

FASCISM  
History 150  
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Fascism has been called one of the three main political ideologies of the twentieth century (the other two being communism and capitalist democracy). Fascism has its roots in the nineteenth century, flowered in the period after the First World War, and remains relevant after 1945 and to the present. 'Fascist' has been used as a catch-all epithet used to smear anything remotely smacking of authoritarianism or ideological rigidity, be it parents, presidents, or feminists. Yet what fascism really was (and is?) remains murky for many. This course will explore the complex, contradictory, and often incoherent trajectories of fascism. Our approach will be broadly comparative; we will explore various ideological paths to and national strains of fascism. We will consider fascism as opposition politics and governing system. Consideration of ideology is particularly important to understanding fascism; we will explore fascist ideologies of class, nation, race, gender, and sexuality. We will focus on fascisms in Germany and Italy.

History 150: This course introduces students to historical inquiry by exploring particular themes or problems in history rather than providing traditional surveys based on geographical area and chronology. Regardless of the topic, each instructor approaches the issue of historical analysis and interpretation in a comparative social and cultural perspective or across a significant breadth of time. Students are expected to appreciate differing interpretations of the same historical questions and to learn how to distinguish primary and secondary source material.

This is a course about fascism. It is also about how to think and write about history. Fascism is a difficult, contentious topic for historians. Our point will not be for you to master the subject, but rather for you to engage with thinking about the subject, and thus to begin to develop a well-grounded interpretation of fascism and to better think historically.

We will focus a lot of energy on your reading and writing. You will discuss historians' ideas about fascism, historical documents about fascism, and your writing about fascism. You will explore some issue of fascism through the semester, incrementally building a well-founded argument about that issue. Classroom discussion of readings and work-shopping of your writing are designed, among other things, to help you develop a sense of the collaborative debate that history is.

Grading:

write an essay	75%	6 % for each of elements 1-10 15% for element 11, revision
participation	12.5%	
group collaboration	12.5%	

### Write an essay on Fascism

- 1) Write not more than one page on the author's argument
- 2) Write not more than one page describing the evidence the author uses
- 3) Write not more than one page describing the interrelation of the three essays
- 4) Write not more than one page on possible questions about this topic
- 5) Write a bibliography of not more than one page of sources
- 6) Write not more than one page on how you might be able to use the sources
- 7) Write a paragraph or two that describes what your argument is.
- 8) On not more than one page, sketch out (in writing) the parts of your essay.
- 9) Take one of the discrete things you need to do, and write a paragraph that achieves it.
- 10) Write an essay of not more than 5 pages
- 11) significantly revise your essay to make it more powerful and persuasive.

You may revise any of assignments 1-9. You must turn in revisions within one week of receiving it back from me.

As part of **participation**, you will write responses to assigned readings or film. Each class that we will discuss assigned texts, you should come to class with a **written response** to the day's readings or film. This response should be *no more than one (1) page*, and *may be handwritten*. You are not required to summarize all the readings/film. You should instead write some response you had to one or more of the readings or the film to be discussed: something that struck you as interesting, strange, unlikely; something you particularly liked or disliked; something that you had questions about; some conflict or agreement with previous readings/films; anything. These responses will be collected at the end of class.

We will watch a series of films related to fascism. They will be on reserve in the library. You are responsible for watching the films before class discussion.

History is not the dates, names, facts and events of the past—these are the raw materials of history. History is rather the construction of meaning and interpretation of significance from these materials, and it is an ongoing debate among historians about meanings and significance. The ability to engage in oral historical debate is a skill akin to historical writing. With this in mind, participation in classroom debate is not designed to demonstrate to me your mastery of the course materials, instead it is an exercise in doing history. Your participation will be graded on your ability to engage with the readings and your effort to engage in debate of the readings and issues with your classmates. Participation will *not* be graded on getting the right or the most intelligent answer.

Required Texts:

- Kevin Passmore, *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2002).
- Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*, 4th ed. (Boston and New York, 2004)

## Essay Assignments for History 150/01 "Fascism"

We will discuss these further in class. I encourage you to ask questions about these.

See the moodle site for due dates.

We will use class time to workshop these writing assignments.

You may revise any of assignments 1-9. You must turn in revisions within one week of receiving it back from me.

### 1) Reading an essay 1, seeing the argument

Find a history journal article that is closely related to your topic and that seems particularly interesting to you.

**Write not more than one page on the author's argument**—what did the author want to do by writing this article? What did the author want to convince readers of that they otherwise might not have believed?

### 2) Reading an essay 2, how do they make the argument?

Find another history journal essay that is closely related to your topic and that seems particularly interesting to you. be sure that this author cites your first author, or that your first author cites this one.

**Write not more than one page describing the evidence the author uses.**

### 3) Reading an essay 3, a conversation

Find another history journal essay that is closely related to your topic and that seems particularly interesting to you. Be sure that this author cites at least one of the previous two, or that at least one of them cites this author.

**Write not more than one page describing the interrelation of the three essays.** How do they address one another? How do they disagree? How do they use others' arguments to build their own? What are common issues? What is the 'story' they are all exploring?

### 4) Writing an essay 1, questions

Identify 3 additional history journal articles relevant to your topic.

**Using these six total essays, write not more than one page on possible questions about this topic that these essays suggest or leave unanswered.** Brainstorm here where your essay might go.

### 5) Writing an essay 2, finding evidence 1

Find evidence that might help you answer your question.

**Write a bibliography of not more than one page of sources. You must have on this bibliography sources that are available on the internet, sources that you have found in the Beloit College Library, and sources that you have ordered via interlibrary loan.** You might consider written, material, visual, and aural sources.

6) Writing an essay 3, finding evidence 2

**Write not more than one page on how you might be able to use the sources you have on your bibliography.**

7) Writing an essay 4, provisional argument

**Write a paragraph or two (not more than one page) that describes what your argument is.** Be aware that this is not cast in steel, you may (and probably will) change or at least revise your argument as you write your essay.

8) Writing an essay 5, structure

**On not more than one page, sketch out (in writing) the parts of your essay.** What specific, discrete things will you need to do to convince a reader that your argument is right?

9) Writing an essay 6, part of the essay

**Take one of the discrete things you need to do, and write a paragraph that achieves it.**

10) Writing an essay 7, the essay

**Write an essay of not more than 5 pages.**

11) Writing an essay 8, revising the essay

**Using the feedback you have received, and the time you have had to think about your essay, significantly revise your essay to make it more powerful and persuasive.**

- Wednesday, 30 August  
Introduction
- Thursday, 31 August  
Introduction, continued
- Friday, 1 September  
Mussolini, "What is Fascism?" (handout)  
"25 Points" (early program of National Socialism) (handout)
- Monday, 4 September  
Geoff Eley, What Produces Fascism?
- Wednesday, 6 September  
Discuss research project.  
Writing workshop.
- Friday, 8 September  
Kurt Gossweiler, Economy and Politics  
Form Research Group
- Monday, 11 September  
**Due: Reading an essay 1, seeing the argument**  
Passmore, *Fascism*, "3: Fascism before fascism?"
- Wednesday, 13 September  
Oswald Spengler, Decline of the West
- Friday, 15 September  
Robert O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism," *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 1 (1998): 1-23.
- Monday, 18 September  
**Due: Reading an essay 2, how do they make the argument?**  
Passmore, *Fascism*, "4. Italy: 'making history with the fist'."
- Wednesday, 20 September  
Walter L. Adamson, "Modernism and Fascism: The Politics of Culture in Italy, 1903-1922," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 95, No. 2. (Apr., 1990), pp. 359-390.
- Friday, 22 September  
Mark Twain, "Concerning the Jews,"  
Discuss Film: *Jud Süß*
- Monday, 25 September  
**Due: Reading an essay 3, a conversation**  
Passmore, *Fascism*, "5. Germany: the racial state."
- Wednesday, 27 September  
Frank Dikotter, "Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 2 (1998): 467-478.
- Friday, 29 September  
No class.  
**Due: Writing an essay 1, questions**
- Monday, 2 October  
Rote Erde Flugblaetter  
Goebbels, Make Way for Young Germany
- Wednesday, 4 October  
**Due: Writing an essay 2, finding evidence 1**

Friday, 6 October

Omer Bartov, "Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust,"  
*The American Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (1998):771-816. **Read pages 771 to 786.**

Monday, 9 October

Peukert, Genesis of the "Final Solution" and the Spirit of Science

Wednesday, 11 October

Alf Ludtke, "The Appeal of Exterminating 'Others': German Workers and the Limits of Resistance," *The Journal of Modern History* 64, Supplement: Resistance Against the Third Reich (1992): S46-S67.

Friday, 13 October

Passmore, *Fascism*, "8. Fascism, nation, and race."

**Due: Writing an essay 3, finding evidence 2**

### **Fall Break--No Class**

Monday, 23 October

Grossmann, Feminist Debates About Women and National Socialism

Wednesday, 25 October

A Hitler Speech: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/hitler4.htm>

Friday, 27 October

Omer Bartov, "Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust,"  
*The American Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (1998):771-816. **Read pages 786 to 798.**

Monday, 30 October

Contemporary issues.

Look at and read Wikipedia's entry on Islamofascism.

**Due: Writing an essay 4, provisional argument**

Wednesday, 1 November

Omer Bartov, "Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust,"  
*The American Historical Review* 103, no. 3 (1998):771-816. **Read pages 798 to end.**

Friday, 3 November

**No Class.**

**Due: Writing an essay 5, structure**

Monday, 6 November

Film: *The Sorrow and the Pity* (excerpts)

**Due: Writing an essay 6, part of the essay**

Wednesday, 8 November

No class--International Symposium

Friday, 10 November

Film: *The Sorrow and the Pity* (excerpts)

Writing an essay 7, the essay

Monday, 13 November

Students Essays

Wednesday, 15 November

Student Essays

Thursday, 16 November

Student Essays

Friday, 17 November

Student Essays

Monday, 20 November

Student Essays

Wednesday, 22 November

No Class

**Thanksgiving Break**

Monday, 27 November

Film: *Sophie Scholl—The Final Days*.

Wednesday, 29 November

Film: *Sophie Scholl—The Final Days* (continued).

Thursday, 30 November

Discuss *Sophie Scholl*.

Friday, 1 December

Robert Moeller, "War Stories: The Search for a Useable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany," *American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 1008-148.

Monday, 4 December

Film: *The Nasty Girl*.

**Due: Writing an essay 8, revising the essay**

Wednesday, 6 December

Film: *The Nasty Girl* (continued).

Thursday, 7 December

Discuss *The Nasty Girl*.

Friday, 8 December

Donald Rumsfeld, "Address at the 88th Annual American Legion National Convention."

Monday, 11 December

Film: *The Great Dictator*.

Tuesday, 12 December

Film: *The Great Dictator* (continued).

Wednesday, 13 December

Conclusions/Questions