Syllabus

The GDR 1949-1990: Politics Culture Society - 54834

Last update 11-09-2016

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

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

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 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:
*Learning outcomes :
On successful completion of this module, students should be able to: 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);
Attendance requirements(%):  
80%  
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;
Week 3:
Repression and Censorship; oral presentation; literature:
Week 4:
oral presentation; literature:
Read Mario Ke"ler / Thomas Klein, Repression and Tolerance as Methods of Rule in Communist Societies, in: Konrad H. Jarausch, Dictatorship as Experience, 109-124
Week 5:
State Consolidation and Early Popular Protest; oral presentation; literature:
Week 6:
Party Rule and "Eigensinn"; oral presentation; literature:
Read Rdiger 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;
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 Wulfel, 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:
Week 10:
Cooperation and Collapse; oral presentation; literature:
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
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:
Read Jrgen Kocka, The GDR: A special kind of Modern Dictatorship?, in: Jarausch, Dictatorship as Experience, 17-26;

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

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 0 %
Project work 0 %
Assignments 0 %
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.