

PS390: German Foreign Policy and National Security Decision-Making

Seminar Leader: Aaron Allen
Email: a.allen@berlin.bard.edu
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

This multidisciplinary course explores the structural evolution of the Federal Republic of Germany's role in the world since the end of World War II to the current *Zeitenwende*. Through an interactive approach, students will be able to contextualize contemporary German foreign policy challenges from their geographic, material, and ideational roots. Furthermore, course activities and assignments are tailored to assist students in becoming foreign policy practitioners fully capable of applying national security decision theories. The curriculum threads together historical cases, international relations scholarship, and security studies in order to provide a holistic understanding of all the constituent parts influencing Germany's external posture. Why is contemporary Germany often referred to as a reluctant leader? What are the unique attributes of German-style foreign policy that are currently undergoing reconsideration by the incumbent *Ampelkoalition*? A critical appraisal of topics such as the institutions shaping elite policy-making, the legacy of the Cold War and reunification, relations with the European Union, and the triangulation between the great powers of the United States, Russia and China offers students the necessary tools to answer these core questions. The complementary emphasis on professional development will allow participants to garner practical skills through simulations, seminar debates, and presentations.

Requirements

Readings:

1. Course readings will be available online.
2. Ash, Timothy Garton. 1994. *In Europe's Name: Germany and the Divided Continent*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. (978-0679755579)
3. Zelikow, Philip D. and Rice, Condoleezza. 1997. *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*. Harvard University Press. (978-0674353251)

Class Preparation:

For each class, please read the assigned texts thoroughly and come prepared to discuss:

- The main arguments put forth by the author(s);
- The role of individual actors, domestic considerations, and other similar factors needed to comprehend evolving trends in German foreign policy;
- And how each reading relates to the larger themes of elite decision-making, and contemporary challenges.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Please know that there will be a sign-in sheet for each session. Up to two absences will not affect one's grade or require documentation. Every additional absence without approved leave will result in the subtraction of one point from the overall final grade. If you need a Leave of Absence, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to make the appropriate arrangements.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credits for any course if a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. Students facing a long-term, serious medical or personal emergency (generally lasting more than two weeks) may request a Leave of Absence, to be approved by the Dean, Associate Dean, Head of Student Life, or Director of Academic Services. The 30% rule applies even in these cases. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook in Section 2.8.

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.

Policy on Late Submission of Assignments:

Assignments that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). The instructor will not accept any papers that are more than 24 hours late.

Assignments, Grade Breakdowns and Deadlines:

Written:

German Foreign Policy In the News Analysis	10%
--	-----

Students must submit an analysis of current German foreign policy news via Google Classroom and deliver an in-class presentation on the selected date. The written analysis should be 1,200-1,500 words and include the following: background information and evaluation of the main ideas in the news article; your commentary and perspective on the topic(s); and connections to course readings and discussions.

Independent News Media Examples:

- Politico Berlin Bulletin
- Deutsche Welle
- Euroactiv
- Euronews

Oral:

Class Participation 30%

This seminar involves thoughtful and active participation in class discussions, reflections on current affairs, and working groups. The classroom is a protected space and you should feel free to voice your arguments and comments. Your class participation grade will be based on: (1) engagement in course discussions; (2) current affairs updates; (3) simulations; (4) and working groups.

Group Presentation 15%

Each student will be assigned to a group and tasked with preparing a presentation on a functional topic related to a contemporary issue in German foreign policy on **March 4, 2025**. Each group will deliver a 30-minute presentation, followed by facilitating a class discussion lasting up to 30 minutes. Further details and guidelines will be provided during class.

Podcast and Presentation 30%

Students will create a podcast (approximately 90-120 minutes) analyzing the bilateral relationship between Germany and a chosen country. The podcast should include a historical overview, analysis and commentary on key topics, an interview with a knowledgeable guest, and a synthesis of relevant concepts covered in the course. Students have creative freedom in the podcast's design and content, enabling them to focus on the aspects they find most significant and engaging. Students will also deliver a brief in-class presentation on the bilateral relationship.

- **Podcast Draft Script:** Submit the draft script of your podcast via Google Classroom. Due March 25, 2025 at 23:59 CEST. This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade.

- **Final Podcast:** Submit final podcast of memo via Google Classroom on May 5, 2025 at 23:59 CEST. This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade.

- **Presentation:** All students will deliver their presentations on the final day of class. This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade.

Exams:

Midterm Exam 15%

Students will take an in-class midterm exam on **April 8, 2025**. More detailed information will be provided in class

Weekly Schedule

Week 1	Course Overview and Introduction to German Politics
January 28, 2025	Reading(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ German Basic Law ▪ Green, Hough and Miskimmon, “The Politics of the New Germany.”
Week 2	German Political and National Security Institutions and Westpolitik
February 4, 2025	Reading(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eberwein and Kaise, "Germany's New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World, Ch. 2 and 3" ▪ Erb, "The Double Consensus: West German Foreign Policy, 1945-1980" ▪ Trentmann, "Out of the Darkness: The Germans 1942-2022 (War and Peace: The Dilemma of Arms)"
Week 3	Ostpolitik
February 11, 2025	Reading(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ash, “In Europe’s Name: Germany and the Divided Continent (1-342)”
Week 4	German Nuclear Strategies and Anti-Nuclear Movements
February 18, 2025	Reading(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heuser, “NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear Strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000, Ch. 1 and 5” ▪ Erb, “Missiles and Protests: The Early 1980s” ▪ Davis and Jasper, “Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons as a ‘Trojan Horse’: Explaining Germany’s Ambivalent Attitude”
Week 5	Case Study: German Reunification
February 25, 2025	Reading(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zelikow and Rice, “Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft (All)”
Week 6	National Security Simulation
March 4, 2025	Reading(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hofmann, “Beyond Culture and Power: The Role of Party Ideologies in German Foreign Policy and Security Policy” ▪ Eberwein and Kaise, "Germany's New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World, Ch. 4 and 10"
Week 7	Group Presentations
March 11, 2025	More detailed information will be provided in class.
Week 8	German-European Union Relations Pt. 1
March 18, 2025	Reading(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beichelt and Bulmer "Germany: A German Europe or a Europeanized Germany?" ▪ Erb, “Uniting Europe: Germany and Integration, 1985-2002.” ▪ Eberwein and Kaise, "Germany's New Foreign Policy: Decision-Making in an Interdependent World, Ch. 6"

Week 9	German-European Union Relations Pt. 2
March 25, 2025	*** Course Site Visit to Europäisches Haus ***
Week 10	Security Challenges Case Studies: The Balkans War, NATO Mission to Afghanistan and the Iraq War
April 1, 2025	Reading(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baumann and Hellmann, “Germany and the Use of Military Force: ‘Total War,’ The Culture of Restraint and the Quest for Normality.” ▪ Erb, “Security and Conflict After the Cold War: From Iraq to Macedonia” ▪ Erb, “Terrorism and German Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Century”
Week 11	Midterm
April 8, 2025	More detailed information will be provided in class.
Spring Break: April 14 — April 20, 2025	
Week 12	Navigating the Modern Great Power Relationship Triangle: The United States, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China
April 22, 2025	Reading(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helwig, "Out of Order? The US Alliance in Germany’s Foreign and Security Policy" ▪ Yoder, "From Amity to Enmity: German-Russian Relations in the Post Cold War Period" ▪ Heiduk, "Conflicting Images? Germany and the Rise of China."
Week 13	*** Course Site Visit to Auswärtiges Amt and Bundestag ***
April 29, 2025	More detailed information will be provided in class.
Week 14	Zeitenwende and Final Presentations
May 6, 2025	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scholz, Olaf, “Zeitenwende Speech” ▪ German National Security Strategy