

HIS 392/ The Holocaust: History and Meanings

I. Required Readings:

Elie Wiesel, *Night* (1961)

Richard L. Rubenstein & John K. Roth, *Approaches to Auschwitz; The Holocaust and its Legacy*, rev. ed. (2003)

Stephen Eric Bronner, *A Rumor about Jews; Antisemitism, Conspiracy, and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (2000)

Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men; Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (1998)

Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness; An Examination of Conscience* (1973)

Required Readings on E-Reserve in Jackson Library

Crucifixion accounts in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (Introduction and Article)

The Epistle of Barnabus (Introduction and Article)

The Acts of Pilate (Introduction and Article)

Nostra Aetate

Required Viewing:

TV Documentary on PBS : "Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State." Shown in three installments: 9:00-11:00 PM on Wednesdays, Jan. 19, 26, and Feb. 2.

II. General Information:

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Office Hours: MWF 9:30-10:45 AM; and by appointment

III. Course Requirements:

- a. **Course Papers:** Students are required to turn in three short papers (see syllabus for dates) based on course readings. Detailed instructions will follow.
- b. **Examinations:** The Mid-Term Exam will be on Friday March 4th and the Final Exam on May 9th (Monday) from 8:00-11:00 AM) Quizzes are scheduled for Wednesday, February 2nd and Wednesday, April 6th.
- c. **Class Discussion:** Given the size of the class, general discussion will be

impossible. I will, however, try to reserve five minutes (more if desired) at the end of every class period for questions.

IV. Learning Goals: Students will --

- i. understand the general background to the Holocaust.
- i. understand the long history of anti-Semitism.
- ii. understand the implications the Holocaust has for understanding our own world.
- iii. have an appreciation for the various interpretations scholars have adduced for the Holocaust.
- iv. understand how the Holocaust has reshaped our understanding of religion, human psychology, and history.
- v. have an appreciation of how various scholarly disciplines contribute to an understanding of the Holocaust.
- vi. become acquainted with the concepts of primary and secondary sources, historiography, thesis, annotated bibliography.

V. Grading Policy

Mid-Term Exam (20 %); Course papers (20%); Quizzes (20%); Final Examination 40 %)

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan. 10 Course Introduction

Problems of Studying the Holocaust

Reading Assignments: R & R: Prologue & Ch.12
Wiesel, *Night*

- Jan. 12 Why is the Holocaust so Problematic?
- “ 14 Examining Elie Wiesel’s *Night*
 - “ 17 MLK Holiday
 - “ 19 Film: “The Longest Hatred”

Why the Jews?

Reading Assignments: R & R: Chs. 1-4
Gospel Accounts of the Crucifixion
E-Reserve Texts by Church Fathers
E-Reserve – *Nostra Aetate*

- Jan. 21 Jew-Hatred before Christianity?
- “ 24 Anti-Semitism in Early Christianity (The Gospel Accounts)
- “ 26 The Church Fathers and the Jews
- “ 28 Jews in the Middle Ages
- “ 31 Jews and the Reformation
- Feb. 2 **QUIZ # 1**
- ” 4 The Enlightenment and Modern Anti-Semitism
- “ 7 The “Jewish Question” – Emancipation and Assimilation
- “ 9 The Emergence of Modern Racism – Aryans and Semites
- “ 11 The Science of Eugenics and Racial Purification

Why the Germans?

Reading Assignment: Bronner, *A Rumor about Jews*

- Feb. 14 Germans and Jews in 1900
- “ 16 World War I and the Jews: The Birth of “World Jewry”
- “ 18 “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion”

Reading Assignments: R&R, Ch. 5

- “ 21 Hitler Being “Helped Into Power” [Film]
(Bronner paper due)
- “ 23 1920s: Decade of German Crisis
- “ 25 Hitler and Charisma
- “ 28 The Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship
- “ 2 Review for the Mid-Term Exam

March 4 ----MID-TERM EXAM

The Nazi Search for a Solution: 1933-1939

Reading Assignment: R&R, Ch. 5

- Mar. 14 1933- The Nazi Search for a Solution to their “Jewish Question”
- “ 16 Population Policy, Eugenics, and Anti-Semitism
- “ 18 Defining the Jew: “Aryan Paragraph” to the Nuremberg Laws
- “ 21 The Nazi System: “Chaos and Consent” [Film}
- “ 23 Enlarging the “Jewish Question” – Annexing Austria
- “ 25 SPRING HOLIDAY
- “ 28 Nov. 9, 1938: Goering becomes “Coordinator” of Jewish Policy

The Making of the Final Solution: 1939-1945

Reading Assignment: R&R, Ch. 6,7,8,9,10,11

Browning, *Ordinary Men*
Sereny, *Into That Darkness*

- “ 30 1939: War/Euthanasia (T-4)/ “Racial Revolution”
- Apr. 1 1939-1940: Nisko and Madagascar
- “ 4 Ghettoization in Eastern Europe
- “ 6 **(Quiz # 2)**
- “ 8 1941: The Decision for Mass Murder
- “ 11 Establishing the Death Camps: 1941/1942
- “ 13 “Obedience” (on the Milgram experiments) [Film]

- “ 15 “Ordinary Men” or “Ordinary Germans”? (*Browning paper due*)
- “ 18 The Universe of Auschwitz/Treblinka – Franz Stangl
- “ 20 The “Jewish Councils”/ Resistance or Collaboration
- “ 22 What did the world know? When did it know it?
- “ 25 Film: “Weapons of the Spirit”
- “ 27 Holocaust Denial
- “ 29 The Holocaust: What Does It Mean?
- May 2 Review for Final Exam

Final Exam -- Monday, May 9 (8:00-11:00 AM)