This course examines the “long road to Auschwitz,” as it is sometimes called, or the pre-histories of the Holocaust. It does so from within the context of German history, with a special focus on the colonial and imperial experience. It begins with German nationalism and the creation of the (“Second”) Reich as well as its development and politics. The seminar will examine the development and prevalence of racial theories, especially from the late 19th century onwards and how they were applied to different peoples and parts of the world (including Anti-Semitism and the Aryan theory). It will focus especially on colonial experiences, cultures of violence before and in World War I as well as the rise of new far right politics and the Nazis themselves. In the final sections it will discuss how the colonial experience and the ideas of Lebensraum help us explain the Holocaust.

While the seminar will continue along the timeline up to 1933, it will constantly test theories and ideas about “path-dependency” and how and why some historians tend to identify straight lines where others reject those. The seminar will also give students a feeling for how the Holocaust is used today to make sense of other atrocities in history (here in the case of those committed in the Congo and Namibia as well as the Armenian Genocide).

Structure

The seminar will feature in each session mainly three components: 1. a short/semi-short introductory lecture, mainly presenting an overview; 2. discussion of our assigned reading materials; 3. work with sources (where possible/feasible) or with other media.

The seminar also features a series of focus topics featured in two sessions each (German colonialism; the Herero and Nama Genocide; the Armenian Genocide). These will offer us the opportunity to venture deep(er) into a topic and also go far beyond the factual level and the discussion of newest research. Where possible we will also learn a bit more about the work of the historian (also for those students who are not historians), will work critically with texts, and have a chance to debate the broader repercussions.
**Reading assignments**

Since this is a double seminar, meeting only once per week, extensive reading is required. However, texts will be assigned and split across the group (A, B, C) in order to manage the reading load and to stimulate debate. Reading the core texts for each week is an essential component of the seminar (requirements), as is active participation which will, at a minimum, involve regularly presenting to the group one of the assigned texts in very short form as well as thoughts and criticisms regarding these texts.

Texts will be generally available on the course’s moodle platform as pdfs.

**Writing assignments and grading/credit options**

Each student will have to hand in two small **response essays** to the texts read. These will be assigned as we go along. Additionally, depending on the chosen format (by the student), there are **three grading options**, depending on the credit points needed by the student: 1. a seminar paper (about 25-30 pages; using primary materials; topic and outline subject to discussion and approval in the course of the seminar; deadline for submission of seminar papers: 21 June 2017); 2. a short final paper (“Referat”; about 10 pages; using secondary sources; deadline for submission one month after the end of the semester); or 3. a grade given for semesters’ on-going assignments (such as response papers and active participation in the seminar).

It is the students’ responsibility to choose his/her assignments out of the three and update the course convener.

**Introductory reading**


**Core books**

(given their scope and availability as paperbacks students might want to consider buying one or more of the following)


Artistic background reading (optional), novels


Mari Serebrov, Mama Namibia (Wordweaver Publishing, 2014)

Background reading (optional)

Weekly topics and reading assignments*

* preliminary, subject to change; however those marked with an “*” are a safe bet for anybody who wants to get ahead with the reading. Students who enjoy the long-read and like to get a head start can read the books listed above as “core books.” These are written in a lively style and will convey an overall sense of the subject matter in a readable fashion.

30th October 2016: Introduction: Pre-histories? Or: Why the Germans?
Introduction, requirements, lecture, discussion


6th November 2016: German nationalism and history in the 19th century – Overview
Lecture: Overview – German history in the 19th century


13th November 2016: Colonial Ventures I – German Colonial designs, conquest, and experience


20\textsuperscript{th} November 2016: \textbf{Discourses of Race and modern Anti-Semitism}

\textit{Lecture: “Race, anthropology, and modern Anti-Semitism”}


or:


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27\textsuperscript{th} November 2016: \textbf{Colonial Ventures II – The colonial experience}

\textit{lecture: Colonial violence – Germany’s and Europe’s rule and experiences of violence}

* Adam Hochschild, \textit{King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa} (Boston/New York: Mariner 1999), various chapters


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4\textsuperscript{th} December 2016: \textbf{The Genocide of the Herero and Nama I}
lecture: Genocide in German South-West Africa – Overview


* various press and academic reviews of *The Kaiser’s Holocaust*


11th December 2016: The Genocide of the Herero and Nama II


18th December 2016: World War I, the Armenian Genocide and Germany I

lecture: The Armenian Genocide – Overview


media dealing with the genocide (various clips) and novel excerpt


25th December 2016: no seminar (Chanukah & Christmas vacation day)

1st January 2017: The Armenian Genocide and Germany II

lecture(s): The German dimension of the Armenian Genocide I&II


* Stefan Ihrig, Justifying Genocide – Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), prologue & epilogue

source material from the Political Archives of the German Foreign Office (in English)

8th January 2016: no seminar (Yad Vashem Seminar week)

15th January 2017: From conquest to the ghettos, to the concentration camps

Lecture: Nazi imperialism, Lebensraum, and conquest

* Christopher R. Browning, The Path to Genocide (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chapter “Nazi resettlement policy and the search for a solution to the Jewish Question, 1939-1941” (3-27)


22\textsuperscript{nd} January 2017: \textit{Colonial pre-histories? Continuities, discontinuities, and the many big questions about humanity, politics, and modernity}

* Birthe Kundrus, “Colonialism, imperialism, National Socialism – How imperial was the Third Reich?” in Bradley Naranch/Geoff Eley (Hg.), German Colonialism in a Global Age, Durham/London 2014, 330-346.


