

## German History and Politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (in English)

---

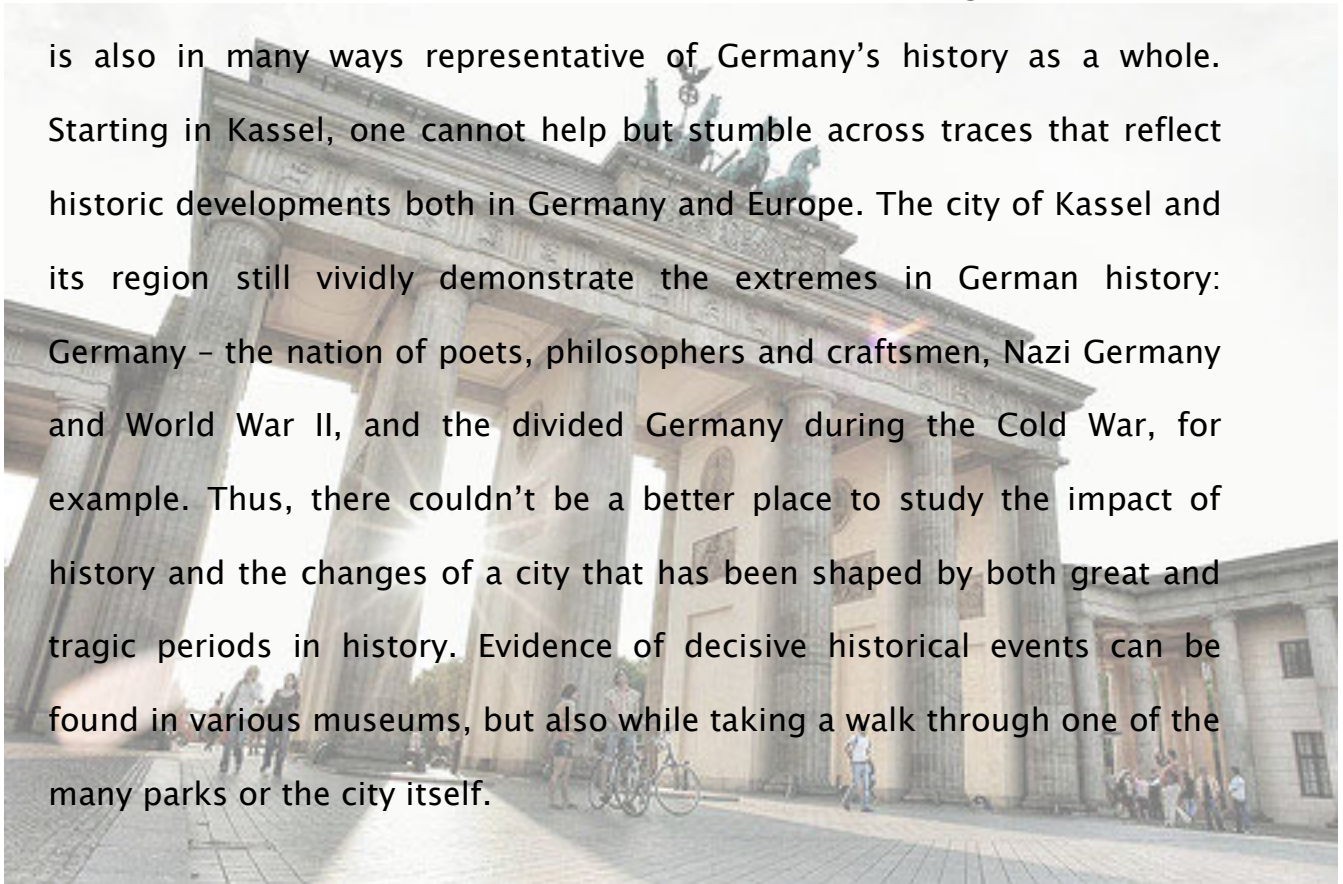


University of Kassel  
**Hessen International Summer University**

- 🏠 Kurt-Wolters-Str. 5  
34109 Kassel  
Germany
  - ☎ +49 (0) 561 / 804-1869
  - 📠 +49 (0) 561 / 804-7168
  - ✉ [isu@uni-kassel.de](mailto:isu@uni-kassel.de)
- 
-

## Thematic Structure:

Kassel, the documenta-city in the land of fairy tales, is renowned as a center of culture and arts. It has a long rich history. Located in the heart of Germany, Kassel's past is not only closely linked to the region of Hesse, it is also in many ways representative of Germany's history as a whole. Starting in Kassel, one cannot help but stumble across traces that reflect historic developments both in Germany and Europe. The city of Kassel and its region still vividly demonstrate the extremes in German history: Germany – the nation of poets, philosophers and craftsmen, Nazi Germany and World War II, and the divided Germany during the Cold War, for example. Thus, there couldn't be a better place to study the impact of history and the changes of a city that has been shaped by both great and tragic periods in history. Evidence of decisive historical events can be found in various museums, but also while taking a walk through one of the many parks or the city itself.



This course is offered based on the preferences that students expressed in the previous years. The focus will be on three major topics.

1. First, we will explore the events and circumstances that led to the rise of Hitler and the Nazis. Which central factors made the “Third Reich” possible? In order to find answers to this question, it is

necessary to take a look at the so-called “Second Reich”, which started in 1871. Both World War I and the following Weimar Republic supported the Nazis and Hitler and finally made it possible for Hitler to gain control over the country.

2. The second topic will focus on the Third Reich. We will not only examine this dictatorship’s underlying structure, but will also analyze the ideology that motivated the Nazis. We will ask questions such as “How did Hitler take Germany to World War II?”, “How did the Holocaust unfold?” “What were the consequences of the Holocaust?” and “What was the legacy of the Third Reich?”.

3. In the third topic covered by the course, we will concentrate on the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the two German states that were formed after World War II. Not only were these states integrated into two different ideological systems, the western capitalist world on the one hand and the eastern communist world on the other hand, but the history of two German states also is a success story that has its peak with the reunification and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Why were there two German states at all and why were they integrated into different ideological systems? What was life like in those states? What was the purpose of the “Wall” and, especially, which steps were taken to finally bring it to a fall?

This seminar will offer students the chance to explore possible answers to those above and similar questions dealing with German history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Method:

The course will be taught with a mixture of lectures, seminar discussions, and excursions. The class will explore historical sites in Kassel first-hand and will visit the former Nazi concentration camp in Breitenau.

## Requirements and Assessment:

Participants are expected to attend classes regularly, take part in the excursions and to actively engage in discussions. As a final examination, students are expected to write an essay dealing with one of the above-mentioned topics in detail.

## Student Profile and Prerequisites:

Ideal for students of history, political and social sciences. Students from other areas of studies, who are interested in German history and politics are welcome as well.

## Lecturer:

Diena Janakat is a graduate of the University of Kassel, where she studied history, English and educational sciences. Her research and teaching focus on German History in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born and raised in Kassel herself, she also developed a special interest in the role of Kassel in history and started her research on local historical topics. She has experience teaching local, German and American history both at university and high-school levels.

## Readings:

Scholarly readings constitute an essential basis for this seminar. A course reader with selected readings, containing excerpts of primary as well as secondary literature sources, will be made available at the beginning of the course.

## Suggested Literature and Online Resources:

To be announced.