

Hitler and Nazi Germany

The Man and the Times; the challenge in the 20th century.

The 20th and now the 21st century has been dominated by this historical figure. Who was he and how did he achieve what he did? Why does his name and his movement continue to find their way into contemporary times?

An Outline

I. Childhood Years

Lineage and family; The Castle in the Forest

II. Vienna and Munich

Art and politics, Wagner, *Lohengrin*, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, angst and anomie

III. WW I

Seminal event of the 20th c., All Quiet on the Western Front, Armistice

IV. Post-War years

Treaty of Versailles, *Max*

V. The putsch and the years following

Munich, Mein Kampf, depression

VI. 1933-1935 election and Gleichschaltung

Political power, *Triumph of the Will*

VII. 1936-1938 –The World Stage

Berlin Olympics, *Olympiad*, Anschluss, appeasement, *The Great Dictator*

VIII. 1939-1941 WW II

Blitzkrieg, The World at War

IX. 1941-1945

Operation Barbarossa, Stalingrad, D-Day, *Valkyrie*

X. The Holocaust

Wannsee Conference, Dachau, Buchenwald, Auschwitz, *Shoah*, Night

Underlines are books, *italics* are movies and opera, suggestions for the interested. Hardly an exhaustive list!

My Mission Statement

What is this class about? Why should we study this period or this individual?

While I enjoy the accumulation of knowledge, even for its own sake, knowledge is the evidence for analysis. As we muddle through 2017 and probably beyond, many people wonder how we arrived at this point, a period when disruption of our society, our values, and our politics has us questioning ourselves and our world. We often bemoan the demise of critical thinking among our young people. I hope we can sharpen our own in this class.

Terms like Nazi and Hitler have surfaced frequently in the last decade, certainly within the past year. What do they mean? How are they being used? While these terms used in the present are not the focus of the class, they certainly underline why I wanted to teach it. The context of the larger history helps our understanding. So the course is both about us and today, understood from a historical perspective.

Godwin's Law is an internet adage that is derived from one of the earliest bits of Usenet wisdoms, which posits that "if you mention [Adolf Hitler](#) or Nazis within a discussion thread, you've automatically ended whatever discussion you were taking part in."

Discussion and sharing, dialog and conversation rather than lecture or collection of evidence, is the goal in each class. The outline is a guide, not a hard and fast syllabus. Digression will and should happen. The moderator's job is to keep the class focused and engaged, the former perhaps more challenging than the latter!

Learning is exploring. The Indiana Jones model is not inappropriate for this topic!

