

Science, Politics and Culture in Nazi Germany

Last Updated: Tue, 07/15/2025

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 3046

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
91659

Instructor First Name: Victoria

Instructor Last Name: Thompson

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

This course examines the history of Nazi Germany, from its precursors in the late 19th and early 20th century, through the establishment, highpoint, and downfall of the regime in 1945. We will discuss not only those in power and their policies, but also those who resisted and those who were targets of the regime. Some of the questions we will explore include: Why did people vote for the Nazi party? Why did people support the regime and its policies? What sorts of resistance were possible? Who was targeted by the regime, and why? How was scientific knowledge used to justify Nazi policies? How did those targeted by the regime get by? How did they face deportation and death? Why did people convince themselves that the Holocaust wasn't happening despite evidence to the contrary? This course asks us to consider the complexity of human behavior during times of crisis.

Course learning outcomes:

Historical Knowledge:

- Understand the origins, development, and legacy of the Nazi regime in Europe, including its impact on a variety of groups and individuals.
- Describe past events from multiple perspectives
- Assess the work of historians on a given topic

Research Skills:

- Identify a topic for research and craft a question that your research seeks to answer

- Find scholarly secondary sources and appropriate primary sources using databases provided by the instructor and Georgia Tech library resources
- Summarize and explain applicability of secondary and primary sources for a research project

Historical Thinking Skills:

- Analyze historical documents, placing them in the appropriate context and identifying their strengths and weaknesses as sources for understanding the past
- Craft a well-supported argument and a coherent narrative based on multiple primary and secondary sources
- Explain cause and effect
- Explain continuity and change
- Demonstrate historical empathy

Required course materials:

Jane Caplan, *Nazi Germany: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

This book is required. You can buy this book: [here](#). Price ranges from \$12.99 (new) to \$7.99 (digital).

Additional required readings will be available on Canvas.

Grading policy:

Attendance	5%
Quizzes on reading (4 @ 10% each)	40%
Midterm exam	15%
Final exam	15%
Research project	25%

The grade for the research project is broken down as follows:

Annotated bibliography	5%
Outline	5%
Introduction with argument	5%
Final Paper	10%

Grade Scale:

A: 90-100: Superior performance – demonstrates thorough understanding of course material and issues raised in class and, if relevant, additional primary and secondary sources. Able to make clear connections between specific examples and general context. Ability to structure and execute arguments in written work. Ability to write well and clearly in a convincing manner. Work is insightful and thought-provoking.

B: 80-89: Good performance – demonstrates a good understanding of course material and issues raised in class and, if relevant, additional primary and secondary sources. Connections between specific examples and general context are present. Arguments may be more basic, but they are well executed in written work. Ability to write well and clearly.

C: 70-79: Average performance – demonstrates a general understanding of course material and issues raised in class and, if relevant, additional secondary and primary sources. This understanding may be lacking details or contain some minor errors. Connections between specific details and general context may not always be present. Argument is present, but may not structure entire assignment in written work. Writing is good enough to be understood without effort.

D: 60-69: Poor performance – demonstrates a superficial understanding of course material and, if relevant, additional secondary and primary sources. Connections lacking between specific details and general context. Argument is lacking or inconsistent throughout paper. Poor writing with many errors and/or difficult to understand.

OR written assignments reflect general knowledge on topic (as might be found in an AI-generated paper), without considering applicable issues discussed in class.

F: 0-59: Unacceptable performance: Work does not address assignment, multiple errors, minimal or no consideration of course materials or issues discussed in class. Lack of specific details or inappropriate details; lack of argument. Writing is poor with many errors and/or difficult to understand.

Attendance policy:

Attendance is worth 5% of your final grade

Attendance will be taken each day in class. Except for excused absences and two free days, students are expected to attend class. Your attendance grade will be calculated as follows:

27 in-class meetings minus 2 free days = 25 class meetings, each of which is worth 4 points.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion