Course Description:

The recent emergence of right-wing populist nationalism in the western world has sparked a renewed interest in fascism as a political phenomenon. Unfortunately, the term “fascist” has become a generic linguistic weapon to attack and demonize one’s political adversaries. In this context, my course seeks to restore analytical meaning and content to fascism by exploring the rise and evolution of actual fascist movements and regimes from their inception in the early twentieth century up to the present day. The course will address the following questions:

1. What are the defining features that distinguish fascism from other political ideologies, parties, and regimes, including other authoritarian-totalitarian dictatorships?
2. What were the economic, political, social, and cultural developments that first made fascism imaginable and possible?
3. What were the political appeals and methods employed by the first fascist movements to mobilize a mass base of support?
4. While fascist movements have emerged at various times and in most countries of the western world since 1919, they have only come to power in two countries: Italy and Germany. Why did most of these movements remain marginal forces in their respective countries? What were the circumstances that transformed electorally marginal movements into a major political forces and ultimately the ruling parties of Italy and Germany?
5. Once in power, what did the fascists do and why? How effective were their efforts?
6. How would we explain the ultimately suicidal aggressiveness of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany that led to war in the 1930s and 1940s?
7. Why have fascist-like movements reemerged on the political scene in the United States and Europe since the 1990s? What do they share in common with their historic predecessors of the 1920s and 1930s? How are they different?

Required Reading:

Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*
Anthony L. Cardoza, *Benito Mussolini: The First Fascist*
Catherine Epstein, *Nazi Germany Confronts the Myths*
Readings on Sakai

Course Requirements:

Class Discussion
Midterm Examination
Course Paper
Final Examination

Course Topics:

Week I: Introduction to the phenomenon of Fascism

Week II: Economic, Social, and Cultural Pre-conditions for Fascism

Week III: World War I and the Emergence of Fascist Movements in Europe

Week IV: The Rise of Fascism in Italy: 1919-22

Week V: The Fascist Seizure of Power: 1922-25

Week VI: The Fascist Regime at Home: 1925-34

Week VII: The Nazi Rise to Power: 1919-32

Week VIII: The Nazi Regime at Home: 1933-36

Week IX: The Rome-Berlin Axis: Fascist Foreign Policy: 1934-1939

Week X: World War II and Defeat of Fascism/Nazism 1939-1945

Week XI: Fascist Movements in Latin America

Week XII: Fascist Movements in the United States? 1929-41

Week XIII: The End of the Cold War and the Rebirth of Fascism in Europe

Week XIV: Fascism and Populist nationalism in Europe and the United States Today