

**RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Office of Communications and Public Affairs**

**Press Release**

**September 16, 2013**

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**HOLLYWOOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NAZI GERMANY TO BE  
DISCUSSED AT RAMAPO COLLEGE OCTOBER 15**

(MAHWAH, NJ) – Brandeis University Professor Thomas Doherty will discuss his recently published book, *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933-1939* (Columbia Press University, 2013), at Ramapo College of New Jersey on October 15 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in the H-Wing Auditorium (H129). The screening is being cosponsored by the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Communications major's Cinematheque series.

At least until the outbreak of war in 1939, with the exception of Warner Brothers, the predominant attitude in Hollywood towards fascism was essentially one of denial and pragmatism. There was a belief that movie-going audiences would be turned off by politics. As Joseph I. Breen, the industry's all-powerful lead censor put it: "the purpose of the screen is to entertain and not to propagandize." The studios also had to contend with the German consul in Los Angeles, Georg Gyssling, the U.S. State Department and Breen, who instilled the fear that offending the Third Reich would lead to exclusion from the hitherto lucrative German market. As Doherty's book also points out, the studios' treatment of the Spanish Civil War and of Fascist Italy was no less timid.

On the other hand, the movie capital was also home to the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League (HANL). One of the only organizations in the U.S. to confront the fascist threat, it included among its members such A-list actors, directors and screen writers as Dorothy Parker, Dashiell Hammett, Ernst Lubitsch, Mervyn LeRoy, Sylvia Sidney, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Chico Marx, Benny Goodman, Fred MacMurray, Frederic March, Oscar Hammerstein II, and Eddie Cantor. The HANL alarmed studio heads to the point that they threatened to insert "political clauses" into their contracts forbidding such activity.

A cultural historian with a special interest in Hollywood cinema, Thomas Doherty is a professor of American Studies and chair of the American Studies Program at Brandeis University. He is an associate editor for the film magazine *Cineaste* and film review editor for the *Journal of American History*. He completed his undergraduate education at Gonzaga University and has M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Iowa.

For a photo of Professor Doherty, click here:

[http://www.ramapo.edu/news/files/2013/09/Doherty\\_Photo.jpeg](http://www.ramapo.edu/news/files/2013/09/Doherty_Photo.jpeg)

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers six graduate programs as well as articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.