

History 12 – Turmoil and Tragedy 1933-1945

Germany 1933-1939 Lesson Plan

Title: How can we critically evaluate Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* as a piece of Nazi propaganda and understand its impact on German society in the 1930s?

Lesson Length: 75 minutes

Context: This lesson is in History 12 and it focuses on the use of propaganda in the early years of the Third Reich. In the previous unit, students learned about Germany 1919-1933 and how the Nazi Party developed. They have learned about Hitler, his rise to power, his ideologies and how the Nazi Party came to power in 1933. They are also aware of the conditions in Germany throughout the 1920s and when the Nazi Party came to power. They have all the necessary knowledge they need to understand the Nazi Party's early success in 1933 and 1934. In the previous lesson in this unit, students have learned about the Enabling Act of 1933 as well as Hindenburg's death and the *Night of the Long Knives* in 1934. Students will now be able to understand the status at which Hitler stood in 1934. The purpose of this lesson is to show students how Hitler manipulated the people in Germany in the early years of his dictatorship. *Triumph of the Will* by Leni Riefenstahl (released in 1935) was an important component in how Hitler was portrayed in Nazi Germany. This lesson is meant to tie in **critical media literacy** within an historical context of the curriculum. The lesson will focus on German propaganda as seen through this very influential film and will be a chance for the students to learn how to evaluate this particular medium known as a documentary. Students will have already had a lot of practice evaluating print and photographs but this will be a new opportunity for them to learn how to work with film.

This lesson falls in the current curriculum in the following way:

History 12 IRP: Turmoil and Tragedy 1933-1945

Rationale: Because of the vast amount of media influence in today's world on students, it is critical that students have the knowledge of where media comes from and what purposes it holds. Students need to have **critical media literacy** and an effective way to teach it to them while still delivering the course content is to incorporate it as skillfully as possible into the lessons. Hitler's Third Reich was a critical time for propaganda development and it is important for History 12 students to be able to successfully examine propaganda. The more students understand about how propaganda is formed, the purpose various propaganda hold and what it is meant to invoke, the more they can apply it to their day-to-day experiences with the media. Not only is it important for students to be able to apply critical media literacy, but the content of this lesson is also critical in understanding the mindset of the German people at the time of the Third Reich. Students will be able to recognize the various methods Hitler used to manipulate German citizens into supporting his actions. Many of Hitler's ideas and policies are illuminated in the film which will be the focus of this lesson. Students will not only gain critical skills from this lesson but they will also understand the conditions which led to the next step of interwar Germany which included breaking away from the Treaty of Versailles and imposing many laws within Germany against some of the groups.

This lesson falls into the official PLOS from the History 12 IRP in the following way:

A1 analyse primary and secondary sources (historical evidence) with reference to

- Reliability
- Bias and point of view

A3 demonstrate historical empathy

- Demonstrate the ability to understand the motives, intentions, hopes, and fears of people in other times and situations
- Express a point of view of an historical person

Prescribed learning outcomes (specific to this topic):

C3 explain the rise to power of Hitler and National Socialism in Germany, with reference to

- Conditions that generated support for Nazism
- Hitler's actions and Policies
- Identify key features of Nazism (e.g., racial policies, anticomunism, aggressive nationalism, *lebensraum*, undoing the terms of Versailles, autarky, propaganda)

D1 assess the causes of and responses to the Great Depression compare responses to the Great

- Germany (e.g., support for extremist political parties; re-armament)

Objectives (by the end of the lesson students will):

1. Be able to critically analyze how film is manipulated to portray a certain message
2. How Hitler was able to manipulate the people of Germany with the use of propaganda
3. Understand the effects of propaganda (verbal and visual) on the people of Germany and their support of the Nazi Party

Teacher Activities	Student Activities	Time
Introduction: Objective for the class Review of Hitler's rise to power Questions: How did Hitler come to power in 1933? What were some of the important things Hitler did right when he came to power?	Objective: We are going to try and understand how propaganda was used in the early years of Nazi Germany. We will look at propaganda through the movie <i>Triumph of the Will</i> . Students should refer to their notes to give them a guideline for the questions posed. The purpose for the students in answering these questions is to put them in the mindset of what the conditions in Germany were once Hitler was in power.	5 minutes
Hook: Introduce the title of the film and get students to think about what the movie would be about. Once we have discussed some ideas, I will transition into the lecture which will be an introduction to the film and a brief explanation of propaganda at the time.	<i>Triumph of the will</i> - what is it about? Please think about what a movie called that would be about Take 2 minutes to jot down your ideas and then turn to your partner or group and discuss it. We will briefly discuss it together afterwards.	10 minutes

Lecture: Propaganda Joseph Goebbels and Hitler What they tried to achieve Their methods Leni Riefenstahl and who she was Explain to the students how to understand media in this form. Students should watch for the music, lighting, angles, what is included, excluded, how are things framed and shown? We will go through this process while we are watching the clips as well.	Students should be taking notes on some of the big topics Joseph Goebbels was the Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany. He understood the power that film had over people and therefore started to use film as a powerful propaganda tool. The Nazis had a strong propaganda program under the leadership of Goebbels. Hitler thought it was extremely important to have propaganda in Nazi Germany because he wanted a united nation. Part of that is getting everyone to believe everything that the National Socialists stood for. We are going to watch parts of the film and there are a few things that I want you to watch out for. We will pause after every small clip and have a short discussion.	10 minutes
Activity: Watching clips from <i>Triumph of the Will</i> I will show a couple of different clips and after each one we will have a discussion about what the students see in the film in terms of content and methods of propaganda. I want the students to keep these questions in mind: Imagine you are a German citizen in 1934 and Hitler is coming to your town to speak to your people, how are you feeling? What are some of the things you are expecting him to talk about?	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHs2coAzLJ8 Students will have to keep in mind while they are watching the film clips how they are feeling, the methods being used in the film and within the actual content of the film. Need to understand the multi-dimensions of examining something like this. From one perspective, you must imagine you are one of the people in this movie- you are at the rallies, you see Hitler, or you are a Hitler youth. On the other hand, you are watching this movie at a movie theatre after 1935. You are a German citizen and you are proud of your nation. These two things will cause you to have different experiences - As you are watching you must understand it from both sides Try to imagine yourself as both a viewer of this film in a theatre in 1935 and as a participant in the rallies in 1934 – what are the differences? What are the similarities?	22 minutes
Discussion: Because we will	First 9 minutes of the film- opening	23 minutes

<p>pause throughout the activity, the discussion part will be throughout the class. For each clip, I want the students to be able to summarize what they saw and tell me what they think. I want them not only to think about the techniques of the film but Hitler's techniques in delivering his speeches.</p> <p>The main thing I want the students to take out of the discussion is that everything that is said and done has a particular purpose. Not only did Hitler and other party members say things in particular ways to achieve a certain purpose, but Leni Riefenstahl also had very specific goals in mind with the way she portrayed Hitler and the rallies.</p>	<p>What does the text mean right at the beginning? Shots from the cloud, people welcoming Hitler and his men, examine music, shots, what is being shown, how is it being shown, what is the message?</p> <p>22:30- welcoming to the congress, honouring Hindenburg's death, welcoming foreign ambassadors until 26 minutes: talking about the importance of Hitler to Germany and how he will have unconditional support from the people</p> <p>31:30- 52,000 workers congregate with Hitler- claim national unity Hitler then speaks- pay attention not only to what he is saying but how he is saying it. What are his expressions like? His movements? Until 37:40</p> <p>45:00- Hitler's speech to the Hitler youth- what is he telling the young people? Do you think he meant everything he was telling them to be? Up to 50:00</p> <p>1:07:00- another speech by Hitler, threatening those who are opposed to the party Until 1:10:00</p> <p>1:36:00 last remarks of the congress- about blood and race and nation until 1:42:00</p> <p>Students should understand how propaganda affects people if they do not critically think about the tactics and the representations that are trying to be achieved.</p>	
<p>Closure: Assign homework assignment which will be collected next class. A rubric will be attached for the assessment from this class.</p>	<p>Each student will be required to write two journal entries. One journal entry will be from the perspective of a man or woman who had attended the rallies or congress. They need to describe what they see, how they are feeling and what they think about the issues being talked about by Hitler. The second journal entry will be from a German viewer of the film in 1935 in a German theatre. They should think about how they are feeling about their nation watching this. Are there things they do not agree with or are concerned about? These journal entries will be collected in the next class for a grade.</p>	5 minutes

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their journal responses based on the film and aspects of propaganda.

Rubric

Student handed in both journal entries	/2
Journal entry shows deep thought	/5
Student acknowledges tactics and content of the speeches	/5
Student takes on persona which shows historical empathy	/5
Writing is polished and proofread	/3
	/20

Students will also be assessed throughout their class in the discussions. I will check for understanding of the content of the lesson throughout the class. The discussion responses will provide a lot of feedback for me of whether the students understand the role of propaganda but also the way in which Hitler was able to influence people.

Resources:

Triumph of the Will

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHs2coAzLJ8>

Media Analysis from the Curriculum:

Purpose: People use media messages to inform, entertain, and/or persuade for political, commercial, educational, artistic, moral, and/or other purposes.

Values: Media messages communicate explicit and implicit values.

Representation: Media messages are constructed; they are only representations of real or imaginary worlds.

Codes, Conventions, and Characteristics: Each medium has its own set of codes, conventions, and characteristics that affect the way messages are transmitted and understood.

Production: People who understand the media are better able to make purposeful media messages.

Interpretation: Audience members bring their knowledge, experience, and values to their interpretation of and emotional response to media messages.

Influence of Media on Audience: Media messages can influence people's attitudes, behaviours, and values.

Influence of Audience on Media: People can influence media institutions and the messages they produce and transmit.

Control: People who control a society's dominant institutions have disproportionate influence on the construction and distribution of media messages and the values they contain.

Scope: Media technologies influence and are influenced by the political, economic, social, and intellectual dimensions of societies.