

History 38A/138A  
Winter 2017  
Ceras, Room 300  
TTh 10:30-11:50

Professor Edith Sheffer  
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Building 200-120

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## GERMANY & THE WORLD WARS, 1870-1990

This course examines Germany's tumultuous history from the Second Empire through the end of the Cold War. During this time, Germany ushered in five regimes and two world wars, seesawing between material ruin and economic prosperity on the frontline of Europe's military and ideological rifts. We will explore the economic and political crises underlying each of Germany's transformations, investigating the relationship between social upheaval and political change, as well as their far-reaching ramifications for the rest of the globe. Beginning with Bismarck's wars of unification, the class spans World War One, the Weimar Republic, the rise of Nazism, World War Two, the Holocaust, the division of communist East and capitalist West Germany, and the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Students will gain a close and critical understanding of different actors in history. We will view war and society through multiple lenses: personal accounts (diaries, letters, memoirs), government documents, newspaper reports, contemporary literature, popular images, jokes, songs, films, newsreels, and television. Course assignments will highlight Germany's changing conditions and perspectives, emphasizing the unforeseen effects of war on society.

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### REQUIRED TEXTS

#### Books

All books are available for purchase, and copies are also on reserve at Green Library.

William Hagen, *German History in Modern Times*

Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town*

Eric Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy*

Robert Moeller, *The Nazi State and German Society*

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*

Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City – A Diary*

Peter Schneider, *The Wall Jumper*

## Document Reader

Course readers are available for \$36 from Copy America in the Thornton Center (379 Santa Teresa Street, across from the Terman Fountain and Roble Gym). Week 1 – Monday-Friday, 9am–5pm. Week 2 – Monday-Wednesday 9am–5pm. After January 18<sup>th</sup> the reader will be available at their store: 344 S California Ave, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

## Films

Evening screenings will be scheduled for the two films required for the course. Students who miss the screenings can watch the films at the Media Microtext Center in the Lower Level of Green Library.

*All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930)

*The Lives of Others* (2006)

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## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

### Requirements

#### *History 38A*

Creating Lives	65%
Participation	35%

#### *History 138A*

Creating Lives	45%
Participation	20%
Midterm	15%
Final	20%

### Midterm and final exams

A midterm (1 hour, 15 minutes) and final exam (3 hours) will include term identification and relations, document discussion, and thematic essays based on the lectures, readings, and films.

### Participation

Students are expected to attend all lectures and section meetings, complete weekly reading assignments, and engage in active debate and discussion. More than two section absences will severely affect a student's participation grade, and insufficient lecture and section attendance will result in failure of the course. If a student has a prolonged illness, varsity athletic competitions, or a personal situation that might lead to more than two absences, the student should contact the instructor in advance, and may be provided an opportunity to make up the work missed in section.

## CREATING LIVES

Each student will create a unique historical character who was born in 1900 and lived through the twentieth century—from World War One through the end of the Cold War. You decide the identity of your character the first week of class, and ***you will keep this identity throughout the course.***

Every week, you will make life choices for your persona and post short updates to your personal wiki pages on Coursework. Each post should incorporate specific citations of the lectures and readings, as well as an analytical explanation of your choices.

This project highlights the significance of everyday actions in world events develops the ability to shift perspectives to people from different backgrounds. It is a highly analytical endeavor. You may find it, in fact, academically more rigorous than writing traditional papers, as it requires comprehensive analysis of broad historical context in order to then take the second step of situating individuals' experiences. It requires close attention to both themes and specific details of lectures and the readings.

### Possibilities

You are free to determine your persona's life path as you wish, selecting your character's name, gender, birthplace, family situation, living conditions, education, religion, political beliefs, and participation in historical events.

You may use this project to pursue topics of individual interest—involving your character deeply in specific subjects, arts, sports, social causes, careers, etc. If you are interested in understanding particular ideologies or phenomena, such as Nazism, you may consider immersing your character in them.

Feel free to incorporate your own family histories into your posts, basing your characters in places or situations your relatives or friends have lived, and or integrating actual family members into your characters' lives.

Your character need not always live in Germany - and does not even need to be German. As long as your avatar spends the bulk of his or her or life in Germany, you may view events from a transnational or outsider perspective.

Your character may interact with other characters in the class and you may collaborate in devising historical narratives. Yet all weekly posts will be written individually, from your character's individual perspective, and graded on an individual basis.

You can attach images, links, and additional information that relates to your persona on your character's wiki page.

The only restrictions are: (1) your avatar cannot die or be otherwise incapacitated, (2) you must spend the majority of your life in Germany and (3) you cannot change history.

## Logistics

Weekly assignment prompts are on this syllabus and the course wiki. Prompts are subject to change depending on course needs over the quarter.

Posts are due in lecture on Tuesdays. Bring a printout of your post to your section each week, and keep printouts of all weekly postings in a folder and bring this to sections.

## Grading

We expect historical accuracy when it comes to factual events and citations of the lectures and readings. We expect that you will strive for plausibility, but not mastery of small details.

We will be incorporating your posts into lectures and sections. Be prepared to discuss them and to apply your avatar's viewpoints onto various readings and lecture topics. You will also engage in the work and perspectives of your classmates.

Your posts will be evaluated with the following rubric. You will receive a copy of this checklist (in addition to individualized comments) each week. After the third and seventh week you will receive a letter grade that indicates the level at which your posts are tracking. This is an interim guideline and not a final grade for the project.

	Meets criteria at a high level	Partially satisfies criteria	Poor; needs improvement
<b>Components</b>			
- Character post			
- Analysis			
<b>Historical context</b>			
- Incorporation of specific points from readings, with page numbers			
- Incorporation of specific points from lectures			
<b>Writing</b>			
- Clarity of expression			
- Direct engagement with the prompt			

For further information about Creating Lives, see:

Edith Sheffer, "Creating Lives in the Classroom," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. November 22, 2009. <http://chronicle.com/article/TeachingMatters-Creating/49211/>

Edith Sheffer and Kathryn Ciancia, "Creating Lives: Fictional Characters in the History Classroom," *Perspectives in History*, October 2013. <http://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2013/creating-lives-fictional-characters-in-the-history-classroom>

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## COURSE POLICIES

### **Submissions and extensions**

Failure to complete any one graded assignment will result in a failing grade for the quarter. Late submissions will be penalized 1/3 grade per day. (An A- becomes a B+, for instance). There will be no revisions of assignments.

Students may request short-term extensions on assignments up to 48 hours before the due date, which will be decided on a case by case basis. Missed exams cannot be made up without prior authorization from the instructor, at least 48 hours in advance.

### **Attendance**

Attendance at lectures and sections is mandatory. If a student has a prolonged illness, varsity athletic competitions, or a personal situation that might lead to more than two section absences, the student should contact the instructor before missing section. Under certain conditions (such as varsity athletic competitions or prolonged illness), a student may be provided an opportunity to make up the work missed in section. Make-up work is at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Electronic devices**

The use of laptop computers will not be allowed in lectures and sections. All phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off and put away for the duration of lecture.

### **Provost's statement concerning students with disabilities**

Students who have a disability which may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education's Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend appropriate accommodations, and prepare a verification letter dated in the current academic term in which the request is being made. Please contact the DRC as soon as possible; timely notice is needed to arrange for appropriate accommodations (phone 723-1066; TDD 725-1067).

### **The Honor Code**

Students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code and adhere to Stanford's guidelines on plagiarism. You are responsible for understanding the University rules regarding academic integrity.

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm>

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/students/plagiarism.sources.htm>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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### WEEK 1. GERMAN EMPIRE

January 10 – Introduction: Germany & the World Wars  
January 12 – State Unification, Social Disunity

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#### Reading

**Course Reader: Document Excerpts #1-23**

*Everyday History - #1*

*Making Empire - #2-5*

*Character Resources - #6-23*

**Hagen, *German History in Modern Times* – pp. 21-27 and pp. 142-152**

*Excerpts of Chapter 2 - Herrschaft: Lordship and Power in the Germanies and Chapter 8 - Freedom and Voice, "Iron and Blood" - The Politics of German Unification and the German Empire (1871-1914)*

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#### Assignment

*Due Tuesday, January 17 in lecture*

1. Character post. Write a short autobiographical excerpt in the style of those in the Course Reader. It is January 1914 and your avatar is 14 years old. Choose your character's name, gender, birthplace, nationality, religion, and family situation; around 150-200 words.
2. Analysis. Explain in around 50-100 words your interest in developing this persona.

*Some questions to consider. In what kind of neighborhood and dwelling do you live? Are you close to your family? What is your daily life like? Do you have school, work, chores, activities, family obligations? Are you happy with your life and your prospects? What are your aspirations for the future?*

*This post is to define components of a historical life—and to frame topics and themes that you may wish to explore through your fictional persona.*

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WEEK 2. TENSIONS, HOME AND ABROAD

January 17 – Culture Wars

January 19 – German-America – Guest lecture by Benjamin Hein

A Conspicuous Minority? Jews and the Economy

in early twentieth-century Germany – Guest lecture by Jacob Daniels

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Reading

Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town*

Hagen, *German History in Modern Times*: pp. 153-182 and pp. 205-224

Chapter 9 - Sozialdemokratie: Workers and Politics in the Age of Industrialization, pp.

153-169; Chapter 10 - Frauen: Women, Family, Feminism, 1789-1914, pp. 170-182;

Chapter 12 - "German Citizens of Jewish Faith": Jews, Germans, German Jews, 1789-1914, pp. 203-224

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Assignment

Due Tuesday, January 24 in lecture

1. Character post. Write two short diary entries, around 100 words each.
  - a. March 1914. Discussing rifts in German society, including events in Konitz in 1900 – from *The Butcher's Tale*.
  - b. June 1914. Discussing Germany's rifts in a world context, including relations with Germany's "East" and the United States.
2. Analysis. Explain in 50-100 words the reasoning behind your character's opinions.

Some questions to consider. *Have larger events influenced your character? Has your character influenced larger events? What is your place in different scales of history – from the immediate sphere to local and regional happenings (such as in the Butcher's Tale) to national and global relationships?*

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WEEK 3. WAR AND UNREST, 1914-1923

January 24 – Origins of World War One

January 26 – Great War, Total War

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Film

*All Quiet on the Western Front*, 1930

Reading

**Course Reader: Document Excerpts #24-58**

*Tensions* - #24-28

*World War* - #29-40

*Civil War* - #41-58

**Hagen, *German History in Modern Times* – pp. 225-240**

*Chapter 13 - Krieg: The Prussian-German Monarchy's Sudden Death in War and Revolution, 1914-1920*

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Assignment

*Due Tuesday, January 31 in lecture*

1. Character post. Write four short diary entries from different points in time. Cite specific points from the lectures, readings, and film; around 70-80 words each.
  - a. September 1914
  - b. November 1914
  - c. November 1916
  - d. November 1918
2. Analysis. In around 100 words, (a) explain how your avatar's experiences shaped his or her view of the war and Germany, and (b) evaluate which actions, if any, contributed to the course of larger events.

*This post is to explore the evolution of actions and mentalities over time, and the relationships between individuals and war, at home and abroad.*

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## WEEK 4. THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

January 31 – Revolution, Inflation, and Near Civil War

February 2 – Stabilization and its Discontents

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### Reading

Eric Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* – pp. 41-80, pp. 251-368

Chapter 2, *Walking the City*; Chapter 7, *Culture and Mass Society*; Chapter 8, *Bodies and Sex*, 297-330; Chapter 9, *Revolution and Counterrevolution from the Right*; Conclusion

Hagen, *German History in Modern Times* – pp. 241-283

Chapter 14 - *Weimarer Republik: Democracy's Bitter Fruits, 1918-1933*; Chapter 15 - *A People without a State?: Middle-Class Discontent and Populist Utopia*

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### Assignment

Due Tuesday, February 7 in lecture

1. Character post. Write two short diary entries, around 100 words each
  - a. November 1923. (*by the way, how much money are you carrying?*)
  - b. Mid-1920s. Your character's encounter with at least one place, person, or phenomenon described in *Weimar Germany* and link it to your avatar's experience of the Weimar period as a whole. Around 150-200 words.
2. Analysis. Explain in 50-100 words the reasoning behind (a) your scenario and (b) your character's reactions.

*This post is to spotlight the diversity and newness of Weimar culture, society, and politics – and how individual perspectives can shift in response to cultural and social trends.*

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## WEEK 5. THE RISE OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

February 7 – Weimar’s Vulnerability

February 9 – The Nazi Seizure of Power

### Reading

**Course Reader, pp. 133-189**

Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*; “January 1933” and “May 1933”

**Robert Moeller, *The Nazi State and German Society* – pp. 29-51**

*Documents #1-11 – Chapter 1, “The Weimar Republic and the Rise of the Nazi Party”*

**Hagen, *German History in Modern Times* – pp. 284-289**

*Excerpt, Chapter 16 - Volksgemeinschaft: The “People’s Community” at Hitler’s Command, 1933-1945*

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### Assignment

*Due Tuesday, February 14 in lecture*

1. Character post. Write two diary entries, around 100 words each. If you wish, you may ground events in Peter Fritzsche’s descriptions of events January 30, 1933 (pp. 139-143) and May 1, 1933 (pp. 217-222).
  - a. January 1933
  - b. May 1933
2. Analysis. Explain in 50-100 words the reasoning behind your character’s actions and beliefs.

*This post is to examine the effects of sudden change on the actions and beliefs of individuals, and how these shifts, in turn, can shape larger events.*

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## WEEK 6. THE THIRD REICH, 1933-38

February 14 – *Midterm*

February 16 – The Racial State

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### Reading

**Course Reader, pp. 193-246**

Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945*; Part Three, "The Formation of the 'National Community,'" 201-307.

**Robert Moeller, *The Nazi State and German Society* – pp. 1-22, pp. 53-109**

*Introduction and Documents #12-33 – Chapter 2, "Life in Nazi Germany"*

**Hagen, *German History in Modern Times* – pp. 289-302 and pp. 319-331**

*Chapter 16 - Volksgemeinschaft: The "People's Community" at Hitler's Command, 1933-1945*

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### Assignment

*Due Tuesday, February 21 in lecture*

1. Character post. Select two documents from two different points in time in *The Nazi State* and write one diary entry based upon each. Both entries should be around 150-200 words.
2. Analysis. In 100-150 words, discuss (a) the reasoning behind your persona's reactions and (b) the role of your persona's actions and mentalities to broader developments in the Third Reich.

*Some questions to consider. In which National Socialist programs and organizations do you or members of your family participate? How do you feel about this participation? (see Racial State, e.g., National Labor Front, Strength through Joy, Hitler Youth, SA, SS). In what ways do you conform, collaborate, or subvert the Nazi regime? What are your reactions to specific events or policies, such as the Nuremberg Laws, war preparations, or measures against those deemed outside the national community? (Political opponents of the Reich, "asocials," homosexuals, the disabled and "hereditary ill," Germans of African descent, Sinti and Roma, Jews). To what extent does their persecution affect your everyday life? Are you doing anything to actively support or resist their persecution?*

*This post is to assess the variety of actions and opinions during the Third Reich and the role of everyday life in sustaining it.*

## WEEK 7. MICROSTEPS TO HOLOCAUST

February 21 – From Persecution to Mass Murder

February 23 – The General Government and Final Solution

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### Reading

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*

Robert Moeller, *The Nazi State and German Society* – pp. 129-173

Documents #34-55 ~ Chapters 4-5, “The Persecution of Jews and the Final Solution,” and “The Limits to Resistance”

Hagen, *German History in Modern Times* – pp. 303-318 and pp. 331-350

Chapter 17 - *Lebensraum: War for Empire in Eastern Europe*; Chapter 18 - *Shoah - Banned from Nation and Earth: German Jews after 1914, National Socialist "Jewish Policy," and the Holocaust*

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### Assignment

Due Tuesday, February 28 in lecture

1. Character post. Write three diary entries between 1939 and 1945; the dates are up to you. Base at least one entry (a) around a document from *The Nazi State*, and base at least one entry (b) around Browning’s *Ordinary Men*. You need not have direct contact with events described, but may have learned of them. The three entries should be around 70-80 words each.
2. Analysis. In 50-100 words, (a) explain your choices and (b) evaluate which actions, if any, contributed to the course of the war and the Holocaust.

Some questions to consider. In what ways do you conform, collaborate, or subvert the Nazi regime in the persecution of Jews? What, if anything, do you know about the Final Solution, and when did you know it?

This post is to consider historical and ethical judgment, questioning potential differences between an individual’s self-assessment at a moment of action and an outsider’s evaluation from a distant point in place or time.

## WEEK 8. AT WAR – 1939-1949

February 28 – WWII: Home and Battlefield

March 2 – Zero Hour and Military Occupation

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### Reading

Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City – A Diary*

Robert Moeller, ed., *The Nazi State and German Society* – pp. 110-128 and pp. 174-183. Documents #34-41 and #56-59 – Chapter 3, “Germany Goes to War,” and Chapter 6, “The Last Days of the Nazi Regime”

Hagen, *German History in Modern Times* – pp. 353-366, and pp. 384-389  
Excerpts: Chapter 19. Beyond “Zero Hour”: Defeated Germany and the West German Federal Republic, 1945-1989; Chapter 20. “Real Existing Socialism: Soviet-Occupied Germany and the German Democratic Republic”

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### Assignment

Due Tuesday, March 7 in lecture

1. Character post. Write four short diary entries that span the period 1939-1949. Specific dates are up to you. Around 60-80 words each.
  - a. One entry based on a document from *The Nazi State and German Society*
  - b. One entry based on your participation or reaction to a major event in the war (e.g., invasion of Poland, Battle of Stalingrad, D-Day)
  - c. One entry based on events described in *A Woman in Berlin*
  - d. One entry reflecting upon your actions during the Nazi period.
2. Analysis. In 50-100 words, explain the reasoning behind your choices and the course of your character’s postwar evolution.

Some questions to consider.

War: How has war affected you on the battlefield or home front? Do you live in a place that has seen Allied bombing, foreign slave laborers, or satellite concentration camps?

Occupation: Where are you when the Allies invade Germany? Which army do you encounter first? What was your reaction to defeat and military occupation? Do you or your family have much contact with foreign soldiers and/or officials (American, Soviet, British, or French)?

Responsibility: Who, in your opinion, bears guilt for the crimes of the Third Reich? Do you see guilt only for individual perpetrators, Nazi Party members, those who voted for the Nazi Party, a “collective” German guilt, and/or an international guilt? Do you see Germans mainly as perpetrators and/or as victims of National Socialism? Can you compare Germans’ wartime experiences of Allied bombing and postwar experiences of mass rape and mass expulsion from Eastern European countries to the suffering of those persecuted and killed by the Third Reich?

## WEEK 9. CLEAVAGES

March 7 – Constructing East and West – *Edith Sheffer*

“Divided Heaven”: German Communists, the Soviet Union, and the Making of East Germany – Guest lecture by *Michelle Mengsu Chang*

March 9 – “The Wall in the Head”

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### Film

*The Lives of Others*, 2006

### Reading

Peter Schneider, *The Wall Jumper*

*Course Reader*, pp. 250-257

Dorothee Wierling, “Mission to Happiness: The Cohort of 1949 and the Making of East and West Germans,” in Schissler, *The Miracle Years*, 110-125

Hagen, *German History in Modern Times* – pp. 371-383 and pp. 389-393

Excerpts: Chapter 19. Beyond “Zero Hour”: Defeated Germany and the West German Federal Republic, 1945-1989; Chapter 20. “Real Existing Socialism: Soviet-Occupied Germany and the German Democratic Republic

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### Assignment

Due Tuesday, March 14 in lecture

1. Character post. Write three diary entries for the time spanning 1950-1989, around 80-100 words each.
  - a. Mid-1950s. Describe your thoughts/participation in German division and the nascent Cold War
  - b. August 14, 1961. Describe your reaction to events the day before.
  - c. Date of your choice. Describe a visit to close friends or relatives in the “other” Germany, as in *The Wall Jumper*
2. Analysis. Explain in 50-100 words the reasoning behind your character’s actions and beliefs.

Some questions to consider: What do you see as Germany's best path for the future, western capitalist democracy, Soviet communism, or something else? Where do you live? East or West Germany? Do you move? Do you have family in other parts of Germany? Do you care if Germany is divided? How do you feel about the escalating Cold War, the East German Uprising of June 17, 1953, or the West German “Economic Miracle”? Are easterners and westerners different? Is there a “wall in the head” between them? Have you had any dealings with the Stasi in East Germany?

## WEEK 10. UNITY?

March 14 – Fall of the Wall and Reunification

March 16 – Five Germanies

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### Reading

**Course Reader, pp. 258-301**

Documents #62-67, and selections from Daphne Berdahl, *Where the World Ended: Reunification and Identity in the German Borderland*, 114-141; 155-183

**Hagen, *German History in Modern Times* – pp. 393-427**

Chapter 21. *Fall of the Wall: The Post-Unification Scene in West and East*

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### Assignment

1. Character Post. *Select either a or b:*

- a. From the perspective of your character at the end of his or her life (whenever you choose that to be) reflect upon your life experiences. You have lived through two world wars, the rise of radical regimes, the Holocaust, and the Cold War. How do you make sense of your life and the world around you? Around 350-400 words.

*Consider some of the following questions from your avatar's perspective: What was your happiest or unhappiest time? The most formative event? Do you wish you had done anything differently? Did you, or could you have, affected how larger events unfolded? Have your beliefs mainly stayed consistent, or changed with the times? What has shaped your life the most—the circumstances into which you were born, your individual personality, or the circumstances of society?*

~ or ~

- b. You are given the opportunity to meet your character and discuss a topic of your choice, such as war, radical regimes, reconstructions, everyday life, conformity and resistance. Write a dialogue between you and your avatar in which both people bring their own views; around 350-400 words.

*You might want to think about formative historical experiences that you have both had, ideas about different generations, the culture of different political systems, the acceptability of particular ideas at a given time, etc.*

2. Analysis. Using specific citations from the reading and lectures, explain in 100-150 words (a) which historical experiences were most determinative for your character's life, (b) how these particular experiences shaped your character's worldview, and (c) what role your character may have played in larger world developments. You may wish to consider "walls of the mind" vs. walls on the ground, addressing Peter Schneider's core question, "where does a state end and a self begin?"