

SE261: Seemingly Inseparable: Reporting and Debating Israel-Palestine, Antisemitism and Racism in German Media

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Course Times: Tuesday and Thursday 9:00-10:30

Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This seminar introduces and critically interrogates German newspaper coverage of debates at the intersection of foreign policy, the politics of memory, and migration. It explores a broad range of journalistic forms: from war reporting and foreign correspondence, to the coverage of domestic political conflicts, long-form interviews, as well as commentary and opinion writing. It also provides an opportunity to gain experience in journalistic writing. Students will be equipped with media critique skills, will hone their skills at distinguishing how and under which influence reports are written, and what voices and opinions are heard or excluded. The second part of the course focuses on the Achille Mbembe controversy, precipitated in early 2020 following accusations of antisemitism against the renowned Cameroonian philosopher. Reviewing the numerous essays dealing with legacies of the Holocaust, colonialism and identity politics, critique of Israel's occupation and the boundaries of free speech, students will gain insights into the making of German national narratives and will have the opportunity to gain practice in commentary and opinion writing.

Requirements

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester can significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Please inform us about any potential absence in advance. Please consult the Student

Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence. Tardiness after ten minutes might be considered an absence.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPRING 2022: Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Assessment and Assignments

Your active, consistent and thoughtful participation and preparation for each session is important. Class sessions will include brainstormings, discussions, presentations, writing and reading periods, and you will be asked to work alone, with a partner or in a group, online and offline.

There will be reading assignments of both academic texts and journalistic texts. All readings are accessible either in the library or online. The links, as well as basic English translations of the German articles will be provided on Google Classroom or Brightspace.

One of the main goals of the course is to acquire experience in journalistic writing. Instead of a Midterm essay you will write several shorter pieces over the course of the semester, that will be graded:

- a short description (300 words) of a German newspaper (due February 10)
- a media critique (700 words) of German media reporting on Israel/Palestine (due February 22)
- a commentary (1400 words) about historical comparisons (due March 31)
- a short journalistic report (400 words) on the online discussion *Your Homeland is our Nightmare* (due 19 April)

Your final essay (2200 words) should be written as a column for potential publication in a German newspaper, reflecting your own thoughts and reactions to German historical debates surrounding racism and antisemitism (due 19 May).

Preliminary contact has been made with a number of media outlets (newspapers, websites, and others) in Germany and abroad willing to consider the publication of your final pieces. Publication cannot be guaranteed, and editorial judgement and decisions will remain with the media outlets in question. If required, the seminar instructor will be able to arrange translation.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

Participation:	30 %
Writing assignments:	40%
newspaper description: 5%	
media critique: 10%	
commentary: 20%	
news report: 5%	
Final essay/article:	30%

Schedule

February 1	Introduction
February 3	<p>Media and the Israel-Palestine Conflict</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunsky, Madra. <i>Pens and Swords</i>. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. 1-33. • Ismail, Ayman. “I Did Have Some Trouble Reporting the Truth”, <i>Slate</i>, May 22, 2021. https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/05/israel-palestine-coverage-bias-reporters.html
February 8	<p>The German <i>Medienlandschaft</i></p> <p><u>Write and present a short description (300 words) of one German newspaper.</u></p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pew Research Center. “News Media and Political Attitudes in Germany,” accessed January 4, 2022, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/fact-sheet/news-media-and-political-attitudes-in-germany/
February 10	<p>German-Israeli Relationships</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marwecki, Daniel. <i>Germany and Israel: Whitewashing and State-building</i>. London: Hurst Publishers, 2020. 1-36 • Strack, Christoph. “Germany stands by Israel — despite the Holocaust, and because of the Holocaust,” <i>Deutsche Welle</i>, May 14, 2021. https://www.dw.com/en/germany-stands-by-israel-despite-the-holocaust-and-because-of-the-holocaust/a-57530170
February 15	<p>German Media and Israel-Palestine</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kempf, Wilhelm. “Peace Journalism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the German press and the German public.” <i>Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem [Online]</i>, 23 (2012). https://journals.openedition.org/bcrfj/6788?lang=en • Two short German newspaper articles problematizing media bias in reporting on Israel-Palestine (still to be selected)
February 17	<p>Reporting on the Ground. The Escalation of May 2021 in the Press</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three short German news reports on violence in Israel-Palestine (still to be selected)
February 22	<p>The War at Home – Reporting on Protests in Germany</p> <p><u>Write a media critique (700 words) of three articles in different German newspapers reporting on the situation in Israel-Palestine.</u></p>

	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Othman, Riad. “All lumped together”. <i>Medico</i>, May 27 2021. https://www.medico.de/en/blog/alles-in-einen-topf-18212 • A news article about antisemitism and pro-Palestinian demonstrations (still to be selected)
February 24	<p>Defining Antisemitism</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ulrich, Peter. “On the IHRA’s “Working Definition of Antisemitism”. Papers 2019/3, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/rls_papers/Papers_3-2019_Antisemitism.pdf
March 1	<p>Holocaust Memory in East and West Germany</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neiman, Susan. <i>Learning from the Germans</i>. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019. 81-132
March 3	<p>Remembering Colonialism</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wells, Alexander. “Historian Jürgen Zimmerer on Germany's other genocide.” <i>Exberliner</i> March 22, 2020. https://www.exberliner.com/features/history/j%C3%BCrgen-zimmerer-interview/
March 10	<p>Multidirectional Memory</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rothberg, Michael. <i>Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization</i>. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2009. 1 – 29
March 15	<p>Excursion: Visit to the Offices of the Berliner Zeitung</p> <p>Meeting Place: Alte Jakobstr. 105 10969 Berlin</p>
March 17	<p>Multidirectional Memory in Israel-Palestine</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bashir, Bashir, and Amos Goldberg. <i>The Holocaust and the Nakba</i>. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018. 1 - 42
March 22	<p>Discussion of Essays</p> <p>Assignment: Prepare and present a draft (300 words) of a longer column, addressing the relationship between the crimes committed and the trauma created by the Nazi regime and other historical atrocities and traumas.</p>
March 24	<p>Achille Mbembe and Postcolonial Critique</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mbembé, J.-A., and Libby Meintjes. "Necropolitics." <i>Public Culture</i> 15, no. 1 (2003): 11-40. muse.jhu.edu/article/39984.
March 29	<p>The German Mbembe Debate</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaube. Jürgen. “Alles in einem Topf.“ <i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i>. April 20, 2020

	<p>https://zeitung.faz.net/faz/feuilleton/2020-04-20/abc2f8341637130502e3b1918bebd3/?popup=user.lf-ns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dekel, Irit and Özyürek Esra. “Perfides Ablenkungsmanöver.” <i>Die Zeit</i> July 10, 2020. https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2020-07/antisemitismus-debatte-holocaust-deutschland-rassismus-kolonialismus-diskriminierung-10nach8 • Rothberg, Michael. “Comparing Comparisons: From the “Historikerstreit” to the Mbembe Affair.” <i>Geschichte der Gegenwart</i>. September 23, 2020. https://geschichtedergewenart.ch/comparing-comparisons-from-the-historikerstreit-to-the-mbembe-affair/
March 31	<p>Writing Commentary- further work on personal columns. <u>Assignment: Bring one recent example of commentary writing and present it in class.</u></p>
April 5	<p>German Catechism and the Continuation of the Historikerstreit Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses, Dirk “The German Catechism.” <i>Geschichte der Gegenwart</i>. May 23, 2021 https://geschichtedergewenart.ch/the-german-catechism/ </p>
April 7	<p>The Debate of German Catechism <u>Assignment: Choose one response to Dirk Moses on the website New Fascism Syllabus and present the main arguments in class.</u></p> <p>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses, Dirk “Dialectic of Vergangenheitsbewältigung.” <i>New Fascism Syllabus</i>. June 15, 2021. http://newfascismsyllabus.com/opinions/dialectic-of-vergangenheitsbewaltigung/ </p>
April 19	<p>Post-migrant Germany <u>Assignment: Write a short journalistic report (400 words) on the online discussion.</u></p> <p>Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foroutan, Naika. “The post-migrant paradigm.” In: <i>Refugees Welcome: Difference and Diversity in a Changing Germany</i>. Edited by Jan-Jonathan Bock and Sharon Macdonald. 121-142. New York: Berghahn Books, 2019. </p> <p>Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goethe-Institut Brüssel “YOUR HOMELAND IS OUR NIGHTMARE (EN)” Youtube, 17 May 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYAijRM3QJw </p>
April 21	<p>Debating Migrant Identities Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amjahid, Mohamad. “Among whites: Biodeutsche and their privileges.” Interview by Seymour Gris. <i>Exberliner</i>, May 11, 2017. https://www.exberliner.com/features/people/among-whites-biodeutsche- </p>

	<p>and-their-privileges/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kermani, Navid. “I won’t be an Uncle Tom” Interview by Ali Fathollah-Nejad. July 3, 2007. http://www.fathollah-nejad.eu/interview-navid-kermani-2007/
April 26	<p>Jewish Identity in the Migrationsland Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolff, Fabian. “Only in Germany.“ <i>Die Zeit</i>. May 7 2021 https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2021-05/judaism-antisemitism-germany-israel-bds-fabian-wolff-essay-english • Czollek, Max. “Gegenwartsbewältigung“. <i>TRANSIT vol. 12, no. 2</i> (2020). https://transit.berkeley.edu/2020/czollekcho-polizzi/
April 28	<p>Palestinian Identity and German Media Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • El-Hassan, Nemi. “A German tabloid called me antisemitic. It cost me my job. Now, it’s my turn to speak.” <i>Forward</i>, November 4, 2021. https://forward.com/opinion/477699/a-german-tabloid-called-me-antisemitic-it-cost-me-my-job-now-its-my-turn/ • Dische-Becker, Emily, Khatib, Sami, Manna, Joumana. “Palestine, Antisemitism, and Germany's "Peaceful Crusade".” <i>Protocols</i>. Issue 8 (2020). https://prtcls.com/article/berlin-art-and-palestine-conversation/
May 3	<p>Writing for German Media Outlets – Constraints and Possibilities <u>Assignment: Prepare a short draft of an essay for publication in a German newspaper reflecting your own thoughts and reactions to German historical debates and dealings with racism and antisemitism.</u></p>
May 5	<p>Guest Visit: A Talk with the Journalist René Aguigah <u>Assignment: Prepare two questions for the conversation.</u></p>
May 10	<p>Presentation of Essays in Class <u>Assignment: Present a draft of your essay.</u></p>
May 12	<p>Feedback and closing remarks</p>