

Germany After the Reelection of Donald Trump

Seminar Leader: Dr. Timo Lochocki

Email: lochocki@hu-berlin.de

Office Hours: by appointment

Seminar Purpose, Learning goals and structure

Following Donald Trump's reelection as President of the United States, Germany might be described as the world's most powerful liberal democracy. The precise consequences of Trump's return to power cannot yet be gauged, but it is certain that the other longstanding centers of influence in Europe, namely France and the UK, have been significantly weakened by internal polarization. In contrast to these other countries, Germany's population is growing significantly, and it can boast much lower levels of public debt, allowing potential future investment in infrastructure and services for citizens. We can also expect that Germany's next government will be led by a political party committed to the democratic process, which can no longer be an automatic expectation in the French or US contexts. In essence, therefore, Germany enjoys auspicious advantages in an uncertain and dangerous world. What will it make of these advantages? How will it stabilize and preserve democratic institutions? What is in store in the realm of economic and social policy? How will Germany's relations with other countries develop? And what will be the implications of the US election for its role in the European Union and its foreign and security policy more generally?

Assessment, Assignments, Requirements, Grade Breakdown

The performance in the seminar is evaluated according to three equally weighed criteria: active participation, a short presentation (max. 15 minutes) and a final seminar paper (10 pages). The form of the final work will be discussed in the seminar.

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.

Accessibility

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation

Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for longer-term accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Bard College Berlin may 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.

Essay Deadlines and Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Deadline for final essay will be discussed in class.

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

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.

About the lecturer

Timo Lochocki is a visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) and has studied interdisciplinary social sciences in Germany, the United States, and Norway and became known for his 2014 doctorate on the reasons behind the rise and fall of right-wing populist parties in Europe. He then worked as a fellow at the German Marshall Fund in Berlin, Washington, and Paris until 2018. In 2019, he joined the German government where he headed the Federal Ministry of Health's strategic planning department and was a key advisor to the minister during the covid-19 pandemic. He also became a "Young Transatlantic Leader" at the American Council on Germany and in 2021 *Capital Magazine* chose him as one of "Germany's top 40 under 40".

Since 2022, Lochocki has advised international foundations and German decision-makers on dealing with anti-democratic forces, and how to update German foreign and security policy. In addition, he is a visiting professor at Bard College Berlin. His book, "*German Interests: How we can become the world's most powerful democracy and save the liberal West*", will be published in February 2025.

Office hours can be arranged flexibly. Contact via: lochocki@hu-berlin.de

Schedule

Class meetings take place every Thursday 3.45pm to 7pm

January 30th: Organization + What's happening?

February 6th: The global theatre

Froman, Michael (2024) *What we're watching around the globe in 2025*. *Council on Foreign Relations*.
<https://www.cfr.org/article/what-were-watching-around-globe-2025>

Bob McMahon and Carla Anne Robins (2024). *The World Next Year: Wars, New Governments, and Stormy Weather to Watch in 2025*, CFR Podcast
<https://www.cfr.org/podcasts/twnw/the-world-next-year-wars-new-governments-stormy-weather-watch-2025>

February 13th: Germany's domestic situation

Eddy, Melissa (2024). *Why Germany's Economy once a Leader in Europe is now in Crisis*. *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/22/business/germany-economy-budget-elections.html>

Kampfner, John (2024). *Germany 2025: Reform or more Gloom?* *Politico*.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-2025-reform-election-cdu-olaf-scholz-friedrich-merz/> Angelos, James (2024). Germanys rude political awakening. Politico.
<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-scholz-afd-politics-economy-merkel/>
Röder, Andreas (2024). *Shifts in the German political landscape. GIS.*
<https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/german-political-landscape/>
The Economist (2024). *German politicians are talking tough, but offering little.*
https://www.economist.com/europe/2024/12/19/german-politicians-are-talking-tough-but-offering-little?utm_source=chatgpt.com

February 20th: The rise of authoritarian parties and domestic polarization

Herold, Maik / Joachim, Janine / Otteni, Cyrill / Vorländer, Hans. *Polarization in Europe. An Analysis of Ten European Countries.* Mercator Forum Migration and Democracy (MIDEM), Dresden, 2023.
<https://forum-midem.de/2023/08/24/policy-brief-meloni-und-die-italienische-migrationspolitik-copy/>
Abrahams, Stacy. *E Pluribus Unum? The Fight over Identity Politics.* Foreign Affairs, March/April 2019
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-02-01/stacey-abrams-response-to-francis-fukuyama-identity-politics-article>

February 27th: The nature of international relations in times of revitalized nationalism

Balfour Rosa (et al.). (2016). Europe's troublemakers. The populist challenge to foreign policy. EPC Policy Paper.
<https://www.epc.eu/en/Publications/EUROPES-TROUBLEMAKERS--The-p~257da8>
Snell, J. (2016) The Trilemma of European Economic and Monetary Integration, and Its Consequences. *European Law Journal*, 22: 157– 179.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/eulj.12165>

March 6th: The National Interest of Germany

Oxford Dictionary (2025). *The National Interest.*
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100224268>
Lochocki, Timo (2025): *The Likely Lads*, ECFR Commentary
https://ecfr.eu/article/the-likely-lads-why-merzs-new-political-generation-will-decide-germanys-future/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

March 13th : Germany's potential

(2023). *Is Germany once again the sick man of Europe? The Economist.*
<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2023/08/17/is-germany-once-again-the-sick-man-of-europe>

Elliott, Larry (2024). *Germany and France are in crisis – is the next global financial crash brewing?* *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/dec/19/germany-france-crisis-next-global-financial-crash>

Kinderlin, Sophie (2024). *Germany's 'debt brake' rule helped collapse its government — and it could be about to change.* *CNBC*.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2024/11/22/the-debt-brake-rule-that-helped-collapse-germanys-government.html>

Nöstlinger, Nette (2024). *Germany's economy goes from bad to worse.* *Politico*.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-economy-bad-worse-recession-gdp-robert-habeck/>

The Economist (2024). *Germany's economy goes from bad to worse.*

<https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2024/10/15/how-the-german-economy-went-from-bad-to-worse>

The Economist(2024). *Angela who? Merkle's legacy looks increasingly terrible.*

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2024/10/24/angela-who-merkels-legacy-looks-increasingly-terrible>

March 20th: The Role of Germany's past

Hoyer, Katja and Moody, Oliver (2022). *The New Germany, Part 1: The Bundeswehr and Germany's Mindset.* *Körber Stiftung*.

<https://koerber-stiftung.de/en/media/the-new-germany--part-1--the-bundeswehr-and-germanys-mindset/>

Hoyer, Katja and Moody, Oliver (2022). *The New Germany, Part 2: Love-Hate Relationship.* *Körber Stiftung*.

<https://koerber-stiftung.de/en/media/the-new-germany--part-2--a-love-hate-relationship/>

Hoyer, Katja and Moody, Oliver (2022). *The New Germany, Part 3: German Energy Policy and Russian Gas.* *Körber Stiftung*.

<https://koerber-stiftung.de/en/media/the-new-germany--part-3--german-energy-policy-and-russian-gas/>

Hoyer, Katja and Moody, Oliver (2022). *The New Germany, Part 4: The Lid of History.* *Körber Stiftung*.

<https://koerber-stiftung.de/en/media/the-new-germany--part-4--the-lid-of-history/>

Lochocki, Timo (2024). *The likely lads: Why Merz's new political generation will decide Germany's future.* *European Council on Foreign Relations*.

<https://ecfr.eu/article/the-likely-lads-why-merzs-new-political-generation-will-decide-germanys-future/>

March 27th: Reforms needed in Germany 1/4: Enabling Community

Koch, Christoph (2024). *The Future of Social Cohesion.* *Robert Bosch Stiftung*.

<https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/en/stories/social-cohesion/future-social-cohesion>

Greve, Maria, et al. (2022). *Long-term decline of regions and the rise of populism: The case of Germany.* *Journal of Regional Science*.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jors.12627>

Unzicker, Kai (2023). *Gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhalt in Deutschland 2023.* *Bertelsmann Stiftung*.

https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/fileadmin/files/Projekte/Gesellschaftlicher_Zusammenhalt/Gesellschaftlicher_Zusammenhalt_2023/2024_Studie_Gesellschaftlicher-Zusammenhalt-2023.pdf

Assmann, Dirk (2024). *Welche Rolle spielt lokale Verbundenheit? Ergebnisse einer aktuellen Umfrage.* Friedrich Naumann Stiftung.

https://kommunal.de/sites/default/files/2024-04/PP_Lokale-Verbundenheit.pdf

April 3rd: Reforms needed in Germany 2/4: Reforming the State

Meyer, Henning (2024). *Germany's Governance Crisis: Why State Reform Can't Wait.* Social Europe.

<https://www.socialeurope.eu/germanys-governance-crisis-why-state-reform-cant-wait>

Nicholson, Esmé (2024). *Fax machines permeate Germany's business culture. But parliament is ditching them.* NPR.

<https://www.npr.org/2024/05/31/1248426978/germany-fax-machines-parliament>

Reuters (2024). *Debt-break will pull Germany out of Slump.*

<https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/debt-brake-release-will-pull-germany-out-slump-2024-12-30/>

Dempsey, Judy (2025). *Can a New Chancellor Fix Germany? Strategic Europe.*

<https://carnegieendowment.org/europe/strategic-europe/2025/01/can-a-new-chancellor-fix-germany?lang=en>

April 10th: Reforms needed in Germany 3/4: More Agency for Citizens and Companies

Reisbeck, Clemens (2024). *Pessimism at a record high: International investors attest to Germany's dwindling strengths and declining attractiveness.* KPMG.

<https://kpmg.com/de/en/home/media/press-releases/2024/03/investors-attest-germany-sinking-attractiveness.html>

Grésillon, Boris (2025). *Germany's AfD targets the youth vote.* Le Monde diplomatique.

<https://mondediplo.com/2025/01/09germany>

No literature

April 17th: no class

April 24th: Reforms needed in Germany 4/4: Using German Power for the Good

Cliffe, Jeremy & Puglierin, Jana (2024). *The Merz doctrine: What a CDU-led government would mean for German foreign policy.* ECFR.

<https://ecfr.eu/article/the-merz-doctrine-what-a-cdu-led-government-would-mean-for-german-foreign-policy/>

Lau, Jörg (2024). *Germany's Foreign Policy Unease.* Internationale Politik Quarterly.

https://ip-quarterly.com/en/germanys-foreign-policy-unease?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Hasselbach, Christoph (2024). *German foreign policy: Crisis mode to continue in 2025*. DW.
<https://www.dw.com/en/german-foreign-policy-crisis-mode-to-continue-in-2025/a-71092683>

May 1st: no class

May 8th: Obstacles and Implementation

No literature

May 15th: Wrap up

No literature