What is a documentary film? How does it represent people and facts? How does it negotiate the cross-currents of ideology, propaganda, pedagogy, and actual events? In the age of “fake news,” these questions are more important than ever. This course explores them through the lens of documentaries that concern some of the most tumultuous periods in German history: the Weimar Republic, the Nazi era, and the 1960s. Like today, these periods are characterized by the difficulty of separating fact from fiction; they are also the subject of numerous documentaries that strive to understand what “really” happened. By watching these film, students will develop a firm basis in the fundamentals of documentary film theory and aesthetics. Directors this class will cover include Walter Ruttmann, Leni Riefenstahl, Werner Herzog, Alan Resnais, and Claude Lanzmann. A major theme will be the representability of the Holocaust.