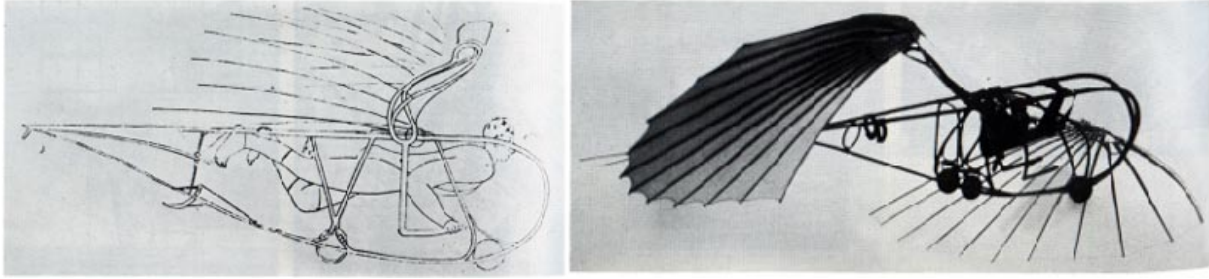


## Russian 4005 / German 4005: Totalitarianism and Culture (WI)



### Meeting times

The course will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:45 AM, in Lafferre E3509.

### Course description

In 1951, as the Cold War intensified, the political philosopher Hannah Arendt identified National Socialist Germany and the Soviet Union of the Stalin era as examples of *totalitarianism*. This, she asserted, was a new and terrifying kind of governance that was barbaric and modern at the same time—wanton in its application of violence and terror, and yet able to plan rationally and organize bureaucratically like other modern states. In this course, we will explore the politics and poetics of totalitarian *culture* by examining the paintings, music, sculptures, buildings, and films produced under the rule of these regimes. In the process, we will learn how Nazi and Soviet culture producers made carefully calibrated appeals to their respective mass audiences, drawing upon the German and Russian cultural traditions—and on scientific rhetorics of cultural history and racial destiny—in crafting their utopian visions of worlds transformed, wrongs righted, and societies perfected.

### Instructor information

This course will have two co-instructors: Dr. Nicole Monnier ([MonnierM@missouri.edu](mailto:MonnierM@missouri.edu)) and Dr. Seth Howes ([HowesW@missouri.edu](mailto:HowesW@missouri.edu)). Dr. Monnier will have office hours Tuesdays and Thursdays TBA (see Canvas) in Strickland Hall 428A. Dr. Howes will have office hours Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM, in Strickland Hall 458. Students enrolled in a writing intensive (WI) section of the course may consult Elizabeth Wolfson ([egw4mc@mail.missouri.edu](mailto:egw4mc@mail.missouri.edu)), for assistance with outlining, writing and editing their coursework.

### Learning objectives

In this course, students will:

- *develop critical literacies* that enable them to define “totalitarianism” with respect to its historical antecedents and influences;
- *identify styles and themes* employed by artists, writers, musicians, and architects working under National Socialist or Stalinist rule;
- *interpret artworks* in order to recognize the kinds of utopian visions they articulate and how they appeal to certain audiences, while excluding others.

### Course materials

All course materials will be made available to you, free of charge, via Canvas. If you wish, you may want to buy the Hannah Arendt text, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, but this purchase is entirely optional.

- Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (Section III)
- Eduard von Barsody, *Request Concert*

- Arno Breker, *Bereitschaft*
- Joseph Goebbels, “Speech at the Berlin Sportpalast on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1943”
- Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art* (Excerpts)
- Victor Klemperer, *LTI — Lingua Tertii Imperii, Language of the Third Reich*
- Leni Riefenstahl, *Olympia*
- Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (Excerpts)
- Kurt Rüpli, *Words Made Stone*
- Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (Excerpts)
- Richard Wagner,
- Andrei Zhdanov, “Speech at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, 1934”

### Grading criteria

Your final course grade will comprise the following components, weighted as indicated:

- discussion (20%)
- ~biweekly reading responses (8 total) (25%)
- an *ekphrasis* (10%)
- final project proposal (5%)
- 5-6p. research paper (25%)
- in-class presentation (10%)
- fact sheet (5%)

#### *Discussion (20%)*

As the course grade percentage suggests, discussion is a core component of this course. The class will be conducted seminar style, with short lectures to introduce topics and individual texts, or to contextualize a period; thus the majority of our class time will be spent in discussion of the weekly readings. You are expected to participate in an informed manner. “Informed” means the following: 1) you have done the assigned reading for the day; 2) thought about it before coming to class; and 3) are prepared to talk about it.

#### *Reading responses (25%; first 8 weeks)*

You will receive detailed prompts (with pre-writing exercises and targeted questions) that help you write the reading responses, each of which will be between 1.5 and 2 pages in length. The purpose of the reading responses is 1) to help guide you through sometimes difficult texts; 2) to prepare you for participation in discussion; and 3) to provide low-stakes writing practice.

Response prompts will be posted on the Canvas site and reminders given in the weekly Friday announcement.

#### *Ekphrasis (15%; week 8)*

An *ekphrasis* is a form of close reading, in which the “text” is a work of art or music. Like a close textual reading, it asks you to describe in close detail what you see (or hear) without appealing to historical context, the biography of the artist or composer who made it, or anything else. Instead, an *ekphrasis* focuses on the formal properties of the work at hand: on *how* it represents its protagonists, arranges its scenery, communicates its ideas, and organizes its world. The goal of this assignment is to provide practice of a genre likely unfamiliar to most students, as the final project will also require an *ekphrasis*. Each student will submit a draft, which will then be workshopped, then revised for final submission and grade.

### *Research project (40%; weeks 6-15)*

For the research paper, you will select an off-syllabus topic for which you will write a 5-6-page essay as well as make a formal presentation on the topic to your classmates. The research project consists of four graded components: the proposal; the paper; the presentation; and a “fact sheet” handout. The essay will provide historical and biographical context for your own detailed analysis of the topic or object at hand, and describe your topic’s contribution to (or deviation from) the totalitarian order under which it was produced. You will submit a full draft of this essay, which you will then workshop, revise, and resubmit.

#### *1) Project proposal (5%; initial consultations week 6; proposal due week 9)*

In consultation with one of the course instructors, you will choose an object or event not explicitly covered in the course (a painting or sculpture; a mass organization like the Hitler Youth or the Soviet pioneers; or an event like the Degenerate Art Exhibit, etc.). You will conduct preliminary research to compile a list of secondary sources on your topic, then submit a 1 p. proposal which will include a ~250word abstract and your list of sources. Instructors will review your proposals, provide feedback, and require for revision (if necessary).

#### *2) Project paper (20%; drafts due week 13; final submission exam week)*

In this 5-6p. essay, you will provide historical and biographical context for your own detailed analysis of the topic or object at hand, and describe your topic’s contribution to (or deviation from) the totalitarian order under which it was produced. You will submit a full draft of this essay, which you will then workshop, revise, and resubmit.

#### *3) Research presentation (10%; week 15 = final week of class; final exam period if needed)*

For the in-class presentation, you will introduce your classmates to the topic (or object) at the heart of your research paper.

#### *4) Research fact sheet handout (5%; due at presentation)*

A fact sheet no more than 1p. in length and outfitted with useful illustrations, names, dates, and definitions of terms, will help orient your colleagues as you discuss the thing about which you have become a specialist.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the [MU Disability Center](#), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

### **Statement on Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any

violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

### **Semester schedule of work, part I: (Weeks 1-7)**

*Note: As this is the first iteration of this course, the schedule may be subject to change. Your instructors promise to give you adequate notice for any such changes. The remaining schedule for Weeks 8-15 will be provided by Week 6. Always check the Canvas Friday weekly announcement for the definitive topic, reading, and assignment schedule.*

#### **Week 1: Introductions, Beginning Arendt**

On January 16<sup>th</sup>,

- we will review the syllabus and discuss course procedures
- we will also engage with two short texts, a Nazi song and a Soviet poem (both to be distributed in class)

On January 18<sup>th</sup>,

- we will begin discussing Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*, having read pp. 305-311 before class

#### **Week 2: Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism***

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>,

- we will discuss chapter 10 of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*, having read pp. 311-340, focusing in particular on pp. 323-236

On January 25<sup>th</sup>,

- we will discuss chapter 11 of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*, having read pp. 341-388 before class, focusing in particular on pp. 341-360

#### **Week 3: Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism***

On January 30<sup>th</sup>,

- we will discuss chapter 12 of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*, having read pp. 389-460 before class, focusing in particular on pp. 437-459

On February 1<sup>st</sup>,

- we will discuss chapter 13 of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*, having read pp. 460-483

#### **Week 4: Socialist Realism**

On February 6<sup>th</sup>,

- Dr. Monnier will introduce Socialist Realism through a discussion of Soviet painting

On February 8<sup>th</sup>,

- we will read Groys' "On the Stalinist Art of Living" before class, and discuss its arguments in class

#### **Week 5: The Total Art of Stalin(ism)**

On February 13<sup>th</sup>,

- we will read Groys' Introduction ("The Culture of the Stalin Era") and Chapter 1 ("The Russian Avant-Garde"), and discuss its arguments in relation to the Gorky, Kataev, and Stalin materials we have already read

On February 15<sup>th</sup>,

- we will read Groys' Chapter 2 ("On the Stalinist Art of Living") before class, and discuss its arguments in class

### **Week 6: Degeneration and Decline**

On February 20<sup>th</sup>,

- we will discuss excerpts from Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* and Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1900)

On February 22<sup>nd</sup>,

- we will discuss the Nazi pamphlet *Der Untermensch* (1942)

### **Week 7: Degeneracy and Degenerate Art**

On February 27<sup>th</sup>,

- we will attend a library session with Anne Barker during the regularly scheduled class time

On March 1<sup>st</sup>,

- having read in advance Hitler's speech at the exhibit and Olaf Peters' contextual framing of the issue of degeneration vis-à-vis art, we will enjoy a guest lecture by Professor James van Dyke (Art History) on the Great German Art Exhibition and the so-called Degenerate Art Exhibition

### **Week 8: Melodrama and the Moving Image**

On March 6<sup>th</sup>,

- we will discuss Grigori Aleksandrov and Isidor Simkov's *Circus* (1936)

On March 8<sup>th</sup>,

- we will discuss Eduard von Borsody's *Request Concert* (1940)

### **Week 9: Music and the Media**

On March 13<sup>th</sup>,

- we will discuss Soviet popular songs such as "Holy War," "Song of My Motherland," and "Wait for Me"

On March 15<sup>th</sup>,

- we will discuss Michael Kater's article "Forbidden Fruit? Jazz in the Third Reich," Wulf Bley's "Jazz or Radio Dance Tunes," Theodor W. Adorno's "Farewell to Jazz," and listen to some examples of musical works discussed in the article

### **Week 10: Engineering the Soul**

On March 20<sup>th</sup>,

- we will discuss Shostakovich's "*Leningrad*" *Symphony* (Op. 60, 1940-41) and the [anonymous review](#)

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>,

- we will discuss Wagner's essays "Judaism and Music" and "What is German?" and talk about Wagner's position in the Nazi cultural pantheon

**NO CLASS: Spring Break**

**Week 11: Ruination and Construction**

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>,

- we will discuss Nazi fantasies of ruination, with help from Albert Speer's "Theory of Ruin Value" and Roger Taylor's *Word Made Stone*

On April 5<sup>th</sup>,

- we will finish our discussion of the Nazi fantasy of ruins, and begin discussing Stalinist architecture as a modernist and classicist form

**Week 12: Architecture and Propaganda**

On April 10<sup>th</sup>,

- we will discuss high-Stalinist architecture

On April 12<sup>th</sup>,

- we will visit Ellis Library (Special Collections) to examine propaganda art

**Week 13: TBD****Week 14: Project Work Break**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>,

- you will meet individually with Dr. M and Dr. H to work on correcting your paper drafts and preparing your presentation

On April 26<sup>th</sup>,

- you will meet individually with Dr. M and Dr. H to work on correcting your paper drafts and preparing your presentation

**Week 15: Presentations**

On May 8<sup>th</sup>,

- Student presentations begin

On May 10<sup>th</sup>,

- Student presentations continue