

**HIS 392: THE HOLOCAUST: HISTORY & MEANING  
(HIS 692 for Graduate Students)**

I. Required Readings: (books to be purchased)

Richard L Rubenstein & John K. Roth, *Approaches to Auschwitz; the Holocaust and its Legacy*, rev. ed. (2003)  
Elie Wiesel, *Night* (1961)  
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 Reading on your own:

Accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus in the Gospels: Matthew (Chs. 26-27), Mark (Chs. 15-15), (Chs. 22-23), John, (Chs. 18-19)

II. General Information:

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Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays: 10:30-12:00 AM and 3:30-3:45 PM (and by appointment)

III. Course Information:

**Course Papers:** Students are required to turn in one short paper (3-4 pages) (see syllabus for dates) based on the "Ordinary Men" book. Detailed instructions will follow.

**Graduate Students:** Are asked to produce a 15-20 page book review essay on books and articles related to the Holocaust. The reading list needs to be approved by the instructor.

**Attendance Policy:** The roll will be taken at each class meeting. More than four unexcused absences may lead to being dropped from the course.

**Examinations and Quizzes:** The mid-term exam will be held during the class period on Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The final exam is scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-6:30 PM and will be in two parts. The written part will be a 3-4 page paper on the Gitta Sereny book and will be due on the last day of classes (May 2<sup>nd</sup>). The objective part of the final exam will be given during the regular final exam period on Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-6:30.

Two shorter quizzes are scheduled on the dates noted in the syllabus.

**Class Discussion:** Given the size of the class, general discussion will be difficult at best. I will, however, try to reserve sufficient time during each class period for questions or observations. **Questions are very much encouraged.**

**Grading Policy:** Mid-Term Exam (20 %); Browning Paper (20 %); Quizzes (20%); Final Exam (40 %)

IV. Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to

1. understand the long history of anti-Semitism,
2. understand how religious teachings and modern science has been used to promote anti-Semitic feelings,
3. explain how someone like Hitler came to power,
4. understand the ideological underpinning of modern racism,
5. understand how the Nazi system functioned in the escalation of its persecutions,
6. to appreciate how various scholarly disciplines contribute to an understanding of the Holocaust, and
7. understand how the Holocaust has reshaped understandings about religious doctrines, human psychology, and history.

### COURSE OUTLINE

Jan. 10 Course Introduction

#### Why the Jews?

Reading Assignment: Rubenstein & Roth (R&R), "Prologue" and Wiesel, *Night*.

Jan. 12 Problems in Studying the Holocaust  
" 17 Discussion of Elie Wiesel's *Night*  
" 19 FILM: "The Longest Hatred"

Reading Assignment: R & R: Ch. 1, "The Jew as Outsider; The Greco-Roman and Early Christian Worlds"; Ch. 2, "The Triumph of Christianity and the 'Teaching of Contempt'"; Ch. 3, "The Irony of Emancipation: France and the Dreyfus Affair," Ch. 4, "Toward Total Domination," pp. 97-99) The Four Gospel Accounts of the Crucifixion (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)

Jan. 24 Ancient Hatreds (Pagan and Early Christian)  
" 26 The Church Fathers and the Jews  
" 31 Jews in the Middle Ages and the Reformation  
Feb. 2 Jews and the Enlightenment; the Dual Legacy  
" 7 The Birth of Modern Racism (Aryans and Semites) (**Quiz # 1**)

#### Why the Germans?

Reading Assignment: R & R: Ch. 4, "Toward Total Domination"

Feb. 9 Germans and Jews in 1900  
" 14 Jews in World War I (1914-1918)  
" 16 The German Crisis; the 1920s  
" 21 "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion"  
" 23 FILM: "The Nazis -- A Warning -- Helped into Power"

- “ 28            Review for Mid-Term Exam
- March 2            **MID-TERM EXAM**
- March 7,9            **SPRING BREAK**

**The Nazi’s “Jewish Problem” and their Search for a Solution**

Reading Assignment: R & R: Ch. 5, “Rational Antisemitism”

- Mar. 14            1933: The Nazi Dictatorship and Nazi Population Policy
- “ 16            Defining Who is a Jew (Aryan Paragraph and the Nuremberg Laws)
- “ 21            FILM: “The Nazis – A Warning: Chaos and Consent”
- “ 23            Jewish Emigration: A Solution? Why did it Fail?
- “ 28            Nov. 9, 1938: The *Kristallnacht* Pogrom (Beginning of the Holocaust?)
- “ 30            Rescuing Jewish Children - The *Kindertransport* (Mr. Jack Hoffmann)

**The Making of the “Final Solution: (1939-1945)**

Reading Assignment: R & R: Ch. 6, “War and the Final Solution,”; Ch. 7, “A Racial Struggle of Pitiless Severity,”; Ch. 8, “Priority over all Other Matters.”; Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men*; Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness*.

- Apr. 4            1939: War and Euthanasia (T-4) (**Quiz # 2**)
- “ 6            1940: Nisko and Madagascar and Ghettos
- “ 11            1941: Decision for Mass Murder (
- “ 13            1941-1942: Establishing the Death Camps (**“Ordinary Me” Paper Due**)
- “ 18            FILM: “Obedience” (Discussion of Ordinary Men)
- “ 20            What Did the World Know?
- “ 25            Holocaust Denial
- “ 27            Can it Happen Again? Other Holocausts
- May 2            Review for Final Exam (**Final Exam Paper on “Stangl” Book Due**)

**The Final Exam will come in two parts:**

**May 2 (Last Class Meeting):** A 3-4 page paper on Gitta Sereny’s book on Franz Stangl will be due.

**May 9 (3:30-6:30 PM):** Objective Section of the Exam.