

Fascist Utopias: A Public Humanities Perspective



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The unapologetic rise of ethno-nationalism, white nationalism, and supremacist narratives has led scholars to revisit the histories of totalitarianism, fascism, and authoritarianism. Critical scholarship has challenged the idea that racialized violent histories are confined to the past, arguing instead that the legacies and reincarnations of this violence are a prominent aspect of the history of the present. While what constitutes fascism is debated today, it is arguably the malleability of fascist thought—and hence, the ambiguity attributed to what fascism is—that enabled its long lifespan, which cannot be confined to before 1945.

This course examines contemporary fascist narratives that deliver a future promise for a "better life," stability and order, alongside their contexts, practices, and acts (including violence) in relation to their promised "utopian" societies. Considering utopia beyond its common-sense use, we will trace multiple histories of the present pertaining to fascism and identify key tenets of contemporary fascist thought. Within this framework, we will address fascism's implications for the Global South, including but not confined to Muslim and Global South immigration. Finally, revisiting the postwar reconfiguration of the humanities curriculum as a public project to rebuild a new morality for humanity in the international arena, we will raise questions about the public endeavors of the humanities against the rise of fascist thought today. This entails identifying the kinds of "publics" such fascist narratives address, as well as decoding the patterns of populist narratives.

No prerequisite is necessary. Students are encouraged to bridge theory and practice and turn these questions into a project of public humanities.

Readings and videos will be provided electronically or linked through our course blog:

Please note that you will need to get permission to have access to this blog; it is set up as private. So please make sure you have been granted access to **both** the blog **and the google drive** so that when you click on the links to the readings and movies provided on the blog, you can access the course materials.

All the weekly readings will be listed on the blog. When applicable, they will be url-linked to the pdf files provided on the tabs of the day. The readings are subject to change to allow us more flexibility, but in all cases, you will always be notified on the blog's tab for that day.

Your reading response comments will also be posted on the blog, under the designated area of each tab with the date of that day.

The blog address is: <http://fascistutopias.blogspot.com/>

There are additional helpful resources posted on the resource tab. Please make sure you check them.

Course Format and Procedures:

We will be following the course planner that will be posted on the blog. If there are changes to the planner, you will be notified both in class and electronically—via email. Please come to class having done the readings assigned for that day. Everybody is expected to actively engage with the material and contribute to the class.

In this course, we will use StoryMaps to visualize the content we analyze. StoryMaps let you combine maps with narrative text, images, and multimedia content to create compelling, user-friendly web apps. You will receive a tutorial to use this digital platform.

In addition to your mastery of the course content, you will also learn using a digital platform configured for a public humanities project. At the end of the course, we will have created our own website—mapping contemporary fascist reincarnations and movements.

Grading:

Participation: Please note that you are required to actively participate in the class. If you have a quiet classroom persona, please speak with me immediately. Attendance is mandatory. You have the right to two unexcused absences, and after that your grade might be affected negatively.

(15% of final grade)

Reading Response/StoryMaps: Every week, we will add content to the StoryMaps. Your weekly reading responses will provide the storyline to the mapped content examined in class. Reading responses answer a question I will post on the course material assigned for that week.

Reading response length: minimum 250 maximum 350 words.

(25% of final grade)

Final Project: Your final project includes a research paper and its visual mapping on the StoryMaps. On the last day of classes, you will present your research findings and receive feedback before you submit your final paper.

Final paper length: MA students min 12 max 15 pages. PhD students minimum 20 maximum 25 pages)

Your research paper counts for 40% of your final grade, and its visualization via StoryMaps counts for 20% with a total of 60% of your final grade. (60% of final grade)

Final Paper Abstract due on March 4th.
Final paper is due on May 15th via email.

Final Grade Breakdown:

Participation: 15%
Weekly Reading Responses: 25%
Final Paper: 40%
Final Project StoryMaps: 20%

Accessibility:

For special needs and accessibility please check:

<https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/student-accessibility.html>

COURSE PLANNER:

INTRODUCTION

Week 1
Jan 28

Katrin Bennhold, "[Body Bags and Enemy Lists: How Far-Right Police Officers and Ex-Soldiers Planned for 'Day X'](#)." *The New York Times*. August 1, 2020.

Katrin Bennhold, "[A Far-Right Terrorism Suspect With a Refugee Disguise: The Tale of Franco A.](#)" *The New York Times*. December 29, 2020.

"[Turkey's President Erdogan Condemns Minneapolis Police Killing of George Floyd.](#)" *Duvar English*. May 29, 2020.

"[Turkey's Strongman, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, takes to the World Stage: He is posing as the voice of Muslims everywhere and of the Global South.](#)" *The Economist*. September 10, 2020.

Joan Wallach Scott, "[The Contradictions of French Secularism.](#)" *New Statesman*. November 18, 2020.

Michael Daventry, "[Europe's Muslims Being Treated Like Jews Before WWII, says Erdogan.](#)" *EuroNews*. October 26, 2020.

Rita Katz, "[Far-Right Terrorists Want Syria Crisis to Bring on Race War.](#)" *Daily Beast*. March 10, 2020.

Recommended only (not required):

Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, "In Upcoming Elections, Will Germany's Turks Obey Erdogan?" *Foreign Policy*. September 11, 2017.

Lorenzo Vidino, "Erdogan's Long Arm in Europe." *Foreign Policy*. May 7, 2019.

Magnus Norell, "[Erdogan's Influence in Europe: A Swedish Case Study.](#)" June 4, 2020.

PART I: FASCISM
Week 2
Feb 4
History and the Concept

Mark Neocleous, *Fascism*. 1-94.

Primary Source:

Alain de Benoist & Charles Champetier, *Manifesto for a European Renaissance*.
(This small book is published by Arktos—please consider checking publishers of Alt Right publications)

Recommended only:

[Resurrection, Ertugrul](#). First Episode of a Turkish TV series made with neo-Ottomanist ambitions.
Available on Netflix with free trial.

Sojla Sahar, “[Turkey’s Neo-Ottomanism Is Knocking on the Door](#).”
Modern Diplomacy. September 2, 2020.

Week 3
Feb 11
Past and Present Publics

Enzo Traverso, *The New Faces of Fascism: Populism and the Far Right*.

Week 4
Feb 18

Legislative Day. No class.
Please take advantage of the break and start reading Houellebecq’s *Submission* and
Camus’ *You Will Not Replace Us!*

PART II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Week 5
Feb 25
History of the Present I

Theodor Adorno, “The Meaning of Working Through the Past” and “Appendix 1: Discussion of Professor Adorno’s
Lecture ‘The Meaning of Working Through the Past,’” and “Appendix 2: Introduction to Lecture: ‘The Meaning of
Working Through the Past.’” *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*. 89-103; 295-308.

Theodor Adorno, *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Extremism*. 1-64.

Joan Wallach Scott, “Preface: History, Race, Nation” and “The Nation-State as the Telos of History.”
On the Judgment of History. ix-20.

Wendy Brown, “Neoliberalism’s Frankenstein: Authoritarian Freedom in Twenty-First Century Democracies,” and Peter
Gordon, “The Authoritarian Personality Revisited: Reading Adorno in the Age of Trump.” *Authoritarianism: Three
Inquiries in Critical Theory* (Wendy Brown, Peter Gordon, and Max Pensky.) 1-84.

Primary Sources:

“Getting Out [Part I](#) and [Part II](#).” *Sounds Like Hate*. Southern Poverty Law Center Podcast. Transcript: [Part I](#) and [Part II](#)

“[Sounds Like Hate-Getting Out Resources](#).” Southern Poverty Law Center.

Week 6
Mar 4
History of the Present II:
Between Categories of Analysis and Practice

Ruth Ben Ghat, *Strong Men: Mussolini to the Present*. 1-190.

Aslı Iğsız, "Theorizing Palimpsests: Unfolding Pasts into the Present." Forthcoming in the journal *History of the Present*.

Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker, "Beyond Identity." *Theory and Society*. 29 (2000). 1-47.

Revisit from Week 1:

"Turkey's Strongman, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, takes to the World Stage: He is posing as the voice of Muslims everywhere and of the Global South." *The Economist*. September 10, 2020.

Week 7
Mar 11
Utopia

Thomas More, *Utopia*.

Primary Source:

Michel Houellebecq, *Submission*.

PART III: THE "UNDESIRABLE"

Week 8
Mar 18

"Civilization" and Race

David Engels, "Oswald Spengler and the Decline of the West." *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*. Ed., Mark Sedgwick. 3-17.

Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*, 173-237.

Primary Sources:

Arnold Toynbee, "The Graeco-Roman Civilization," "Civilization on Trial," "Islam the West and the Future," "Encounters Between Civilizations." [Civilization on Trial](#). 47-62, 136-147, 164-197.

Samuel Huntington, "[The Clash of Civilizations?](#)" *Foreign Affairs*. 72:3 (Summer 1993). 22-49.

Samuel Huntington, "The West, Civilizations, and Civilization."
The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the New World Order. 301-321.

[Identity Evropa/American Identity Movement](#). *Southern Law Poverty Center*.

Recommended Only:

Houston Chamberlain, "Author's Introduction" and "First Part: Origins: The Legacy of the Ancient World: Introduction" [Foundations of the Nineteenth Century](#). (1911) lix-xcix and 1-12.

Oswald Spengler, "[On Cosmopolis and Depopulation](#)" *Population and Development Review*.
28:4 (December 2002). 787-796.
(originally from Spengler's "The Soul of the City" in *The Decline of the West*, 1918)

Zack Snyder, [300](#). Film based on Frank Miller's comic book.

Week 9

Mar 25

**Eugenicist Demography:
Segregation**

Frank Dikötter, "[Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics](#)" Review Essay.
The American Historical Review. 103:2 (April 1998). 467-478.

Richard Soloway, "Eugenics and the Population Question," "Deterioration and Decline," "Race Suicide Revisited: The Menace of Underpopulation," *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth Century Britain*. 18-59; 226-258.

Aslı Iğsız, *Humanism in Ruins: Entangled Legacies of the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange*. 1-72.

Aslı Iğsız, "Refugee Trajectories: Post-1945 Refugee Management and the Implications of Demography as a Field." *Refugee Routes: Telling, Looking, Protesting, Redressing*. 193-207.

Primary Sources:

Alfred Sauvy, "[Getting Rid of the Unwanted](#)," "Quality."
General Theory of Population (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1969). 341-347, 509-515.

Renaud Camus, *You Will Not Replace Us!*

["Charlottesville: Race and Terror."](#) Vice News.

Revisit Michel Houellebecq's *Submission* from Week 7.

Recommended Only:

Renaud Camus, *The Great Replacement*. 1-40.

Richard Soloway, "World War II and the Population Question." *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth Century Britain*. 312-335.

Dennis Hodgson, "[Ideological Origins of Population Studies Association](#) of America" *Population and Development Review*.
17:1 (1991): 1-34.

Dennis Hodgson, "[Demography: History Since 1900.](#)" *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Vol. 6.
176-180.

Week 10
Apr 1
Populism

Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. 1-118.

Roger Eatwell, "Populism and Fascism." *Oxford Handbook of Populism*.
Eds. Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser et al. 363-381.

Halil Ibrahim Yenigün and Sinem Adar, "[A Muslim Counter-Hegemony? Turkey's Soft Power Strategies and Islamophobia.](#)" *Jadaliyya*. May 6, 2019.

Spyros Sofos, "[What is in a Place? Hagia Sophia in the Affective Topography of Populism in Turkey.](#)" *Jadaliyya*. August 5, 2020.

Primary Sources:

Video, [The Rise of Populism: Stephen Bannon vs. David Frum--The Munk Debates](#).

Jonathan Bowden *Western Civilization Bites Back*, Ed. Greg Johnson. 5-77.
(This book is published by Counter-Currents. Please consider checking this Alt Right publisher.)

PART IV. FASCIST UTOPIAS

Week 11
Apr 8
Segregation, Islam, and the "White" Global North

[Identity Evropa](#), Southern Poverty Law Center.

[Episode 6: The New Nazis. Motive](#), Podcast. NPR. October 9, 2020.

Primary Sources:

Anders Breivik, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence Book 1*. 1-268.

Bob Whitaker, *Mantra*.

["How the Greek Island of Lesbos Became a Hub of Right-Wing Activism."](#) *TRT World*.
13 May 2020.
(TRT is the Turkish Radio and Television)

Week 12
Apr 15
"White North in Crisis":
Gender, Sexuality, Family, and Security

Michel Foucault, "Lecture One: 11 January 1978." *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France*. 1-28.

Melinda Cooper, "Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism." *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism*. 7-24.

Primary Source:

Anders Breivik, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence Book 1*. 1-268.

Recommended Only:

Anders Breivik, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence Book 2: Europe Burning*.

Week 13

Apr 22

White “Extinction” and “Genocide”

Graham Macklin, “Greg Johnson and Counter-Currents.”
Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy. Ed., Mark Sedgwick.
204-218.

Rosa Schwartzburg, “[No, There Isn’t a White Genocide.](#)” *Jacobin*. September 4, 2019.

Primary Source:

Greg Johnson, *The White Nationalist Manifesto*.
Publisher: Counter-Currents.

Week 14

Apr 29

**Discontent in the Present:
A “Counter-Revolution” for a Future (White) Utopia**

“[The Turner Diaries, Other Racist Novels, Inspire Extremist Violence.](#)”
Intelligence Report. Southern Poverty Law Center. October 14, 2004.

Alexandra Alter, “[How ‘The Turner Diaries’ Incites White Supremacists.](#)”
The New York Times. January 12, 2021.

“[The Turner Diaries’ Influence on White Nationalists.](#)” NPR. April 2, 2019.

Primary Sources:

Paul Greengrass, *July 22*. Film based on Norwegian mass killer Anders Breivik’s massacre of 77 people.

Andrew MacDonald (William Pierce), *The Turner Diaries*.

Week 15

May 6

Final Project Presentation.

Please consider fascistic weaponization of the Northern white fascist movements within the context of the Global South.