Global Seminar in Berlin
GS 154: Modern Germany – From Bismarck to Hitler

Instructor: Frank Biess
Place: Berlin
Time: Summer Session I, Mon 3-6
Excursions: 6hrs/week (Wednesdays and some afternoons/ evenings)

Course Description: Germany has been at the center of some of the 20th century’s most crucial events. Conflicts and tensions inside Germany frequently spilled over Germany’s borders and affected the lives of millions of non-Germans, thus shaping the course of 20th century European and world history. This course follows the extremely volatile and often violent course of German history from its emergence as a nation state in the 19th century to the total collapse of the Nazi dictatorship in 1945. In particular, the course will examine two major themes: first, we will examine continuities and contingencies in Modern German History. Was there, for example, a direct link between the unification of Germany through "iron and blood" under Bismarck in 1870/71 and the rise of Hitler in the 1930s? Why did the Weimar Republic (1918-1933) that was celebrated for its liberal constitution, progressive welfare system, and vanguard culture turn into one of the most destructive regimes in human history? What were the alternatives to this disastrous course of Modern German history and why did these alternatives ultimately not materialize? Secondly, the course will entail a detailed examination of the Nazi period. We will address such issues as the structure of the Nazi dictatorship, the nature of the Nazi "racial community," the peculiar mixture of popular consent and coercion, and the regime’s policies of war and genocide. The course concludes with an analysis of the meaning of the Nazi past in postwar Germany.

Course Format: Because the class will be taught as a seminar in Berlin, the format will be somewhat different from the corresponding lecture course taught at UCSD. We will once a week for three hours. The emphasis during our meetings will be more on small group discussion and primary source analysis. I will also integrate site visits with readings and assignments.

Course Requirements: Attendance and Participation, three 5-7 page essays, due at the beginnings of week 3 and 4, and at the end of week 5.

Course Readings:
William Hagen, German History in Modern Times: Four Lives of the Nation
Joseph Roth, What I Saw. Reports from Berlin, 1920-33
Robert Moeller, The Nazi State and German Society
Ruth Kluger, Still Alive. A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered

Week 1: The German Empire
Hagen, *German History*, 1-19, 97-182.
Matthew Jeffreys, "Great Men? Otto von Bismarck and Wilhelm II"
"The Constitution of the German Empire"
Bismarck, “Iron and Blood Speech” (1862)

**Excursions:**
*Mon: City Walk*
*Tue: Reichstag*
*Wed: Visit to Otto von Bismarck Stiftung/Hamburg*
*Thu: Museum of German History*

**Week 2: World War I and Revolution**

Hagen, *German History*, 227-240
World War I letters of German soldiers
Sebastion Haffner, “Failure of a Revolution”

**Excursions:**
*Tue: Visit to Willy Brandt Foundation*
*Wed: Jewish Berlin: Visit to Jewish Museum, Neue Synagogue, Scheunenviertel*
*Thu: Visit to Brücke Museum*

**Week 3. Weimar Germany**

Hagen, *German History*, 241-283
Eric Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, 169-206

**Excursions**
*Tue: Allied Museum*
*Wed. Bauhaus Museum, Berlin Cabaret Show*

**Week 4: National Socialism**

Hagen, *German History*, 284-302
Robert Gellately, “Concentration Camps and Media Reports”
Moeller, *The Nazi State and German Society* (selected documents)

**Excursions:**
*Tue: House of Wansee Conference*
*Wed: Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, Topography of Terror*
*Thu: Museum of German Resistance*

**Week 5: War, Genocide, Aftermath**
Hagen, German History, 303-351
Moeller, The Nazi State and German Society (selected documents)

Excursions:
Mon: Boat Tour, River Spree
Wed Comparing Commemorative Sites: Holocaust Museum, Bayrisches Viertel,
Neue Wache, Soviet Memorial Treptow
Fr: Show Friedrichstadtpalast