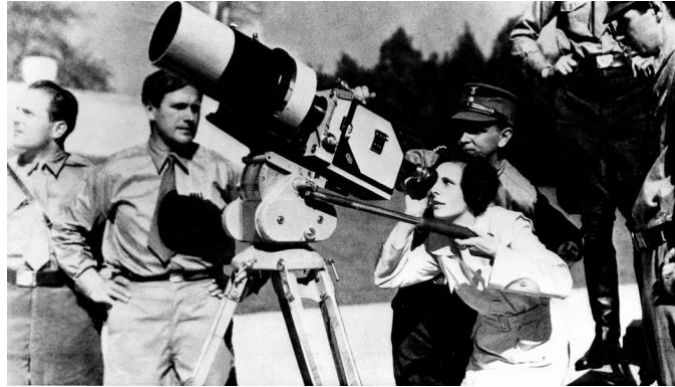


HSTR 491: The Art of Nazi Propaganda
Montana State University
Summer 2019 (Session 1: May 14 – June 14, 2019)
Peter Schweppe



Course Description

“The Art of Nazi Propaganda” assesses the ways in which art and propaganda underwrote and challenged Nazi ideological platforms. By connecting artistic transformations in painting, sculpture, architecture, and cinema with propagandastic visions of the Nazi party, this course traces significant historical turning points that bolstered ideologies and politics in the Third Reich. From Leni Riefenstahl’s films to the infamous 1937 Degenerate Art exhibit, students will weigh images and structures against Nazi party rhetoric in order to assess how truth, power, and ideology took shape in art and left their political mark on German history.

This 6-week intensive online course is broken up into five main categories. Students will first examine the roots of Nazi propaganda through vision, text and image. Reaching back to Athenian traditions, this section takes into account the historical origins of Nazi ideas about form, scale, and aesthetics in theory and praxis. Second, students will analyze how the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment fashioned a new politics of art through persuasion campaigns and censorship. The third part of the course pivots to the didactic cinematic productions of the 1930s and 1940s by scrutinizing pro-Nazi films like *Triumph of the Will* and anti-Semitic films like *Jüd Süß*. The final sections of the course investigate the genesis of the “Degenerate Art” exhibit of 1937 and the subsequent legacies of Nazi art and propaganda.

Learning Objectives

- Gain understanding of historical events that influenced Nazi artworks
- Interpret visual and textual forms of propaganda
- Demonstrate knowledge of formalistic and rhetorical discourses surrounding art in Nazi Germany based on texts, images, and films covered in class
- Formulate verbal and written responses to Nazi art and propaganda

Texts and Images

All materials will be available on D2L unless otherwise specified.

Grades

25% Participation

10% Quiz

15% Visual Essay

25% Mid-term exam

25% Final paper

Participation

This portion of the course will primarily be evaluated by participation on the Padlet reflections and live online discussions.

Quiz

Students will place historical events, artworks, and rhetoric onto timelines and explain their relevance.

Visual essay

In this activity, students will be asked to situate a work of art into its historical and political contexts. Students will re-present the work and contextualize it in terms of the discourse we have discussed in class.

Mid-term exam

The mid-term online exam will assess basic knowledge in Week 4 to ensure that students have kept up with concepts, terminologies and events that shaped Nazi art and propaganda.

Final paper

The final paper will showcase a deeper analysis of one artist, theme, or work of art in Nazi Germany. Topics may include a Leni Riefenstahl or Walter Ruttmann film, a Modernist or Nazi-endorsed work of art, or a political speech about art by a Nazi official. 6-8 pages double-spaced.

Course schedule

Week 1: Divergent Histories of German Art and Philosophy

May 14-17

Texts: excerpts from Mitchell Frank, et. al. *German Art History and Scientific Thought*; excerpts from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Will to Power*; excerpts from Stephen Hicks, *Nietzsche and the Nazis*

Art: The Discobolus, Arno Breker, Der blaue Reiter, Die Brücke, Jugendstil, DADA

Film: excerpts from Walter Ruttmann, Leni Riefenstahl, Fritz Hippler

Activity: Live online discussion

Week 2: Truth, Lies, and the Nazi Disinformation Campaign

May 20-24

Texts: excerpts from David Culbert, et. al. *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*; excerpts from *Kunst dem Volk* ("Art for the People"); excerpts from Joseph Goebbels and: "The Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment"; excerpts from George Masse, *Nazi Culture*

Visual Essay: What was Nazi art?

Quiz

Week 3: Administering Illusion: Nazi Cinema

May 28-31 (Mon May 27: Holiday)

Texts: Erich Rentschler, "The Power of Illusions"; excerpts from David Hinton, *Leni*; excerpts from George Masse, *Nazi Culture*

Films: excerpts from Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*; Veit Harlan, *Jüd Süß*

Week 4: Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art)

June 3-7

Texts: excerpts from Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich*; excerpts from Toby Clark, *Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century*; excerpts from Olaf Peters, *Degenerate Art*; excerpts from George Masse, *Nazi Culture*

Virtual Exhibit: MoMA, "Degenerate Art"

Mid-term Exam

Week 5: Aftermath of Art and Politics in Nazi Germany

June 10-14

Texts: excerpts from Peter Adam, *Art of the Third Reich*; excerpts from *Facing History: "Art and Politics"*

Activity: Live online discussion

Week 6:
June 17-21

Film: Rüdiger Suchsland, *Hitler's Hollywood*

Final Paper: Due June 21, 2019