

History 423 — Divided Germany and the Cold War, 1945–1990

Spring 2026

Course Description

Germany's division during the Cold War offers a powerful lens for understanding the global conflict between capitalism and communism.

This course examines:

- **The American occupation** and the four “D’s”: de-Nazification, de-militarization, de-mocratization, and de-cartelization
- **The Soviet occupation**, which produced a tightly controlled political and economic system
- The development of **West Germany (FRG)** and **East Germany (GDR)** as model states within NATO and the Warsaw Pact
- Continuing shadows of the Holocaust in both German states
- How each society handled memory, guilt, and political identity

This is a **reading-intensive seminar** emphasizing critical discussion and analytical writing.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Communicate ideas effectively during seminar discussions
 - Analyze historical scholarship and evaluate authors' arguments
 - Synthesize readings into clear, well-argued essays
 - Conduct a scholarly evaluation of primary source material
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Course Requirements

Participation — 10%

- Based on preparedness and engagement in discussion
- Occasional reading quizzes may be included

Paper 1 — 20%

Topic: Nature of Cold War competition in Germany

Length: Five pages

Due: Wednesday, **February 11** (end of day)

Paper 2 — 20%

Topic: West German social movements and memory politics

Length: Five pages

Due: Thursday, **March 26** (end of day)

Paper 3 — 20%

Topic: East Germany and unification

Length: Five pages

Due: Thursday, **April 23** (end of day)

Primary Source Exercise — 30%

- Students select a group of primary sources
- Produce an original **2,500-word analysis** (approx. 9–10 double-spaced pages)
- **Due:** Friday, **May 6** at 5 PM

Required Texts

Students must obtain the following paperback editions (ISBNs ensure correct version):

1. **Andrew Port**, *Germany*
Cambridge: Polity Press, 2025
ISBN-13: **978-1-5095-4667-1**
2. **Nora Krug**, *Belonging: A German Reckons with History and Home*
New York: Scribner, 2019
ISBN-13: **978-1-476-79663-5**

Additional readings (articles and book chapters) will be posted on **Brightspace**.
All assigned readings are required.

Course Policies

Attendance

- You may take **up to six unexcused absences**.
- After six, each additional absence reduces your participation grade.
- If you will miss class for official university activities (e.g., band, sports), notify the instructor in advance.

Punctuality

- Arrive on time.
- If you need to leave early, inform the instructor beforehand and exit quietly at an appropriate moment.
- Frequent entering/exiting disrupts seminar discussions.

Technology Use

- **No electronic devices** permitted during class (no laptops, tablets, or phones).
- All note-taking should be done **by hand**.

Academic Integrity

- All work must be in your own words.
- Plagiarism or submitting another's writing as your own results in:
 - **Zero** on the assignment
 - Possible notification to the **Dean of Students Office**
- For concerns, report to:
 - **integrity@purdue.edu**
 - **765-494-8778**

AI Tools

- Use of tools like ChatGPT is **strongly discouraged**.

- Work produced using AI tools often fails to meet assignment expectations and historically receives lower grades.

Emergency Policy

In the event of a major campus emergency, deadlines and grading policies may change. Updates will be posted on the course website or distributed via email.