please contact me or the Student Support Center (978 934-2474 or 800 480-3190) if you are having any difficulties whatsoever at any point in accessing or using the course website.

Course Requirements:

Written Work (80%)

Students will have the option of writing either three unit papers or two unit papers and a final research paper that expands the argument and source base of the second unit paper. The choice about the final paper will have to be indicated at the beginning of Unit Three.

All of the papers will require synthesis of multiple forms of historical evidence, as well as information from reading, lecture/class discussion and the course website.

The additional written requirement will be completion of one of the shorter response worksheets connected to the reading for individual classes, as indicated on the class schedule below.

*Please note:* Late written work cannot be accepted without penalty unless arrangements are made with me in advance of the due date. Written work should also be submitted directly to me in hard copy format. The penalty for lateness is one-half letter grade per day. Missed or late assignments can have a dire effect on your grade, and you should contact me if there are any circumstances that make it difficult for you to complete a piece of work in timely fashion.

Class participation (20%)

Students are expected to participate actively in discussion of the subject matter, and will be provided with multiple avenues for doing so. It is required that individual students serve as “principal discussant” during
two classes of their choosing over the course of the semester. Doing so will entail submitting a short written summary of that class’s readings to me by email prior to class, and then playing a leading role in the discussion itself.

There will be additional opportunities for participation in online discussion threads connected to the papers, and that will be considered a part of the class participation grade as well. Conversely, lateness and/or incomplete preparation for the discussion will lower the participation grade, as will any more than three absences.

Schedule of Classes

1/22 Course Introduction

1/24 What is Fascism? Problems of Definition
    Benito Mussolini, “What is Fascism?” at
    http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/mussolini-fascism.html

Unit One: Fascism’s Origins and First Wave, 1900-1929

1/29 Origins of Fascism: European Nationalism and Liberal Crisis at the Turn of the Century
    Payne, chapters 1-2, pp. 23-70
    Gustave Le Bon, “Mass Psychology”, course website
    Georges Sorel, “Reflections on Violence”, course website

1/31 The Impact of World War I
    Payne, chapter 3, pp. 71-79
    “The War and European Consciousness”, course website

2/5 Early Fascism: Fascist Doctrines and Mussolini’s Rise to Power
    “Pre-1918 Tributaries of Fascism”, course website
    Cardoza, Benito Mussolini: The First Fascist, chapters 1-2, pp. 1-34
    and/or
    Payne, chapter 4, pp. 80-110

2/7 The New Regime in Italy
    Cardoza, chapter 3, pp. 35-53
    and/or
    Payne, chapter 4, pp. 110-128

2/12 Germany: The Weimar Republic and the Birth of Nazism
    Payne, chapter 6, pp. 147-164
Friedrich Junger, “Antidemocratic Thought in the Weimar Republic”, course website
Adolph Hitler, “Mein Kampf”, course website

*Unit One Paper Due

**Unit Two: Fascism’s Apex 1929-1944**

2/14 Economic Depression and its Political Impact
Payne, chapter 6, pp. 164-175
Heinrich Hauser, “With Germany’s Unemployed”, course website
View image file, “Pre-1933 Nazi Propaganda Posters”, course website

2/19 **Monday Class Schedule; No Class**

2/21 1933 and the Establishment of Hitler’s Dictatorship
Payne, chapter 6, pp. 176-179
two of the following:
Detlef Mühlberger, “Conclusion to Hitler’s Followers”, in The Third Reich, 13-23
Richard Bessel, “Political Violence and the Nazi Seizure of Power”, course website
Albrecht Tyrell, “Towards Dictatorship: Germany 1930-1934”, in The Third Reich, 27-48

2/26 Structures of Fascist Rule: Leader, Party and State
Payne, chapter 6, pp. 179-190
Michael Guyer, “The Nazi State Reconsidered”, course website

2/28 Propaganda, Public Opinion and the Dynamics of Consent
Ian Kershaw, “How Effective was Nazi Propaganda?” course website
View image file, “Post-1933 Nazi Propaganda Posters” course website
Robert Gellately, “Surveillance and Disobedience: Aspects of the Political Policing of Nazi Germany”, in The Third Reich, 181-203

3/5 The Aesthetics of Politics, the Politics of Aesthetics: Riefenstahl’s “Triumph of the Will”
view Leni Riefenstahl, “Triumph of the Will (1935), at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHs2coAzLJ8
*optional worksheet due

3/7 “Beauty of Labor” and “Strength through Joy”: Workers under Nazism
Anson Rabinbach, “The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich”, course website
Shelley Baranowski, “Strength through Joy: Tourism and National Integration in the Third Reich”, course website

*Spring Break*

3/19 Fascist and Nazi Youth Policies
Michael Burleigh, “Youth in the Third Reich”, from *The Racial State*, course website

3/21 Women, Family and Reproductive Politics
Claudia Koonz, “The Fascist Solution to the Woman Question in Italy and Germany”, course website
Adelheid von Saldern, “Victims or Perpetrators? Controversies about the Role of Women in the Nazi State”, in *The Third Reich*, 207-227

3/26 Nazi Racial Hygiene and the *Volksgemeinschaft*
Robert Proctor, “The Nazi Diet”, from *The Nazi War on Cancer*, course website

3/28 1930’s Fascist and Authoritarian Movements and the Coming of War
Payne, chapter 8, pp. 245-289
*optional worksheet due*

4/2 Fascism at War
Payne, chapter 11, pp. 355-437
Omer Bartov, “Soldiers, Nazis and War in the Third Reich”, in *The Third Reich*, 131-150
Christopher Browning, “Reflections on a Massacre”, course website
*Unit Two Paper Due*

**Unit Three: Resistance, Memory and Revival**

4/4 The “Absurdity” of Resistance
Jean-Paul Sartre, “The Wall”, course website
Ignazio Silone, *Bread and Wine*, chapters 1-5

4/9 A Novel of Resistance? Silone’s *Bread and Wine*
Ignazio Silone, *Bread and Wine*, chapters 6-20
*optional worksheet due*
4/11  The Curious Case of Ignazio Silone
       *Bread and Wine*, chapters 20-29

4/16  Remembering Fascism: Italian Neo-Realism
       *in-class showing of film: “Rome, Open City” (1945), Roberto Rossellini

4/18  “Rome, Open City” and the Politics of Memory

4/23  The Return of the Radical Right in Europe
       Jean-Marie Le Pen, “The First Horseman of the Apocalypse: International
       Communism”, course website
       Jörg Haider, “Multiculturalism and Love of One’s Country”, course
       website

4/25  German Memory Politics and Neo-Nazism in the 1980’s and 1990’s
       “Bitburg, Historicization and the Historikerstreit”, course website
       Ingo Hasselbach, “Inside the Neo-Nazi Scene”, course website
       Joachim Krautz, “The Grapes of Neglect: Violence and Xenophobia in
       Germany”, handout

4/30  Yugoslavia: From Communism to Ethno-Fascism?
       David Rieff, “Slaughter in Yugoslavia”, handout

       *Final Paper due*