



## *Syllabus*

### *The GDR 1949-1990: Politics Culture Society - 54834*

*Last update 11-09-2016*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Responsible Department: cont. german studies:politics, soc.&cult*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 2nd Semester*

*Teaching Languages: English*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Francesco Di Palma*

*Coordinator Email: [dipalma80@gmx.de](mailto:dipalma80@gmx.de)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: by prior arrangement*

*Teaching Staff:*

*Dr. Francesco Di Palma*

*Course/Module description:*

*This course is an introduction to the key issues of the East German State, from its*

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foundation in 1949 until its collapse in 1989/1990, and will allow students to connect social, political and cultural history of the GDR to the experience of the divided continent. In the context of the development of German politics and society, this seminar examines the patterns of national reconstruction in the GDR, contextualizes its alignment within the framework of the Cold War and assesses the impact of political and cultural movements nationally, internationally and in transnational perspective.

The readings and discussions will consider the structures of European integration, the struggle towards recognition of national sovereignty, the confrontation over the occupational status of Berlin as well as their implications for the Eastern German State and Society at large. Themes include the intersection of foreign relations and nation-building after the immediate consequences of WWII destruction, the ever-increasing influence of Soviet Russian based mass culture, elite and popular responses to Marxism-Leninism, suburbanization, gender constructions, narratives of national identities, social movements, political and economic relations between the SED and selected European [fraternal Parties], Perestroika as well as the long path to reunification.

The course will be of primary interest to students of Modern European History, German or Cold War Studies.

Course/Module aims:

This course aims to develop a variety of skills:

1. The mastery of arguments and concepts;
2. The ability to assess and interpret diverse texts;
3. The ability to express ideas and opinions (both in writing and in class);

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

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Attendance requirements(%):

80%

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You may not miss more than two sessions. Contact me if you have to be absent more than twice to arrange a make-up task;

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: The methods of instruction in the course and any other arrangement regarding teaching and learning activity.

Course/Module Content:

Week 1:

Introduction, getting to know each other, aims & expectations of the course, review course syllabus, distribution of oral presentation topics;

Week 2:

Foundation and Exercise of Rule; oral presentation; literature:

Read Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic*, Cambridge 2007, 23-45;

Read Burghard Ciesla, *Winner takes it all: The Soviet Union and the Beginning of Central Planning in East Germany*, in: eds. Hartmut Berghoff / Uta Andrea Balbier, *The East German Economy, 1945-2010*, New York 2013, 53-76;

Week 3:

Repression and Censorship; oral presentation; literature:

Read Jens Gieseke, *The Stasi: An Overview*, in: eds. Carl Eric Scott / F. Flagg Taylor, *Totalitarianism on Screen*, Lexington 2014, 231-256;

Week 4:

oral presentation; literature:

Read Mario Kessler / Thomas Klein, *Repression and Tolerance as Methods of Rule in Communist Societies*, in: Konrad H. Jarausch, *Dictatorship as Experience*, 109-124

Read Sylvia Klitzner / Siegfried Lokatis, *Criticism and Censorship: Negotiating Cabaret Performance and Book Production*, in: Konrad H. Jarausch, *Dictatorship as Experience*, 241-264.

Week 5:

State Consolidation and Early Popular Protest; oral presentation; literature:

Read Mary Fulbrook, *Rethorising "state" and "society" in the German Democratic Republic*, in: eds. Patrick Major / Jonathan Osmond, *The Workers' and Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht 1945-71*, Manchester 2002, 280-298;

Read Gareth Dale, *Popular Protest in East Germany, 1945-1989*, London 2005, 9-36;

Week 6:

Party Rule and "Eigensinn"; oral presentation; literature:

Read Rüdiger Bergien, *Activating the "Apparatchik." Brigade Deployment in the SED Central Committee and Performative Communist Party Rule*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 47 (2012), 4, 793-811;

Read Andrew I. Port, *The Dark Side of Eigensinn: East German Workers and Destructive Shopfloor Practices*, in: Berghoff / Balbier, *The East German Economy*,

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(Cambridge University Press, 2013), 111-128;

Week 7:

*From Ulbricht to Honecker*; oral presentation; literature:

Read Monika Kaiser, *Reforming Socialism? The Changing of Guard from Ulbricht to Honecker during the 1960s*, in: Konrad H. Jarausch, *Dictatorship as Experience*, 325-340;

Week 8:

*Society and Culture*; oral presentation; literature:

Read Josie McLellan, *Did Communists have better Sex? Sex and the Body in German Unification*, in: eds. David Clarke / Ute Wölfel, *Remembering the German Democratic Republic. Divided Memory in a United Germany*, Houndmills 2011, 119-130;

Read Martin Sabrow, *Dictatorship as Discourse: Cultural Perspectives on SED Legitimacy*, in: Konrad H. Jarausch, *Dictatorship as Experience*, 195-212;

Week 9:

oral presentation; literature:

Read Gunilla-Friederike Budde, *Women Policies in the GDR in the 1960s and 1970s: Between State Control and Societal Reaction*, in: ed. Rolf Torstendahl, *State, Policy and Gender System in the Two German States and Sweden 1945-1989*, Lund 1999, 199-217;

Read Leonore Ansorg / Renate Hartgen, *The Myth of Female Emancipation: Contradictions in Women's Lives*, in: 163-176 ;

Week 10:

*Cooperation and Collapse*; oral presentation; literature:

Read André Steiner, *Common sense is necessary.* East German Reactions to the Oil Crises of the 1970s, in: eds. Frank Bensch / Rüdiger Graf, *The Energy Crises of the 1970s. Anticipations and Reactions in the Industrialized World*, *Historical Social Research*, Vol. 39, 2014, Nr. 4, 231-250;

Read Ralf Ahrens, *Debt, Cooperation and Collapse: East German Trade in the Honecker's Years*, in: Berghoff / Balbier, *The East German Economy*, 161-176;

Week 11:

oral presentation; literature

Read Francesco Di Palma, *Eurocommunism and the SED: a contradictory relationship*, in: *Journal of European Integration History*, 20:2, 2014, S. 219-231;

Read Patrice G. Pouturus, *Asylum in Postwar Germany: Refugee Admission Policies and Their Practical Implementation in the Federal Republic and the GDR Between the Late 1940s and the Mid-1970s*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, January 2014, Vol. 49/1, 115 - 133;

Week 12:

*Perestroika and Fall of the Berlin Wall*; oral presentation; literature:

For Background read ed. Jonathan Osmond, *German Reunification: A reference guide and commentary*, Harlow 1992, 3-14;

Read Dale, *Popular Protest in East Germany*, 151-186;

Read Port, *Conflict and Stability*, 271-286

Week 13:

*Reunification and beyond*; oral presentation; literature:

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Read J½rgen Kocka, *The GDR: A special kind of Modern Dictatorship?*, in: Jarausch, *Dictatorship as Experience*, 17-26;

Read Mary Fulbrook, *Normalisation in the GDR in Retrospect: East German Perspectives on Their Own Lives*, in: Fulbrook, *Power and Society in the GDR 1961-1979*, 278-319.

Required Reading:

Mary Fulbrook, *A history of Germany, 1918-2014: the divided nation*, Chichester 2014, Part II and III;  
ed.

Mary Fulbrook, *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: the normalisation of rule*, New York 2009;

Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and stability in the German Democratic Republic*, Cambridge 2007.

Additional Reading Material:

eds. Patrik Major and Jonathan Osmond, *The workers and peasants state: communism and society in East Germany under Ulbricht 1945-1971*, Manchester 2002; J½rgen Kocka, *Civil Society and dictatorship in modern German history*, Hanover 2010; Joel Agee, *Twelve Years: An American Boyhood in East Germany*, Chicago 2000; Feiwel Kupferberg. *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic*, New Brunswick and London 2002; Christian Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989: Social Movement in a Leninist Regime*, Basingstoke 1995; Mike Dennis, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, London 2003; Dirk Philipsen, *Voices from East Germany's Revolutionary Autumn of 1989*, Durham 1992; Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR*, London 2002; Raymond G. Stokes, *Constructing Socialism: Technology and Change in East Germany, 1945-1990*, Baltimore 2000.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 0 %

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Reports 0 %  
Research project 0 %  
Quizzes 0 %  
Other 100 %  
see additional information

Additional information:

Your final grade is based upon:

1. Active participation in class discussions;
2. Doing the readings in advance of the respective classes and preparing 1-2 written discussion questions or short (critical) comments on each reading (20% of final grade). I collect them in the beginning of each session;
3. Oral presentation (critical summary of the text and a moderation of the discussion) (30% of final grade);
4. Written assignment: You are asked to hand one term paper (final take-home essay) to topics or texts discussed in class (approx. 3500 words) within two weeks after the last session of the course. All written material should be submitted in 12 point Times New Roman Font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. Sources must be cited in footnotes. Please send it to me via email (50% of final grade);

Plagiarism Policy: The penalty for plagiarism is failure of the course.