

The Environmental Movement in Germany:

Why did the German Greens become the most successful environmental party in the world?

Course Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Freshman seminars give students an opportunity to get acquainted with a professor and the professor's research in a small group setting. I teach German history, and my particular specialty is how Germans have "learned from" the experience of Nazi Germany to become what some consider to be a model democracy. The rise and success of citizens' movements in the 1960s can be considered in part a response to Nazism, which merged with a specifically German relationship with "nature" to shape the unique path of Germany's Green party.

In this seminar we will examine how Germans conceived of "nature" from the Romantic period of the early 1800s through industrialization and World War I to the Nazi period. After discussing "How green were the Nazis?" we will investigate the origins of the postwar environmental movement in the 1960s, the founding of the German Green Party in 1979, and its success winning seats in the national parliament in 1983. What personalities, topics and events contributed to its early success? What problems did it have to overcome before it became part of a national governing coalition from 1998 to 2005? For this period we will examine election posters and speeches, and biographies of prominent individuals to see why the party was able to create a core constituency of voters.

REQUIREMENTS

- Attend class & any outside films/events, and especially: participate in discussion!
- Post a profile photo on Gauchospace
- Read the texts that are posted on the course Gauchospace site or distributed in class.
- Prepare, individually or in groups, a short oral presentation on a person or theme, with a write-up.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic Suggestions	Notes
1.	Jan. 8	Introduction & Introductions	
2.	Jan. 15	History of the German Green Party	1 of 3 essays + article
3.	Jan. 22	Current Issues & Activities	Research news articles
4.	Jan. 29	19th Century Roots	
5.	Feb. 5	Weimar and Nazi Germany	
6.	Feb. 12	Green Party Politicians	Biographies
7.	Feb. 19	Green Party Dilemmas: "Fundis" vs. "Realos"	
8.	Feb. 26	Greens in Government: Policies and Legislation	
9.	Mar. 5	"Ecofascism"?	
10.	Mar. 12	Concluding Discussion / Presentations	