

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
HIS 392- The Holocaust: History and Meaning

Spring Semester 2016
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TR 9:30–10:45am SOEB 206

Office Hours: TR noon–1pm and by appointment

“Here there is no why.”

- Primo Levi

DESCRIPTION

The Holocaust is central to our political, moral, and cultural world in twenty-first century America. Yet the Holocaust still confounds efforts to understand the perpetrators’ motivations and the victims’ experiences. How did “ordinary” Germans respond to the Nazi regime? Why did special units commit murder so efficiently and ruthlessly? What role did other countries--the US and the Soviet Union--play? In this course we will study the origins and implementation of the Holocaust, and the challenge this event poses to the study of history. Among the topics to be covered are the long history of anti-Semitism in Germany and debates about Germany's aims; the role of the Holocaust within the larger context of World War II in Europe; and the difference between the Holocaust in the East and the West. We will pay close attention to how the Holocaust has been remembered and memorialized and how memory aids and differs from the work of professional historians.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- understand the history of anti-Semitism and pre-conditions for the Holocaust
- challenge received knowledge and assumptions about the Holocaust
- introduction to different approaches to the study of the Holocaust
- explore their relationship between personal experience, historical events, and forms of representation
- explore possibilities and limitations of global comparison
- aesthetic, literary, and religious responses to the Holocaust

REQUIRED READINGS

Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*. NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009. ISBN: 978-0742557154.

Gross, Jan T. *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne Poland*. Penguin, 2002. ISBN: 978-0142002407.

Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1993. ISBN-13: 978-0060995065.

Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz*. New York: Touchstone Books, 1995. ISBN-13: 978-0684826806

SYLLABUS

Week 1

I. Preconditions

T, 1/12: Introduction to the course— Conceptions and Misconceptions

View: “The Path to Genocide” (38 min short film- aftermath of WWI through liberation): <http://www.ushmm.org/learn/introduction-to-the-holocaust/path-to-nazi-genocide>

R, 1/14: The Holocaust as History, Political Science, and Collective Memory

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, Chapter 1 (1–28).

Charles King, “Can There be a Political Science of the Holocaust,” *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 10, no. 2 (June 2012): 323–336.*

Friday, January 15: Last day to drop course for tuition and fees refund

Week 2

T, 1/19: One the eve of the Holocaust: Jews in Western Europe

Reading:

Fritz Stern, “The Burden of “The Burden of Success: Reflection German Jewry,” 97–114.*

R, 1/21: One the eve of the Holocaust: Jews in Eastern Europe

Reading:

Jeffrey Veidlinger “The Jewish Question in the Soviet Union.”*

Week 3

T, 1/26: Modern Political Antisemitism

Reading:

Gavin Langmuir, “Toward a Definition of Antisemitism,” in *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, 311–352.*

In class: Dostoevsky *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*, IX.*

Wilhelm Marr, *The Victory of Jewry over Germandom* (1879).*

Edouard Drumont, “The Jews Against France” (1899).

II. Nazi State

R, 1/28: Adolf Hitler and Anti-Semitism

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide* Chapter 2 (29–50).

Adolf Hitler and the discovery of Anti-Semitism in Vienna.*

Adolf Hitler’s Gemlich Letter, 1919.*

Adolf Hitler, excerpt from *Mein Kampf*.*

Week 4

T, 2/2: The Nazi Rise to Power and Ethnic Fundamentalism, 1933–1935

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide* first part of Chapter 3 (51–70).

Michael Bayzler, “The Thousand Year Reich’s over one thousand anti-Jewish laws,” in *Routledge History of the Holocaust*, 82–89.*

Reich Citizenship Law, 1935.*

View: excerpt from Leni Riefenstahl’s “Triumph of the Will” (1934)

R, 2/4: **Anti-Jewish Persecution and Jewish Responses, 1935-1939**

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide* first part of Chapter 3, 70–78
Marion Kaplan, “Persecution and gender: German-Jewish responses to Nazism, 1933-39,” in *Routledge History of the Holocaust*, (90–102)*

Week 5

III. World War II

T, 2/9: **The German Conquest of Poland, 1939–1941**

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, Chapter 4, (79-100); Chapter 5, 101–133.
Extract from the speech by Hitler, January 30, 1939*
The Madagascar Plan, July 1940*
Map: Europe, 1939: http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_nm.php?MediaId=7827
and on Canvas.

Due: Complete map assessment at URL on Canvas.

R, 2/11: **Online Assignments**

Reading:

Book: Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne Poland*, xv-xxii, 1–56.

Due: Prospectus for first paper.

Week 6

T, 2/16: **Jedwabne as history and memory, I**

Reading:

Book: Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne Poland*, 56–124.

View: “The Legacy of Jedwabne” at URL on Canvas.

Due: complete worksheet and submit revised prospectus by **5pm**.

R, 2/18: **Jedwabne as history and memory, Part II**

Reading: Finish Jan Gross and locate secondary source article about “Neighbors Debate.”

Due: Draft of first paper due; in class peer review.

F, 2/19: Due online by 5pm: Paper on Jedwabne and “Neighbors Debate.”

Week 7

T, 2/23: War on the Western Front, 1940–1941

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, first part of Chapter 6, 135–149.

Book: Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, xv-xxii, 1-25.

In class: De Gaulle, “The Flame of Resistance” (1940)

R, 2/25: The Invasion of the Soviet Union, 1941

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, second part of Chapter 6 (150–165).

Book: Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, 1–55.

In class: Einsatzgruppen situational reports 80 and 81

Week 8

T, 3/1: Killing on the Eastern Front, 1941–1942

Reading:

Book: Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, 55–70.

Watch online lecture (begins at 5:20; lasts about 90min):

Tim Snyder, “The Origins of the Final Solution: Eastern Europe and the Holocaust.”*

R, 3/3: The “Holocaust by Bullets”

Reading:

Book: Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, to end.

Vasily Grossman, Kiev: Babi Yar and the Murder of the Jews in Berdichev from the *Black Book of Communism**

In class, film and podcast: Patrick Desbois and Yahad In Unum

Friday, March 4, Last day to withdraw from course without incurring a WF grade

Saturday, March 5–Monday, March 14: UNCG SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS

Week 9

T, 3/15: Toward the Final Solution

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, first part of Chapter 7, 167–182.

Book: Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz*, 9–55.

In class: Wannsee Protocol, January 1942*

R, 3/17: Liquidation of the Polish Ghettos, 1942-43

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, middle part of Chapter 7 182–203.

Book: Levi, Primo, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 56–100.

In class: Stroop Report: “The Warsaw Ghetto is No More” (May 1943).

Week 10

T, 3/22: Survivor Testimony

Reading:

Book: Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 101–end.

R, 3/24: Visit to Special Collections

Presentation:

Stacey Krim, Special Collections and University Archives: Lev Aronson survivor testimony. Meet in Special Collections, Jackson Library.

Due Online by classtime, 9:30am: Second paper on Browning’s “Ordinary Men” or Primo Levi

IV. Memory and Representation

Week 11

T, 3/29: Varieties of Jewish Resistance

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, last part of Chapter 7 (203–214).

Nechama Tec, “Jewish Resistance: Facts, Omissions, and Distortions.”*

R, 3/31: Collaboration, Complicity, and Accommodation

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, Chapter 8 (215–232).

Chaim Rumkowski “Give me your children” (1942).*

Week 12

T, 4/5: Responses around the World and Displaced Persons and Refugees

Reading:

Doris Bergen, review: 194–5 (Jews in hiding); 222–226 (Hungary);

Richard Breitman and Allan T. Lichtman, “Perspectives,” Chapter 16 from *FDR and the Jews* (315–329).*

View: “Confronting the Holocaust: American Responses” (17 min. video)*

In class, begin group work on case studies and presentations: Jan Karski, Joachim Prinz, and Raoul Wallenberg et al.

R, 4/7: Justice from Nuremberg to Eichmann

Reading:

Book: Doris Bergen, Conclusion (233–243).

Hannah Arendt, “Judgment, Appeal and Execution” from *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.*

In class, clip: Wolfgang Staudte, “The Murderers Are Among Us” (1948).

Week 13

T, 4/12: Memorializing the Holocaust

Reading:

Dan Stone, “Memory, Memorials, and Museums,” *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (Chapter 23 from ebook online, 508–532)*

In class: “Babi Yar in poetry, music and film” :

Yevgeny Yevtushenko, “Babi Yar” (1961)

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 13 (Babi Yar) (1970)

“The Ladies Tailor” (1990)

R, 4/14: **The Holocaust and Other Genocides**

Reading:

A. Dirk Moses, “The Holocaust and Genocide,” in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (ebook online, 533–556).*

Week 14

T, 4/19: **Archives and Responses**

Meet with small groups to practice presentations

R, 4/21: **Group Presentations and Oral Presentation Visuals**

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 3rd 12 noon–3:00pm

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading assignments: There will be approximately one reading assignment per week. These might take the form of take-home short answer questions, in-class quizzes, or online work. You should expect to have one of these assignment for each monograph you are assigned in the course. These assignments are designed to help you keep pace with the reading, identify where we might need further review, and to prepare for the final exam.

Map assessment, Europe, 1939 (*Due February 11th*): There will one map assessment that will require you to familiarize yourself with a “mobile” map of Europe in 1939 using both a video and a stationary map. You may watch the video as many times as you want until you feel you have mastered the material. An online quiz will assess your knowledge of the geography of the Holocaust and World War II from 1938–1945.

Paper Assignments (*Due February 19th*; and *March 24th*): There will be two 5 page paper (12pt font, double spaced) that will focus on the historical questions concerning the motivations of perpetrators in the Holocaust. You will be presented with paper prompts in preparation for this paper. The texts that may be addressed in these papers will be **Jan Gross’s *Neighbors*, Christopher Browning’s *Ordinary Men*, and Primo Levi’s *Survival in Auschwitz*.**

Group Research Projects, Responses Around the World (*April 21st*): In this final group research project you will conduct primary research in English-language newspapers on the reaction to the unfolding war. You will want to address the following

questions: How was World War II reported in the English-language press? How were the atrocities against Jews presented (if at all)? Were they singled out for their uniqueness? Were they presented as part of the German war aims? How did the refugee crisis impact our attitude towards these atrocities? This assignment will involve group research over the course of week November 17th, a final oral presentation (April 19th or April 21st) in which every member of the group must participate, and individual methodology papers, explaining the overall concept of the presentation and your participation in it, due at the time of your group presentation. The group presentations will receive a separate grade from the methodology paper, which will count among your “reading assignments.”

Final Exam (May 3rd): There will be a final exam for this class with definitions of key terms and events mentioned in lectures, identification of passages from texts, images (film/stills) discussed and viewed in class, and one short essay on themes traced throughout. Each of these sections will be weighed equally.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

Late Work

No late work is accepted. All students are required to complete all assignments for the course on the due date specified.

Attendance

Attendance at class is mandatory. You may miss up to three classes throughout the semester without penalty. After you miss three classes, you lose a point for every class missed from your participation grade (see below). **I reserve the right to withdraw you from the course if you miss six or more classes.**

In accordance with new statewide regulations, students are permitted a minimum of two excused absences due to religious observance. If you plan to be absent due to religious observance, please notify me in advance by email.

Punctuality

It is imperative that you come to class on time. The lecture starts at the beginning of the hour and ends ten minutes before the hour on the dot. If you arrive late, you miss vital information about assignments given at the beginning of class. Similarly, it is also appreciated if you do not pack up your things until after the lecture is complete. **In an effort to encourage punctuality, three late arrivals will constitute one absence, and therefore, the removal of one participation point, as described above.**

Cell phones & Laptops

There are no laptops permitted in this classroom. Students are encouraged to take notes on paper and transfer your notes to laptops during your exam preparation.

Your cell phone must be turned off before class begins and remain out of view. **If your phone is viewable or goes off in the classroom, you will receive a failing grade for**

participation/attendance on that day and you will be asked to leave.

Students who abuse technology in the classroom risk earning a failing grade for participation/attendance and being removed from the course.

Name Cards

You will receive a name card on the first day of class. It is your responsibility to keep the name card and bring it to class. You must keep the name card in front of you at all times and should expect to be called on for discussion.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

All students are expected to abide by the UNCG Honor Code. Please visit the following link: Academic Integrity Policy: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>. Depending on the severity of the offense, students risk receiving a zero for the assignment, an F for the final grade of F for the course and/or having an academic violation placed on their record.

Adverse Weather Conditions

If you think that the university might be closed due to weather, either call the UNCG Adverse Weather Line at (336) 334-4400 or check the university's website (www.uncg.edu). If the university is open, I will hold class.

OFFICE HOURS

Office hours will be held on TR noon–1pm. Appointments recommended. This is an open time when students are welcome to come visit the professor with questions about the readings and class discussion. If you cannot make the regularly scheduled office hours, please contact the professor to inquire about another time either in person or over the phone.

GRADING

Attendance and participation is an essential part of this class. Class time will be divided between the instructor's lectures, which will provide crucial historical context and thematic overview, discussions of the texts (reading, viewing, listening) assigned for that week, and workshops of specific historical skills, including thesis writing and paper preparation.

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned texts. The class goals are to engage one another in friendly debate, to express opinions, and to learn from one another.

Participation will be noted on a daily basis in accordance with these expectations.

Grading will be weighed according to the following formula and scales:

Attendance (including punctuality)	10%
Participation	10%
Reading Assignments	10%
Paper:	20%
Oral Presentation	20%
Final Exam:	30%

59.5	D-
62.5	D
66.5	D+
69.5	C-
72.5	C
76.5	C+
79.5	B-
82.5	B
86.5	B+
89.5	A-
92.5	A

Have a great semester!