

Fascism without Borders. Fascist Movements in Past and Present in Comparative Perspective

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Live Sessions:	Monday, 9 – 11 a.m. CET (Berlin time)
Duration:	Feb. 14 – May 16, 2022
Language of Instruction:	English
Contact Hours:	30
ECTS Credits:	6

Course Description

This course addresses the question of what Fascism is, how it developed and changed over time, and how it unfolds in different regional contexts. We will compare various Fascist movements and regimes that existed in different times and spaces. The course will start with a discussion of a wide range of theories and definitions of Fascism, both contemporary and scholarly. From there, we are going to analyse distinct key aspects of historical Fascism (ideology, organisation, practices), particularly in France, Italy, and Germany, from the 1900s to the 1940s. The second half of the course deepens the comparative aspect when we look at very different movements and regimes across the globe that have been labelled as either “Authoritarian”, “Populist”, or “Fascist”. Relating and comparing such different political systems to each other as well as to the historical Fascist regimes helps us to get a better understanding of what exactly might be Fascist about them.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students develop an understanding how conceptual terms like “Fascism” are always politically framed and loaded and at the same time can still be very useful analytical tools. They will acquire basic knowledge of various Fascist regimes across the globe and how they relate to each other, i.e. learn about similarities and differences, entanglement and dissociation. In addition to introducing students to historical and contemporary debates of Fascism, this course uses guided readings, discussions, and frequent writing to help students discover and pursue their own intellectual interests. Finally, the course emphasizes how to formulate productive critical questions, how to draft concise analytical summaries of the issues raised by texts, and how to develop and push forward own research interests.

Student Prerequisites

Students should have completed at least three semesters of higher education when the course starts and need to possess English language abilities in speaking and writing on the Upper Intermediate Level (at least B2, preferably above).

General Requirements

Attendance of the weekly live sessions is mandatory (for the specific time slot, see above). These live sessions will be combined with recorded video lessons and intensive work through the online course platform, both individually and in groups. Altogether, this course awards credits for 30 contact hours and 90 hours of additional workload as well as completion of the [Portfolio Intercultural Awareness \(PIA\)](#). Please see course requirements for the various formats and weight of the course assignments as well as forms of assessment.

This course features a certain amount of independent coursework and thus expects you to be able to set up a self-disciplined study routine. We recommend that you make sure to have a quiet and appropriate working space. To ensure a comfortable learning environment for all, please adhere to our [Code of Online Conduct](#).

Technical Requirements

Stable internet connection.

Fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones is not recommended) with camera and microphone, headset recommended.

Recommended operating systems: Windows 7 or higher or MacOS 10.13 or higher. Avoid using a VPN.

Software: Webex Meetings.

Course Requirements

Three Course Assignments: 300 Points (30%)

Research Paper: 400 Points (40%)

Live Online Attendance (min. 75% required) & Participation: 300 Points (30%)

Grading

FU Grade	Points of 1,000
1.0	980-1,000
1.3	950-979
1.7	900-949
2.0	850-899
2.3	800-849
2.7	750-799
3.0	700-749
3.3	650-699
3.7	600-649
4.0	500-599
5.0	< 500

Literature

Provided online.

Course Schedule

Calendar	Topics, Reading, etc.
<p>Week 1 14/02/2022</p>	<p>Conceptualising Fascism</p> <p>I. What is Fascism? Contemporary Definitions and Discussions (1920s/1930s)</p> <p>Since the advent of Fascism as a political movement, commentators from all political strands tried to understand and interpret this new phenomenon. As an introduction to this course, we will read contemporary texts by a wide range of authors, e.g. Ludwig von Mises, Leon Trotsky, George Orwell, or Hermann Schuschnigg.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Paxton, <i>The Anatomy of Fascism</i> (2005) • Stanley Payne, <i>Fascism: Comparison and Definition</i> (1980) • Excerpts from selected contemporary definitions
<p>Week 2 21/02/2022</p>	<p>Conceptualising Fascism</p> <p>II. What is Fascism? Scholarly Definitions and Discussions</p> <p>Academics from various disciplines have developed different theories and interpretations of Fascism as a historical and political phenomenon. We will read some of the most important scholarly accounts to this debate, among them texts by Hannah Arendt, Umberto Eco, Roger Griffin, Robert Paxton, Stanley Payne.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roger Griffin, <i>The Nature of Fascism</i> (1995) • Umberto Eco, <i>Eternal Fascism</i> (1995) • Robert Wistrich, <i>The New Islamic Fascism</i> (2002) • Robert Eatwell, <i>Populism and Fascism</i> (2017)
<p>Week 3 28/02/2022</p>	<p>Comparing European Fascism, 1920s to 1940s</p> <p>I. Fascist Ideology</p> <p>Rather than providing a coherent ideology in its own right, Fascism borrowed ideological elements from various political movements and radicalised them. In this meeting we are going to identify and analyse core elements of Fascist ideology in a comparative perspective.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roger Griffin, <i>International Fascism</i> (1995) • Robert Paxton, <i>The Anatomy of Fascism</i> (2005) • Jason Stanley, <i>How Fascism Works</i> (2017)

<p>Week 4 07/03/2022</p>	<p>Comparing European Fascism, 1920s to 1940s</p> <p>II. Fascist Organisation</p> <p>Fascist movements share specific patterns of organisation that are characterised by a strict hierarchy and the cult of the (charismatic) leader by the masses. We will take a close comparative look at these aspects and their aesthetic representation in the public sphere.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle A. Kallis, The ‘Regime-Model’ of Fascism: A Typology (2000) • Stanley Payne, Fascism (1980) • Anson Rabinbach, Staging the Third Reich (2020)
<p>Week 5 14/03/2022</p>	<p>Comparing European Fascism, 1920s to 1940s</p> <p>III. Fascist Practices</p> <p>Fascist movements emphasise the politics of will and action. They perceive violence, including murder, as a legitimate means to fight the enemy. Studying Fascist practices therefore means to analyse violence as a tool of destruction directed against real or imagined “Others”, but also as a tool of internal (male) bonding.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emilio Gentile, Fascism as Political Religion (1990) • Sven Reichardt, Fascist Marches in Italy and Germany: Squadre and SA before the Seizure of Power (2007) • Jason Stanley, How Fascism Works (2017)
<p>Week 6 21/03/2022</p>	<p>Comparing European Fascism, 1920s to 1940s</p> <p>IV. Another <i>Sonderweg</i>? German National Socialism and Fascism</p> <p>Wherever in power, Fascism unfolded its violent and destructive force. But nowhere else but in National Socialist Germany did this lead to such unprecedented crimes against humanity. In this session we are going to identify the peculiarities of German National Socialism in comparison to other Fascist regimes and ask if the concept of “Fascism” is appropriate to actually understand National Socialism.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geoff Eley, Nazism as Fascism (2013) • Richard Evans, The Third Reich at War. How the Nazis Led Germany from Conquest to Disaster (2008) • Ian Kershaw, To Hell and Back. Europe 1914-49 (2015)

<p>Week 7 04/04/2022</p>	<p>National Case Studies</p> <p>I. Iberian Fascism or Right-Wing (Catholic) Authoritarianism? The Regimes of Franco (Spain) and Salazar (Portugal)</p> <p>The regimes of Franco in Spain and Salazar in Portugal lasted until the mid-1970s and have been described as either proto-Fascist or clerical-Fascist. In this meeting we will focus on authoritarian political Catholicism, its ideological roots, and in particular its relation to “pure” Fascism.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanley Payne, <i>Fascism in Spain 1923-1977</i> (2000) • António Costa Pinto, <i>The Salazar “New State” and European fascism</i> (1991) • Paul H. Lewis, <i>Latin fascist elites. The Mussolini, Franco, and Salazar regimes</i> (2002)
<p>Week 8 11/04/2022</p>	<p>National Case Studies</p> <p>II. From Fascism to Populism? South American Populist Regimes</p> <p>Besides Europe, South America has been a hotbed for the emergence of Populist and sometimes Fascist regimes. Mainly drawing on the examples of Argentina and Chile, we will look at ideological transfers across the Atlantic and will relate South American populism to the Fascist regimes in Europe.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federico Finchelstein, <i>The Ideological Origins of the Dirty War: Fascism, Populism, and Dictatorship in Twentieth-Century Argentina</i> (2014) • Federico Finchelstein, <i>From Fascism to Populism in History</i> (2017) • Rene Leal, <i>The Rise of Fascist Formations in Chile</i> (2020)
<p>Week 9 18/04/2022</p> <p>(Easter Monday)</p> <p>Class will take place!</p>	<p>National Case Studies</p> <p>III. Fascist Movements in the U.S. and the Rise of “Trumpism”</p> <p>While it is popular to assume that liberal democracies are immune to the challenges of Fascism, the U.S. provide the best example that Fascist movements can flourish even within liberal democracies and, moreover, under certain circumstances can become an influential factor in national politics. We will investigate how extra-parliamentarian right-wing and evangelical movements paved the way for the Trump presidency and to what extent (and why) these can be labelled as “Fascist”.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Steigmann-Gall, <i>Star-spangled fascism: American interwar political extremism in comparative perspective</i> (2017) • Kathleen Belew, <i>Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America</i> (2018) • George H. Nash, <i>American Conservatism and the Problem of Populism</i> (2017) • Cas Mudde, <i>The Far Right in America</i> (2018)

<p>Week 10 25/04/2022</p>	<p>National Case Studies</p> <p>IV. Fascist Traditions and the “New Right” in Europe</p> <p>Across Europe, a so-called “New Right” that has redefined its relation to historical Fascism has emerged since the 1970s. Today, very different exponents of the “New Right” have either come to power in countries like Hungary, Poland, and the UK, or have strong general support in countries like France and Italy. Acknowledging the sometimes fundamental differences, we will look what these regimes and movements might have in common and how past experiences with Fascism resonate with them in theory and practice.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jean-Yves Camus/Nicolas Lebourg, Far-Right Politics in Europe (2017) • Cas Mudde, The Populist Radical Right (2017) • Wiebke Keim, Postfascists. Putting the so-called “Populist Right” in historical context (2021)
<p>Week 11 02/05/2022</p>	<p>National Case Studies</p> <p>V. Fascism and Political Religion Outside Europe</p> <p>In recent years, we have observed a dramatic rise of political-religious movements that postulate supremacy and tend to establish absolute power while suppressing minorities and violating human rights. Political Islam in Turkey, the theocratic regime in Iran, or Hindu Nationalism in India come with Fascist undertones and have been described as partly Fascist. In this session we will also take a closer comparative look at the general relation between Fascism and religion and the conception of Fascism as a Political Religion, respectively.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamir Bar-On, ‘Islamofascism’: Four Competing Discourses on the Islamism-Fascism Comparison (2018) • Martha C. Nussbaum, The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence and India's Future (2007) • Ekin Burak Arıkan, Turkish extreme right in office: whither democracy and democratization? (2012)
<p>Week 12 09/05/2022</p>	<p>Fascism Transnational: Cooperation and Competition</p> <p>In the logic of Fascism, international cooperation is impossible as the defined in-group (whether on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality etc.) is at constant war with “Them”, the outsiders. However, Fascist <i>Realpolitik</i> has always created and until today still creates transnational networks, exchanges, and entanglements. We are going to look at some of these international networks in past and present and will assess the chances but also limitations of these forms of Fascist cooperation.</p> <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angel Alcalde, The Transnational Consensus: Fascism and Nazism in Current Research (2020) • Arnd Bauerkämper/Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe (ed.), Fascism without Borders (2018) • Sven Reichardt, Fascism’s Global Moments (2017)

Week 13
16/05/2022

Fascism Revisited: Useful Concept or Ideological Term?

The last decade has seen the rise of right-wing authoritarian and populist movements and regimes all over the globe that sometimes are being labelled as “Fascist”. At the end of this course, we are going to assess if the term and concept of “Fascism” are still appropriate to fully understand the character of these movements by relating present developments to the past, i.e. “historical Fascism” from the 1920s to the 1940s.

Reading

- Enzo Traverso, *The New Faces of Fascism* (2017)
- Paul Gottfried, *The Uses and Misuses of “Fascism”* (2020)
- Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* (2017)