

Stony Brook University
Dept. of History
College of Arts and Sciences

HIS 401.02 Spring 2018
Visualizing Fascism

T 1-4
SBS N-318

Professor Janis Mimura
SBS N-325
OH: T 11-12, TH 1:30-2:30 or
by appt.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What did fascism look like? How did it mobilize culture and for what purpose? This senior research seminar considers the ways in which fascism has been visualized in Europe and Asia in the 20th century. We will examine a variety of primary sources such as film, photography, architecture, advertisement, theater, and pageantry. Drawing upon recent scholarly research and theoretical writings, we will take up fascism as one form of mass culture mobilized by the right.

Requirements for the course include short writing exercises, class presentations, peer review, and a 12-15-page research paper based on primary sources. It is recommended that students have a background in either modern European, Asian, or cultural history.

This course satisfies SBC: SPK and WRTD.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Introduce students to the methods and skills for researching and writing cultural history.
- Analyze primary sources by asking questions about its purpose, argument, presumptions, and limitations.
- Read secondary sources critically by analyzing the author's thesis, arguments, motives, and evidence.
- Learn how historians apply theory in their research and writing.
- Produce a 12-15-page research paper based on primary sources which applies the rules and conventions of scholarly writing, including proper citation and grammar. A paper with a grade of B- or higher may be used to fulfill the history major writing requirement.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation:

Weekly attendance is mandatory. The success of this seminar depends upon the active contribution of every seminar member. You are expected to come prepared to share ideas, ask questions, and discuss problems encountered in the reading and writing assignments. Since the class meets once a week, more than one absence will seriously impact your participation grade in this course.

Reading/Writing Exercises: Students will complete two reading/writing exercises to encourage you to be proactive readers. A footnote citation quiz will also be given.

Research Exercises: Students will complete several research exercises designed to encourage you to think about your final paper and nudge you along the research process. You will submit a three-page research proposal and an annotated bibliography of the works that you have consulted.

Research Paper: You will submit a rough draft and final draft of a 12-15-page research paper based on primary and secondary sources.

All submitted written work must be edited for proper grammar, style, and footnote citation. Work that does not follow these guidelines will be marked down by 1/2 grade.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Participation (attendance, discussion, topic and paper presentation, peer-review)	25%
Research Exercises	10%
Reading and Writing Exercises	15%
Final Paper	50%

Grade Scale: A = 93-100, A- = 90-92.9, B+ = 87-89.9, B = 83-86.9 B- = 80-82.9, C+ = 77-79.9, C = 73-76.9, C- = 70-72.9, D+ = 67-69.9, D = 60-66.9, F= 0-59.9

Late papers, make-ups, and incompletes: Late papers will be accepted but marked down unless prior arrangements are made. Make-ups for exams will be granted only if permission is given ahead of time. Incompletes are seldom granted.

REQUIRED TEXT (available for purchase at Amazon@StonyBrook and on reserve at SBU Library)

Falasca-Zamponi, Simonetti, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy*
Additional readings are available via JSTOR or Blackboard.

CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to modification)

Week 1	Introduction
1/23	View excerpts from Ray Müller's "The Wonderful Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl" (1994). For an introduction to fascism, see Robert O. Paxton, <i>The Anatomy of Fascism</i> , Introduction*

Week 2
1/30

Aesthetics of (f)ascism

1. Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," *The New York Review of Books*, Feb 6, 1975.*

Note the ideas, symbols, and images associated with fascism in her essay. Consider the title of the essay: why is fascism "fascinating"? What does she mean by this? How is the problem of fascism being framed?

2. Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy*, Intro and CH 1-2 (pp. 1-41).

Introduction and book overall: Look at the title, table of contents. Skim the conclusion. What is the time frame of this study? How is it constructed? In a sentence or two, describe what the book is about. What does the author seek to understand? What is the book's argument? What is she arguing against?

CH 1: What are the key aspects and components of Mussolini's "aesthetic politics"? What types of sources does she use? What ideas and theories does the book draw upon? Spend time reading the footnotes. Note what you consider the key works and points in the footnotes.

Reading Exercise: Compose a list of questions about the reading: What do you need to understand to grapple with her arguments? What would you like to know more about? What statements are unclear to you or need further explanation?

Week 3
2/6

Theoretical Approaches

1. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations* (NY, Schocken Books, 1973)*

Consider the historical context in which Benjamin's essay was written. What is the main problem or challenge of his time? How does he understand modernity?

2. Susan Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered"(JSTOR)

What aspects of Benjamin does she highlight? What is the connection between anaesthetics and aesthetics? How does she understand modernity? How does *Fascist Spectacle* reflect this body of theory? Does it challenge or contribute to these ideas?

Week 4
2/13

Aesthetics of Mussolini

1. *Fascist Spectacle*, CH 2-4

Reading and Writing Exercise: Submit a 1- 2-page essay on what you consider the key points in Benjamin and Buck-Morss' essays. You may quote specific terms and phrases but please explain the approach in your own words. Imagine you are trying to present these ideas to somebody outside of this class. Be as clear and succinct as possible.

Week 5
2/20

Fascist vs. Nazi Aesthetics

1. Finish *Fascist Spectacle*, CH 5 and Conclusion
2. Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience*, CH 4*
3. Rainer Stollman, "Fascist Politics as a Total Work of Art"*

Is the overall argument of *Fascist Spectacle* convincing? Where is it weak? What new questions does the book raise? Compare Koonz's depiction of fascist culture with that of Falasca-Zamponi and Stollman.

Research Exercise: Select a primary source from our readings or another reading. Why is it particularly interesting to you? Do the theoretical approaches you've read about offer new insights into analyzing this source? Start thinking about the types of medium (film, pageantry, photography, advertising, sports events) that interest you and might lead to a research topic. Track down references to your source, its history, and any information about it. Why is it an interesting to you? What questions arise? What are the challenges and limitations of using such a source? Submit a 1-page report.

Week 6
2/27

Research Workshop

Research Exercise: Submit a one-paragraph proposal on your paper topic. List two important secondary works, which you have perused.
Class visit to the stacks.

Week 7
3/6

Pageantry and Parade

1. Hans-Ulrich Thamer, "The Orchestration of the National Community: The Nuremberg Party Rallies of the NSDAP"*
2. Kenneth Ruoff, *Japan at its Zenith*, excerpt.*

Footnote Citation Quiz

Research Exercise: Students will present their research topics and address the following questions: What research possibilities exist? What are the limitations of these sources? What problems are anticipated with the materials? This exercise will force you to be realistic about the viability of your topic. Make an appointment for an individual meeting if necessary.

Week 8
3/13

SPRING BREAK

Week 9
3/20

Sports and the Fascist Body

1. Michael Mackenzie, "From Athens to Berlin: The 1936 Olympics and Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia*"*
2. John London, "Competing Together in Fascist Europe: Sport in Early Francoism"
3. Sandra Collins, "The Spectacle of Olympic Tokyo and Imperial Japan"

How do these works speak to each other? Do they examine different aspects of the problem or offer competing interpretations or approaches?

- Week 10
3/27 **Fascism and Consumer Culture**
 1. Adam Arvidsson, "Bourgeois into Fascists: Mass Consumption and the Regime?"*
 2. Bianca Gaudenzi, "Dictatorship for Sale: The Commercialization of the Duce and the Fuehrer in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany"*
- Research Exercise:* Submit ahead of time to your peer reviewer a three-page prospectus with annotated bibliography that discusses the historical problem, the larger national/global historical context, the questions asked, the primary and secondary research already completed, and the research yet to be done. Each student will be responsible for one peer review. Guidelines will be provided. You will submit a copy of your prospectus and your peer review to me in class.
- Week 11
4/3 **Fascism's Photographic Image**
 1. Gennifer Weisenfeld, "Gas Mask Parade: Japan's Anxious Modernism"*
 2. Andrea Germer, "Visual Propaganda in Wartime East Asia – The Case of Natori Yōnosuke"*
- 4/4 **"Visualizing Fascism" Symposium: Humanities Institute, 1-5**
- Week 12
4/10 Topic of Choice - to be decided by the class
Rough Draft due.
- Week 13
4/17 **Paper Consultation**
 Individual meetings to be scheduled, no formal class meeting.
- Week 14
4/24 **Presentations, Peer Review**
- Week 15
5/1 **Presentations, Peer Review**
Wrap-up. Final Paper due in class.
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