

HITLER, NAZISM AND WORLD WAR TWO

History 376G/LAH 350
Spring, 2014

Prof. David Crew

THE PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

How was an obscure, unemployed Austrian, who never rose above the rank of corporal in the German army, able to become the leader of a mass political movement which overthrew the most democratic political system Germany had ever known? Why did Germany begin the most devastating and brutal war in world history just two decades after having lost the First World War? Why did the Nazi state systematically murder 6 million Jews? How did the implementation of Nazi plans for a "racial empire" affect the lives of millions of Europeans during the Second World War? And what is the legacy of the Third Reich, for Germany today? These are the primary questions addressed by this course.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

David F. Crew, *Hitler and the Nazis. A History in Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)[also available on-line at the PCL as an e-book]

J. Noakes and G. Pridham(editors), *Nazism. A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts, 1919-1945* (University of Exeter Press Edition: Volumes 2 &3)

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

We are also going to be working with the images at these two web-sites:

<http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/> and <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADING

A distinctive feature of this course is the fact that we will be working extensively with original documents, in translation. This will give you a more direct and immediate connection to the past, will allow you to experience, at first hand, the language and ideas of the period. It will also allow you to engage directly in the process of interpretation. Rather than simply ingesting the arguments of historians who write about the Nazi period, you will have the opportunity to analyze the "raw materials" with which historians themselves work. The first and second document essays will ask you to comment on the meaning and significance of several documents(or parts of documents) assigned for the class. You will be given a copy of the document(s) which will be clearly identified for you (i.e. author, date, place). These are, therefore, not identification quizzes; your job is rather to write an essay in which you show why the particular documents are important in terms of the larger history of the period from which they derive and what they tell us about that particular phase in the rise or development of Nazism.

Your general participation in class discussions (i.e. attendance + involvement) counts for 20% of the overall grade. There will be a take-home mid-term document essay (5-6 pages, 20% of the final grade). There is no final exam per se but you will have a second take-home document essay (5-6 pages, 20% of the final grade). You will also be asked to write one short essay on any one of the books by Remarque or Levi (4-5 pages, 20% of final grade). Finally, you will be asked to write **two** brief (2-3 page) analyses of the visual evidence (photographs, propaganda, election posters, etc.) discussed in class and/or those that are available on the web-sites listed above. Each of these two assignments is worth 10% of the final grade. I will be using the full range of +/- grades.