

The University of Toronto

INTRODUCTION TO GERMAN CULTURE

GER 150S / winter semester, 2020

Instructor: **JOHN ZILCOSKY**

Office: Odette Hall #303

Departments: German / Comparative Literature

Office Hours:

Tues. 4-5 PM (& by app't) (winter semester)

Lecture: Mondays, 1:00 – 3:00 in AH 400

Tutorials: M 3-4, 4-5; Wed 1-2, 2-3

DESCRIPTION

This is an introduction to German culture, viewed through a dynamic duo at the heart of this culture: art and politics. Beginning with the birth of a unified German in 1871 and the legacy of nineteenth-century German history and philosophy, we will investigate the vibrant ways in which writers, artists, and filmmakers related to political power and/or politicized their art. These include the expressions of protest and drama during and after World War I, the wild artistic abandon of the interwar Weimar era, and the deliberately “aesthetic” propaganda strategies of the Nazi period. Throughout this course, we will explore some of the high points of German culture—in philosophy (Nietzsche, Freud), music (Beethoven, Wagner), literature (Kafka, Hesse), and film and visual art (Lang, Riefenstahl, Klee)—and ask: How did a society that created such works of genius also produce the Holocaust? And how has German society today come to terms with its past and attempted to create a “new” Germany? How does art still relate to politics, and beauty to violence, in this contemporary Germany?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND WEEKLY SCHEDULE: TBA