

Fascism and the Radical Right in Twentieth Century Europe

Spring 2017

University of Massachusetts-Lowell

Professor Patrick Young

Dugan 106

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office hours: Tuesday 9:30-11, Thursday 11-12:30

Course Description:

This course will explore the deep and enduring appeal of fascism and radical right wing politics in Europe, over the twentieth century and into current time. 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 respective efforts of national mobilization. Issues covered will include fascist political ideology, communication and governance; charismatic leadership; terror, consent and "normality" in everyday life; labor and youth policy; gender and reproductive politics; racism and racial purification. In the final section of the course, we will consider the historical legacy and memory of fascism, and focus on the striking resurgence of radical right wing political tendencies in contemporary Europe.

Course Materials:

The following are the required books for the course and can be purchased at the bookstore. Digitized chapters, articles and original source documents will be made available 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.

Stanley Payne, *Fascism, 1914-1945* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), ISBN 978-0-299-14874-4

Anthony Cardoza, *Mussolini: The First Fascist* (Pearson, 2006), ISBN 0-321-09587-1

Course Objectives:

The aim of the course is to enable students to:

- identify and discuss the main historical issues surrounding fascism and radical right wing politics in Europe
- engage scholarly, historiographic and ethical debates connected with European fascism and right wing politics
- consider the similarities and differences between radical right wing political tendencies of the interwar period and contemporary time

- 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 and literary culture (propaganda imagery, film, architecture, 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%)

Each of the main topical/chronological units of the course will have written work corresponding to it. This will consist both of shorter response, document analysis or presentation-based assignments, and longer-format formal essays.

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

Students are expected to take stock of critical comments and suggestions for improvement that are offered on returned written work.

*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%)

This course has a discussion-based format, and requires active student participation throughout the semester. A formal requirement of that participation is that students assume responsibility for being a primary discussant for **two**

classes of their choosing at some point over the course of the semester. On the dates when they are designated as primary discussant, students are required to submit (by email attachment, at least two hours prior to class) a one to two-page response to the main discussion question of that class, as indicated on the schedule of classes below, as well as any questions they may wish to pose about the reading and/or to the class.

The primary discussant work will be combined with a grade for daily participation, to produce an overall class discussion grade. Lateness and/or incomplete preparation for the discussion will lower the participation grade, as will any more than three absences. Texting and computer usage unrelated to course content are strictly forbidden during class, and will also diminish the class participation grade.

Schedule of Classes

1/17 Course Introduction

1/19 What is 'Fascism' and the 'Radical Right'? Problems of Definition
Benito Mussolini, "What is Fascism?" at
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/mussolini-fascism.html>
Stanley Payne, *Fascism, 1914-1945*, "Introduction: Fascism, A Working Definition", 3-19
main discussion question: Why can fascism be difficult to define, and which definition(s) do you find most compelling?

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

1/24 Origins of Fascism: European Nationalism and Liberal Crisis at the Turn of the Century
Payne, chapters 1-2, pp. 23-70
choose one for focus:
Gustave Le Bon, "Mass Psychology", course website
Georges Sorel, "Reflections on Violence", course website
Vilfredo Pareto, "Politics and the Nonrational," course website
main discussion question: What are the main historical conditions and developments of turn of the century Europe that help explain the emergence of fascism and the radical right?

1/26 The Impact of World War I
Payne, 71-79
"The War and European Consciousness", course website
main discussion question: How did the experience and outcomes of World War I contribute to the emergence of fascism as a political ideology?
***2-page document response due**

- 1/31 Early Fascism: Fascist Doctrines and Mussolini's Rise to Power in Italy
 "Pre-1918 Tributaries of Fascism", course website
 Cardoza, *Benito Mussolini: The First Fascist*, chapters 1-2, pp. 1-34
and/or
 Payne, 80-110
main discussion question: How did the ideology of fascism arise in Italy,
 and what was distinctive about the perspective that Mussolini and
 other radical nationalists offered on Italy's condition?
- 2/2 The New Fascist Regime in Italy
 Cardoza, chapter 3, pp. 35-53
 "Program of the Italian Fascist Movement," "Postulates of the Italian
 Fascist Movement", 1919-1920, course website
main discussion question: What were the main components of the Fascist
 program, and what conditions and events led to the elevation
 of Mussolini to the position of Prime Minister?
- 2/7 Germany: The Weimar Republic and the Birth of Nazism
 Payne, 147-164
 Adolph Hitler, "Mein Kampf", course website
 "The 25 Points, An Early Nazi Program", at
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/25points.html>
main discussion question: How and why did postwar conditions in
 Germany give rise to radical right wing political tendencies, and
 what were the defining features of the National Socialist
 worldview?

Unit Two: Fascism's Apex 1929-1944

- 2/9 Economic Depression and the Nazi Breakthrough
 Payne, 164-175
 Heinrich Hauser, "With Germany's Unemployed", course website
 View image file, "Pre-1933 Nazi Propaganda Posters", course website
main discussion question: How and why did Hitler and the Nazi Party
 experience a political breakthrough over the years following the
 Great Depression?

***Unit One Paper Due**

- 2/14 From Democracy to Dictatorship in Italy and Germany
choose one country:
 on Germany: Payne, chapter 6, pp. 176-179
 Albrecht Tyrell, "Towards Dictatorship: Germany 1930-
 1934", course website
 on Italy: Payne, 110-123; Cardoza, 55-70

main discussion question: How were Mussolini and Hitler able to establish dictatorial rule in their respective countries?

- 2/16 Structures of Rule: Leader, Party and State
Payne, 179-190
Michael Guyer, “The Nazi State Reconsidered”, course website
Ian Kershaw, “Working Towards the Führer: Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship”, course website
main discussion question: How did the Nazi state function, and how effective was it?
- 2/21 Monday Class Schedule; No Class**
- 2/23 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>
main discussion question: Is Leni Riefenstahl’s “Triumph of the Will” a film about fascism, or a fascist film?
- 2/28 Propaganda, Public Opinion and the Dynamics of Consent
view image file, “Cult of the Leader Propaganda” course website
choose one country:
Ian Kershaw, “How Effective was Nazi Propaganda?” course website
Robert Gellately, “Surveillance and Disobedience: Aspects of the Political Policing of Nazi Germany”, course website
or
Cardoza, 71-86
Christopher Duggan, *Fascist Voices: An Intimate History of Mussolini’s Italy*, selections, course website
main discussion question: How did fascist regimes attempt to shape popular opinion, and how successful were they in securing popular consent?
- 3/2 Economic and Labor Policies
Payne, 186-194; 224-226
Italian Fascist Labor Charter, 1927, course website
Shelley Baranowski, “Strength through Joy: Tourism and National Integration in the Third Reich”, course website
main discussion question: What policies did the Italian and German regimes undertake with regard to the economy and labor, and what were the outcomes and impacts of those policies?
- 3/7 Fascist and Nazi Youth Policy
“Principles, Goals and Methods of the Fascist Schools”, 1939, course website

Paola Bernasconi, "A Fairy Tale Dictator: Children's Letters to the Duce,"
course website

Michael Burleigh, "Youth in the Third Reich", from *The Racial State*,
course website

main discussion question: How did the Fascist and Nazi regimes attempt
to reach and mobilize youth, and how successful were they?

***two-page historiography assignment due**

3/9 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", course website

main discussion question: What were the objectives and initiatives that
guided fascist policies toward women, and what was the impact of
those policies?

Spring Break

3/21 Nazi Racial Hygiene and the *Volksgemeinschaft*

choose two:

William Carr, "Nazi Policy against the Jews", in *Life in the Third Reich*,
69-82

Jeremy Noakes, "Social Outcasts in the Third Reich", in *Life in the Third
Reich*, 83-96

Robert Proctor, "The Nazi Diet", from *The Nazi War on Cancer*, course
website

main discussion question: Why and how did the Nazis endeavor to create
a "racial state" in Germany?

3/23 1930's Fascist and Authoritarian Movements and the Coming of War

Payne, chapters 8 and 9, pp. 245-327 (**choose one country**)

main discussion question: How did the tilt toward radical right wing
politics play out across Europe in the 1930's, and how can we
explain the patterns and variations in its appeal?

3/28 Fascism at War

Payne, chapter 11, pp. 355-391

Omer Bartov, "Soldiers, Nazis and War in the Third Reich", in *The
Third Reich*, 131-150

Christopher Browning, "Reflections on a Massacre", course website

main discussion question: What was the role of fascist principles and
provocations in bringing about World War II; how did Hitler
and Mussolini conduct their war efforts, and how did fascist
ideology influence the behavior of soldiers in combat?

Unit Three: Resistance, Memory and Revival

- 3/30 The Necessity and 'Absurdity' of Resistance
Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Wall", course website
Hans and Sophie Scholl, "The White Rose," course website
main discussion question: On what grounds was resistance to fascism justified, and how important was it?

***Unit Two Paper Due**

- 4/4 Defeating Fascism, Remembering Fascism: "Rome, Open City"
*view film: "Rome, Open City" (1945), Roberto Rossellini
main discussion question: How does "Rome, Open City" characterize Italy's experience of fascism, and is that view a realistic or distorted one?
- 4/6 Memory Issues and Controversies: Germany in the 1980s
"Bitburg, Historicization and the *Historikerstreit*", course website
main discussion question: How was Germany's memory of fascism shown to be a conflicted one in the Bitburg and *Historikerstreit* episodes of the 1980s?
- 4/11 The Radical Right in Contemporary Europe: Overview
- 4/13 In-Class Presentations/Group Discussions
- 4/18 In-Class Presentations/Group Discussions
- 4/20 In-Class Presentations/Group Discussions
- 4/25 In-Class Presentations/Group Discussions
- 4/27 Looking Back, Looking Forward: Reconsidering the Radical Right

***Final Paper due**