GERM 1175

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GERMAN CULTURE

Fall Semester 20XX
Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:15pm
Oak Hall 201

Professor Sebastian Wogenstein
Office: Oak Hall 262
Office Hours: Tue 11-12 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course examines primary sources on, and theories of, human rights from the Enlightenment to the present and analyzes related ethical problems in conjunction with an examination of relevant literary texts, film, and other art forms. Using various media, students will become familiar with texts focusing on the legal status and experiences of Jews in Germany from the late 18th century to the present, the women's rights and labor rights movements, Germany's colonial history, the Holocaust, human rights in divided Germany, and current debates on citizenship, multiculturalism, and political asylum. The course also discusses the impact German history, and the prosecution of Nazi perpetrators in particular, had on the development of international human rights declarations, treaties, and courts as well as the role of the post-war German states and contemporary Germany's involvement in international human rights matters. Although the course focuses on Germany, it also aims to sharpen their ethical sensitivity and raise awareness of human rights-related issues in the students' own lives.

The following questions will be central to our analysis: When and why have human rights been considered natural or universal? How is moral philosophy relevant to contemporary debates on human rights? What role does the idea of justice play in imagining a less violent world? Can literature and the arts be considered ethical projects? How can we describe the impact on readers/observers who are confronted with representations of human rights violations? Which affective strategies might be involved in these representations? How are literature, the arts, and philosophy related to legal rights frameworks and politics?

REQUIRED READING

The following books are available for purchase at the UCONN COOP:

Jurek Becker: *Bronstein's Children* (University of Chicago Press)

Georg Büchner: *Danton's Death, Leonce and Lena, Woyzeck.* (Oxford University Press)

Heinrich von Kleist: *The Marquise of O and Other Stories* (Penguin Classics)

Hans Massaquoi: *Destined to Witness: Growing Up Black in Nazi Germany* (Harper Perennial)

All additional source material (book excerpts and journal articles) will be available for download on HuskyCT or via the URL links mentioned in the syllabus.

PARTICIPATION: You are expected to attend class regularly and to participate actively in discussions. If you don't understand something or find something questionable, voice your objection or ask. You are expected to read all assigned texts carefully and come to each seminar session prepared with question.

ATTENDANCE is required. If you cannot come to class for legitimate reasons, you are required to inform the instructor ahead of the class session. You will also be responsible for retrieving class materials and notes from fellow students.

ACADEMIC HONESTY/PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable and will be taken seriously. **Writing assignments for this course will be submitted through HuskyCT's "Safe Assign" function and will automatically be checked for plagiarism.** For a definition of plagiarism and penalties, see section "Honor Code" of the Student Handbook.

If you have any special request for the course, if you need help at any point during the course, or if you cannot fulfill an assignment for a specific reason, please contact me after the class session or via e-mail.

SUPPORT: The Writing Center offers a variety of support for students.
Website: http://www.writingcenter.uconn.edu

If you need academic accommodations for a disability, please let me know.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE COMPOSITION

1) Class participation and four brief response papers (400-500 words) (30%)

2) Quizzes (20%).

3) Midterm exam (15%)

4) Group poster presentation (10 minutes + 5 minutes Q&A) (10%)

5) Final exam (25%)

Schedule, policies, and assignments are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances or by mutual agreement between the instructor and the students.

Due dates for response papers:

1) Sep 17, 20XX
2) Oct 8, 20XX
3) Oct 29, 20XX
4) Nov 19, 20XX

Segment One
Human Rights: Concept and Instruments

Week 1)

- Introduction
- Syllabus
- What are human rights?
- Concept: Principles and specifications, personhood and rights
- Overview of the historical development of human rights: Declarations, covenants, institutions

    - Homework: Read postings 1.1 to 1.3 on HuskyCT

- Detailed study of 18th-cent. declarations, Geneva Convention, and the UDHR (content and historical context)
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948, Raphael Lemkin)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966)

    - Homework: Watch PBS Video: History of the International Criminal Court (3 parts) http://www.pbs.org/pov/reckoning/icc_history.php
    - Read the European Convention of Human Rights http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf

Week 2)

- Rome Statute (2002) and the International Criminal Court
- Contemporary Germany in Europe: Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (1949/1990), European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR, 1950) and European Court of Human Rights

    - Homework: Read the seven additional core international human rights treaties mentioned in the syllabus for next session (Sept 10): http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx

Week 3)

- Additional core international human rights instruments:
  1) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD, 1965)
  2) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979);
  3) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT, 1984);
  4) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989);
  5) International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW, 1990);
  6) International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED, 2006);

7) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006)

- Contemporary human rights issues in Germany: Refugees, Education, "Anti-Terror" Measures, Neo-Nazi crimes and the law enforcement

    - Homework: Watch *The Specialist* (on course reserve, library)
    - Read excerpt from Hannah Arendt: *Eichmann in Jerusalem*

Segment Two
Genocide and War

Week 4)

- Response paper #1 due

- Nürnberg Trials
- Eichmann Trial incl. discussion of *The Specialist,* dir. Eyal Sivan
- Excerpt from Hannah Arendt: *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*
- *Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen* (Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes) Ludwigsburg, Germany

    - Homework: Read Hannah Arendt: Introduction to *The Life of the Mind*
    - Read Hans Massaquoi: *Destined to Witness: Growing Up Black in Nazi Germany*

- Ethics under totalitarian conditions: Who is responsible?
- Excerpt from Hannah Arendt: *The Life of the Mind: Thinking*
- Hans Massaquoi: *Destined to Witness: Growing Up Black in Nazi Germany* (discussion part I)

    - Homework: Watch *Counterfeiters* (on course reserve, library)

Week 5)

- Hans Massaquoi: *Destined to Witness: Growing Up Black in Nazi Germany* (discussion part II)
- Discussion of *The Counterfeiters,* dir. Stefan Ruzowitzky

    - Homework: Read Ben Kiernan: *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur*, chapter 11: "Blut und Boden – Germany and Nazi Genocide"

- How was it even possible? Intentionalists (Lucy Dawidowicz, Eberhard Jäckel, etc.) vs. functionalists (Raul Hilberg, Christopher Browning, etc.); the *Historikerstreit*; the Goldhagen Debate
- Positions: Yehuda Bauer, Henry Friedlander, Ian Kershaw, Niall Ferguson, Ben Kiernan

    - Homework: Read Kiernan: *Blood and Soil*, excerpts "German Views of Indigenous Peoples," "German Settler Colonialism," and "Conquest and Genocide in Southwest Africa"

Week 6)

- German colonialism: genocide and aftermath
- Discussion of Kiernan on Colonialism and Genocide in Africa 1830-1910
- Uwe Timm's novel *Morenga*
- Decolonization and human rights in the 1970s (excerpts from Samuel Moyn: *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*)

    - Homework: Read Susan Sontag: *Regarding the Pain of Others*, chs. 3 and 7

- Wars, torture, propaganda, and just war claims
- War and photography, discussion of Sontag: *The Pain of Others*

    - Homework: Read Jurek Becker, *Bronstein's Children*

Segment Three
Trauma, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, and human rights debates in divided Germany

Week 7)

- ➢ Response paper #2 due

- East and West Germany: Political systems, cultural shifts
- Postmemory (Marianne Hirsch) / Multidirectional Memory (Michael Rothberg)
- Discussion of Jurek Becker, *Bronstein's Children*

    - Homework: Watch Youtube clips of *Exploring Moral Legacies* and *The Lives of Others*

- **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8)

- *Exploring Moral Legacies* and *The Lives of Others*, dir. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck; discussion and context

    - Homework: Watch *The Experiment*

- *The Experiment*, dir. Oliver Hirschbiegel; discussion and context

    - Homework: Read Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?"

Segment Four
Moral Foundations

Week 9) The History of Human Rights: The Enlightenment and its Legacy

- ➢ Response paper #3 due

- Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?,” “Perpetual Peace”
    - Homework: Read excerpts from Kant, *Groundwork toward a Metaphysics of Morals*
- Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork toward a Metaphysics of Morals,* and David Hume *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*
    - Homework: Read Kleist, *Michael Kohlhaas*

Week 10) Justice

- Taxonomy and Theories of Justice (John Rawls, Amartya Sen)
- Heinrich von Kleist, *Michael Kohlhaas*
- Heinrich von Kleist, *Michael Kohlhaas* (cont.)
    - Homework: Read Büchner, *Danton’s Death*

Week 11) Freedom and Economic Equality

- Georg Büchner, *Danton’s Death* and the Legacy of the French Revolution
    - Homework: Read posted chapters from Marx/Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*; Marxist critique of human rights
    - Homework: Read Olympe de Gouge, *Declaration of the Rights of the Woman and the Female Citizen*; Hedwig Dohm, “The Right of Woman's Suffrage” (excerpts)

Week 12) Political and Social Equality

- Women’s rights from Olympe de Gouge and Hedwig Dohm to feminism’s Third Wave, gender theory, LGBT rights
- Issues of social justice and diversity in Germany today

Week 13)

- ➢ Response paper #4 due
- Poster presentations

Thanksgiving Recess

Week 14)

- Tough questions: universalism reexamined, dilemmas of humanitarian aid and intervention (e.g., R2P – "responsibility to protect")

- Does it all make sense? Course review. Where to go from here?

Finals Week

- **FINAL EXAM**