

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SECOND REICH

This course spans the period from 1740 (the accession of Frederick the Great) to the end of World War I and is an essential foundation for understanding Germany's catastrophic history in the first half of the 20th Century – but also, its successes in the second half.

When we begin, the term "Germany" covered a loose collection of polities ranging from city-states, to middle sized kingdoms, to the huge multinational empire ruled by the Habsburg dynasty. Culturally marginalized after the devastating 30 Years War, economically a backwater, the region had been easy prey to the appetites of the Great Powers, especially France. By 1871, war – especially those fought under Otto von Bismarck, known as "the Iron Chancellor" – had enabled one kingdom, Prussia, to dominate its German neighbors. The resulting German Empire (the "Second Reich") was an economic dynamo, commanded the most powerful army in Europe, and boasted the most educated population and one of the most creative elites in the world, making it a model for other emerging and ambitious states (for example, Japan).

Bismarck's empire, committed to the principle of ethnic homogeneity (the German "nation") in the heart of Central Europe, left Prussia's old rival, the multi-ethnic (= "multi-national") empire of the Habsburgs (popularly referred to as "Austria"), a state with a similarly creative elite, an only slightly less dynamic economy, and a large German population of its own, more and more an anomaly in the a Europe now organized, at least in theory, in nation-states. Yet the two empires – German and Austrian – were bound at the hip: by history, by culture, and after 1879, by a military alliance. The strains that growing nationalism everywhere put on the European state-system helped plummet Europe into total war in 1914 – a war during which Europe's first genocide (of the Armenians) took place under the eyes of German military leaders. At the end of World War I, both the German Reich, which had managed to maintain military supremacy in the field for four long years, and its Habsburg counterpart, collapsed.

Our central theme is the creation, expansion, and collapse of the German Empire, a collapse that brought down the Habsburg Empire with it. But this course will also explore the rise of the largest economy *and* the most powerful socialist movement in the world; anti-Catholicism, antisemitism, and the genocidal dynamic of what the 19th century called "small wars" (i.e., colonial warfare); and the lives of ordinary citizens (through autobiography). We will sample German Romanticism (through fiction) and Vienna Modernism (through architecture and art). Behind all of these developments lurks the question of "national identity," a question that posed severe political and cultural problems for a region where states and "nations" had never quite coincided, and where people with a variety of identities could claim with equal right to be "German."

Requirements: exams (mid-term, March 4 = 15%) and final (40%); **two papers** (5 double-spaced pages = 15% each); attendance and **vigorous participation** in discussions (15%).

Paper topics are drawn from the assigned reading and require no additional research. They are due in class on the day that particular reading is discussed. You decide yourself on which of the topics to write and (consequently) on which date to submit each paper to suit your own schedule. Since good historians not only understand what they learn, but are also be able to communicate it, each paper will receive two grades, of equal weight: one for analysis, the other for presentation (organization, clarity, grammar, spelling, and punctuation: all the things that together we call "good writing"). I suggest that you familiarize yourself with the very brief set of rules for good writing found William Strunk and E.B. White, *Elements of Style*, available on-line, in paper, and in the library.

Documents and shorter readings are in a **READER**, at Copy Central, 2560 Bancroft Way. The following paperbacks are for sale in local bookstores and are also be on **RESERVE** in Moffitt.

Gerhard Ritter, *Frederick the Great: A Profile* (1936)

David Wetzel, *Duel of Giants. Bismarck, Napoleon III, & the Origins of the Franco-Prussian War* (2002).

Laurence Lafore, *The Long Fuse. An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (1965, 1997)

William Carr, *A History of Germany 1815-1990* (4th ed. 1990) (course textbook)

NOTE: Our bookstore assures me they will have enough copies of the 4th edition (used is fine), but if the 4th edition is sold out, the 5th will do, although it is more expensive. The assigned pages are from the 4th ed., but it will easy to locate the assignments in the 5th.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES & READINGS

WEEK 1:

Tues. Jan 19 Introduction: the German Question
 Thurs. Jan 21 The Setting: The "First Reich" (Holy Roman Empire)

Reading:

Reader: James J. Sheehan, *German History 1770-1866* (1989), selections on Austria, Prussia, and 18th Century Culture (39 pp.)

Begin Gerhard Ritter, *Frederick the Great: A Profile* (1936), chs. 1-4 (pp. 1-61)

WEEK 2:

Tues. Jan 26 The Prussian Tradition
 Thurs. Jan 28 Enlightenment in Politics? Frederick the Great

Reading:

Reader: Chief Bailiff Fromme, "An Inspection Tour with Frederick II" (1779). 19 pp.

Continue Gerhard Ritter, *Frederick the Great. A Profile*, chs. 5, 6, 7 (pp. 61-93)

Supplementary reading for those who want to explore further:

Love and Marriage between Jewish women and Prussian men during the Enlightenment:

Deborah Hertz, "Salons and Intermarriage," *Central European History*, 16/4 (Dec. 1983): 303-346.

Susanne Hillman, "The Conversions of Dorothea Mendelssohn: Conviction or Convenience?" *German Studies Review* XXIX/1 (Feb. 2006): 127-44.

WEEK 3:

Tues. Feb 2 **FIRST DISCUSSION: Frederick II & Enlightened Absolutism**

Reading:

Reader: Lt. Ernst Friedrich Rudolf von Barsewisch, "The Battle of Hochkirch of 1758." 7 pp.

Finish Gerhard Ritter, *Frederick the Great: A Profile*, chs. 8 and 10, pp. 129-48; 185-202.

PAPER TOPICS: Choose one or (if you want to integrate) both.

Frederick II believed his policies reflected the rational pursuit of the interests of his state ("reason of state"). Was he right?

Why was it historically misleading for later German nationalists to see Frederick II and his policies as precursors for a German nation-state?

Thurs. Feb 4 The Impact of Napoleon and Romanticism

Supplementary reading for those who want to explore further:

Germany under the impact of Revolutionary and Napoleon wars:
 James J. Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866*, chs. 4 & 5

On the general whose "treason" saved Prussia during the final conflict with Napoleon: Peter Paret, *Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform, 1807-1815* (1966).

WEEK 4:

Tues.

Feb 9

SECOND DISCUSSION: The Essence of Romanticism?**Reading:**

Reader: Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811): "The Marquise of O," and Kleist "The Beggarwoman of Locarno," 49 pp.

E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776-1822): "The Sandman," 38 pp.

George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology. Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (1964), "Introduction" and ch. 1, "From Romanticism to the Volk," 1-30.

PAPER TOPIC:

Analyze "The Sandman" (and if you want, one or both of the Kleist stories as well) as an example of Romanticism.

Thurs.

Feb 11

The Age of Metternich: 1814 - 1848

Reading:

Reader: Prince Metternich, "The Karlsbad Decrees" (1 p.)

For background: William Carr, *A History of Germany*, Ch. 1, "Restoration Germany," Ch. 2, "The Revolution of 1848," 1-51.

Supplementary reading for those who want more:

George Williamson, "Who Killed August von Kotzebue? The Temptations of Virtue and the Political Theology of German Nationalism 1789-1819," *Journal of Modern History* 72 (Dec. 2000): 890-943. On Father Jahn and German nationalism.

Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx. His Life & Environment* (1978).

Brief portrait of Marx as an Idealist German philosopher

WEEK 5:

Tues.

Feb 16

The Revolutions of 1848

Thurs.

Feb 18

THIRD DISCUSSION: Self-Government, German Style**Reading:**

Reader: Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State and General Estate 1648-1871* (1971). Ch.1 "The Incubator," from 1-33; parts of ch. 2 "The Civic Community," 34-35, 56-62; ch. 3 "Guilds," 73-99, 102-107; ch. 4 "Walls, Webs, and Citizens," 109-22, 133-35, 140; ch. 11 "1848," pp. 356-86, 388-91.

"With German Craft Rules, It's Hard Just to Get Work," *New York Times*. Feb. 1999.

Supplementary reading for those who want to explore further:

Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals. The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848-1849* (1991).

PAPER TOPIC:

You consider yourself a lover of freedom and you have just been elected to the Frankfurt Parliament. You are *either* a lawyer for your hometown and its citizens *or* you are liberal lawyer or bureaucrat from some capital city who thinks that the hometowns represent precisely what is wrong with Germany. Tell us what you like or don't like about the legislation passed by the Frankfurt Parliament, *making the most convincing case for your position that you can*. Remember, the best lawyers are always those who are aware of the arguments their opponents can marshal against them.

WEEK 6:

Tues. Feb 23 The Rise of Bismarck
 Thurs. Feb 25 German Unification

Reading:

For overview: William Carr, *A History of Germany*, Chs. 3 & 4, "Germany in the 1850s" and "The Unification of Germany," 61-118.

Begin David Wetzel, *Duel of Giants. Bismarck, Napoleon III, & the Origins of the Franco-Prussian War* (2002).

Supplementary reading for those who want to explore further:

A.J.P. Taylor, *Bismarck, the Man and the Statesman* (1955)
 Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War* (2003)

WEEK 7:

Tues. Mar 2 **FOURTH DISCUSSION:** Blood and Iron: Causes of Franco-Prussian War

Reading:

Finish David Wetzel, *Duel of Giants. Bismarck, Napoleon III, and the Origins of the Franco-Prussian War* (2002).

Reader: Bismarck, "The Ems Dispatch," from his *Reflections and Reminiscences* (1898).

PAPER TOPIC:

Did Bismarck plan to go to war against France? How accurate was Bismarck's assessment of his leading French antagonists (esp. Gramont and Napoleon III)? Who (or what) was responsible for the Franco-Prussian War?

Thurs. Mar 4 **MID-TERM EXAM**

WEEK 8:

Tues. Mar 9 Outsiders I: Culture War against the Catholics (the *Kulturkampf*)
 Thurs. Mar 11 Outsiders II: Class War against the Social Democrats

Reading:

William Carr, *A History of Germany*, **part of ch. 5:** "The Development of the German Empire, 1871-1890," **from 119-136**, mid-page.

Reader: M. L. Anderson, "Voter, Junker, Landrat, Priest: The Old Authorities & the New Franchise in Imperial Germany," *American Historical Review* 98/5 (Dec. 1993): 1448-74.

Supplementary reading for those who want to explore further:

Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict. Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (1995).

WEEK 9:

Tues. Mar 16 **FIFTH DISCUSSION:** German Workingmen – and Workingwomen!

Reading:

Reader: M. L. Anderson, "Defeating the Socialist Law," from Ch. 9 of Anderson, *Practicing Democracy. Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (2000), pp. 286-305

Autobiographies from *The German Worker*, ed. by Alfred Kelly (1987)

- "A City Man on a Farm" (1896)
- "Moritz Bromme, Woodworker and Metalworker" (1905)
- "A Barmaid" (ca. 1900) (64 pp.)

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PAPER TOPIC: Reading "Between the Lines" of Primary Sources.

Every narrative, whether from the past or from our own day, is written from a particular perspective. Even eye-witnesses "see" some things, and miss others, not least because of who they are, and the historian, as a critical reader, must be alert to their biases. The point of this week's exercise is to give you practice in "reading between the lines" – i.e., seeing what the document's own author is not conscious of "saying," but what is nevertheless "hidden in plain sight." **Choose one** of today's autobiographies and use its materials to construct, as carefully and sympathetically as possible, a *different* story, different because, while drawing on the same events, it is told from the perspective of different person:

- a member of the farm family in Mecklenburg that employed Otto, the "City Man"
- Moritz Bromme's wife
- one of the Barmaid's employers

Good papers will be ones that pay close attention to the text of the actual document, but by reading between the lines and *thinking* about the implications of the information it conveys, constructs an alternative to the perspective given by the author. (One way to do this is to imagine yourself a lawyer looking at the evidence on behalf of a *different* client.)

Thurs. Mar 18 Outsiders III: The Jews of Central Europe and Antisemitism

Supplementary for those who want more — Great for Spring Break !

Film: *Pelle the Conqueror* (1988), by Bille August. Moving tale of rural childhood of the rural poor in the late 19th century. Though set in Denmark, the landscape, architecture, and especially relations between masters and workers were exactly the same as in Schleswig-Holstein, rural Prussia, Mecklenburg, and Pomerania: in short throughout northern Germany. A good companion to Otto's "City Man on a Farm."

Novel: Sybille Bedford, *A Legacy* (1956). Brilliant novel of the the transformation of Germany after unification, seen through the intertwined stories of a South German Catholic and a Berlin Jewish family.

March 22 – March 26 SPRING BREAK !

WEEK 10:

Tues. Mar 30 Race in a Multi-Ethnic Empire

Thurs. Apr 1 **SLIDE LECTURE:** Vienna Culture between Tradition and Modernism

Reading: William Carr, *A History of Germany*, **finish ch. 5:** "The Development of the German Empire, 1871- 1890," **from 136 to 145** Ch. 6, "Bismarck's Foreign Policy, 1871-1890," 146-62; Ch. 7, "The Germany of Wilhelm II 1890-1914," 163-86.

Reader: Interview with Bismarck on State Socialism, January 1881, by Moritz Busch, journalist and Bismarck's unofficial press secretary.

WEEK 11:

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| Tues. | Apr 6 | Wilhelmine Germany: On a "Peculiar Path" ? |
| Thurs. | Apr 8 | SIXTH DISCUSSION: A Murder Mystery and a Case of Genocide |

Reading:

Reader: Abraham Mendelssohn, "Why I Have Raised You As a Christian: A Letter to His Daughter Fanny," 1 p.
 Bismarck, conversation on Germany's Jews, 1892, reprinted in F.B.M. Hollyday, *Bismarck: Great Lives Observed* (1970), 2 pp.
 Helmut Walser Smith, "Konitz, 1900: Ritual Murder and Antisemitic Violence," 29 pp.
 Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction. Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (2005), chs. 1 and 2 on the 1904 destruction of the Herero in German South West Africa (today's Namibia). 62 pp.

PAPER TOPIC: Reading Secondary Sources Against the Grain

Imagine that you are a liberal German Jew, writing some time after the turn of the century. The events in Konitz have been widely reported in the foreign press and you are asked by the *New York Tribune* to write an article commenting on the Konitz events and on the state of antisemitism in Germany. You argue (contrary to Smith) that the significance of the Konitz case has been exaggerated. Basing your account largely on Smith's information, but on anything else you may have learned from this course, what arguments would you make?

Supplementary reading for those who want to explore further:

Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron. Bismarck, Bleichröder & the Building of the German Empire* (1978), chs. 17-19, & epilogue.
 Helmut W. Smith, "The Logic of Colonial Violence: Germany in Southwest Africa (1904-1907); the US in the Philippines (1899-1902)," *German & American Nationalism*, ed. H. Lehmann & H. Wellenreuther (1999), 205-31.

WEEK 12:

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| Tues. | Apr 13 | Unsolved Problems: The Kaiser and the Crises |
| Thurs. | Apr 15 | Origins of World War I: Encirclement, Balkan Crises, Countdown |

Reading:

Background: William Carr, *A History of Germany*, ch. 8, "The Foreign Policy of Imperial Germany," pp. 187-211. **Begin** Laurence Lafore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (1965).

Supplementary reading for those who want to explore further:

Joseph Roth, *Radetzky March* (1932). Novel about life within the Habsburg Empire's army, focusing on the friendship between a Slovenian officer (of peasant background) and a Jewish army doctor, whose grandfather operated a tavern in Galicia. The army becomes Roth's symbol of the multi-national empire itself.
 István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism. A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps* (1992). Suggested chapters: "Introduction," "Life in the Regiment," "From Payday to Payday," "Latter Day Knights;" "Marriage, Family, Sexual Ethics, Crime."

WEEK 13:

Tues. Apr 20 **SEVENTH DISCUSSION:** What "Caused" World War I ?

Reading:

Finish: Laurence Lafore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (1972)

PAPER TOPIC:

What is Lafore's "interpretation" (argument) about the origins of WWI? (Hint: what was "the long fuse"?)

Thurs. Apr 22 A German Way of War? Atrocities and Military Dictatorship

Supplementary reading / viewing for those who want to explore further:

Paul W. Schroeder, "The Risks of Victory. An Historian's Provocation," in *The National Interest* (Winter 2001/02): 22-36. Fascinating comparison of 9/11 to the assassinations at Sarajevo by a master diplomatic historian.

Colonel Redl (1984) Film by István Szabó. A dark counterpart to Joseph Roth's *Radetzky March*. Many of the same themes, now connected to espionage.

WEEK 14:

Tues Apr 27

EIGHTH DISCUSSION: A German Way of War?**Reading:**

Background: William Carr, *A History of Germany*, ch. 9 "Germany at War, 1914-1918," 212-35.

Reader: Documents from World War I:

- Annex to the [Hague] Convention: Regulations Respecting the Laws & Customs of War on Land (1907) (15 pp. - wide margins)
 - Section I Belligerents.* Ch. 1 "The Qualifications of Belligerents;" Ch. 2 "Prisoners of War" Ch. 3 "The Sick & Wounded"
 - Section II Hostilities.* Ch. 1 "Means of Injuring the Enemy, Sieges and Bombardments" Ch. 2 "Spies;" Ch. 3 "Flags of Truce;" Ch. 4 "Capitulations;" Ch. 5 "Armistices."
 - Section III Military Authority over the Territory of the Hostile State.*
- 4 August, 1914. Report of Sir Edward Goschen, the British ambassador to Berlin, on his conversation with Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, July 4, 1914 (the origin of the phrase "scrap of paper" for the international treaty guaranteeing Belgium's neutrality)
- Bethmann Hollweg's Defense to the Reichstag of the German Invasion of Belgium
- German Military Proclamation of Hostage System in Belgium
- The Sinking of the Lusitania
- Execution of Nurse Edith Cavell
- The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

PAPER TOPIC:

Using some or all of the documents from this week's assignments, do you conclude that the German government and its officials abandoned civilized norms in 1914, either in its decision to wage war and/or in the way it conducted war?

Thurs Apr 29

Dying by The Sword. The Fall of the Hohenzollern & Habsburg Empires: From Second Reich to Third?

