

German 8400

## Vergangenheitsbewältigung

Seminar in Film, Visual Culture and the Performing Arts

Holub | 3 credit units | Spring Semester 2016

No topic in postwar Germany has been more important than coming to terms with its legacy of fascism and the Holocaust. This topic has insinuated itself into all aspects of German life and culture, and in this course we will examine some of the various ways in which Germans have dealt with their infamous past.

We will focus on three areas:

- (1) Philosophical and intellectual debates starting from the initial reactions—or lack of reaction—of older philosophers (Theodor Adorno, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers) to more recent responses and debates (Jürgen Habermas, historians' debate, Wehrmachtdebatte).
- (2) Literary texts in which the past plays a significant role (from Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, Christa Wolf to Christoph Ransmayr and Bernhard Schlink).
- (3) Films that thematize the past or try to assist us in understanding the past from Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, Slatan Dudow's *Stärker als die Nacht*, Frank Beyer's *Jakob der Lügner*, and Helma Sanders-Brahms *Deutschland, bleiche Mutter* to Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Our Hitler*, Edgar Reitz's *Heimat*, Helke Sander's *BeFreier und BeFreite*, Max Fäberböcke's *Eine Frau in Berlin*.

Although we will examine materials from intellectual history and literature, since this course is given under the rubric 8400, we will pay special attention to films that deal with Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Students will be expected to make oral reports on various materials; a research paper or examination will be expected as a final exercise.