

HIS 392-01 – The Holocaust: History & Meaning

Spring 2021

3 credit hours

Format: Online

Course Meeting Time (on Zoom): Wednesdays 3:30-4:45pm

Instructor Information

Dr. Teresa Walch

Email: tmwalch@uncg.edu

Office Hours (via Zoom): Mondays 3:30-4:30pm, and by appointment

Course Description

Anne Frank, Elie Wiesel, Hitler, Dachau, Auschwitz... These are a few names of people and places that might come to mind for American audiences when thinking about the Holocaust. In this course we will dig deeper and shift our focus to examine the Holocaust on multiple scales—the local, national, continental, and global. The Holocaust had unique and contingent origins in Germany, but it cannot be understood without examining some important antecedents, and it was ultimately a European phenomenon with global, and long-lasting ramifications. This course will cover the timeframe of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with an emphasis on the critical years of 1933-1945.

Throughout the seminar, you will be introduced to the main historiographical debates surrounding Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, and you will be asked to reflect upon the all-important questions of *how* and *why*. You will encounter the voices of diverse individuals who experienced persecution by the Nazi regime. By the end of this course, you should be able to outline the ideological, political, material, and interpersonal dynamics of the Holocaust and to chart the timeline of historical events and the stages of radicalization. Furthermore, you will be able to discuss how the Holocaust played out on multiple scales and in various geographic locations and to outline the various motivations of perpetrators and helpers. You will examine these themes through a diverse set of primary and secondary sources and thereby hone your critical reading skills.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

The course has several learning goals that are important for both the study of history and humanities in general. In this course, you will:

1. learn to approach primary sources critically and effectively, scrutinizing the document's historical context, intended audience, and purpose.
2. learn how to identify and critique arguments in secondary sources.
3. articulate plausible arguments of your own, based on evidence from various sources (primary, secondary, novels, etc.).
4. develop your critical thinking and communication skills through reading, writing, and discussion assignments.
5. explain the multiple long- and short-term causes of the Holocaust.

Required Books

1. Omer Bartov, *Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018). ISBN: 9781451684544.
– also available as a [3-simultaneous-user e-book](#) via Jackson Library
2. Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, 3rd edition (New York and London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). ISBN: 9781442242289.
– also available as an [unlimited user e-book](#) via Jackson Library
3. Benjamin Carter-Hett, *The Death of Democracy: Hitler's Rise to Power and the Downfall of the Weimar Republic* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2018). ISBN: 9781250162502
4. Ruth Kluger, *Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered* (New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 2001). ISBN: 9781558614369.
– also available as an [unlimited user e-book](#) via Jackson Library
5. Nora Krug, *Belonging: A German Reckons with History* (New York: Scribner, 2018). ISBN: 9781476796628.

You may purchase all required books via the [UNCG bookstore](#), online, or elsewhere. I recommend that you purchase the editions specified by the ISBN number listed above. Copies of all required books are also available via Jackson Library, either as an e-book (indicated above) or on reserve as a hard copy available for a 2-hour loan in the library. All other required readings and materials will be available on Canvas.

Assignments & Grading

Attendance & Participation (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5) – This is a 300-level course. Your active participation is vital to your grade, your success in this course, and your enjoyment thereof. As advanced undergraduate students, it is your task to come to class prepared, as your careful reading of the assigned texts and attention to the assigned lectures and videos will allow us to dig deep into the course themes. You should be prepared to outline and debate the authors' arguments and to share interesting or thought-provoking passages from the readings. You are also encouraged to pose questions and insights and to challenge and debate arguments that arise in readings and during class discussions – we all learn from your thoughts and from the questions you ask!

Weekly Responses (SLOs 1, 2, 3 & 4) – Beginning in Week 2, you are asked to analyze a theme from the readings and write a 400-word response that reflects a deeper engagement with the material. Your response should not be a summary of the assigned materials but should instead grapple with them and reflect critical analysis on your part. You should cite specific information and quotations from the assigned materials. These responses should incite you and your peers who read them to further contemplation, and they should serve as a springboard for discussion each week. You must post your responses online by Tuesday @ 11:59pm (the day before our Wednesday class meetings), and you should read your classmates' responses before class begins. You may miss or skip **two** weekly responses during the semester without penalty.

Holocaust Testimony Assignment (SLOs 1 & 2) – For this assignment, you will select a testimony from the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive and listen to the testimony in its entirety. Thereafter, you will use Google's *My Maps* to create a map that follows the journey of your selected person. For each stop on the map, you will conduct additional research to create a small biographical entry about the place that also comments on its role in the Holocaust and World War II. You will hand in a preliminary bibliography in Week 8 that lists at least one secondary source for each place on your map.

First Paper (SLOs 2, 3 & 4) – The first paper will ask you to grapple with the causes of the failure of Weimar democracy and the rise of National Socialism in Germany. The should provide an appropriate introduction and must center around a lucid and well-developed thesis. You should then support this thesis throughout the paper with clear reasoning and ample and *specific* pieces of evidence from the course materials. The paper should be 4-5-pages long.

Final Paper (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5) – The final paper will ask you to consider various explanations for the Holocaust. Utilizing materials from the entire course you will consider the multiple causes for the Holocaust, centering your paper around a well-developed thesis. You must support your thesis with appropriate evidence from the course readings, lectures, and discussions, and at least one video testimony from the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive, as well as your own clear reasoning. The paper should be 6-8 pages long.

Detailed prompts for the assignments & papers will be posted on Canvas.

Your final grade will be assessed as such:

- 15% – *Attendance & Participation*
- 25% – *Weekly Responses* (400 words each)
- 15% – *First Paper* (4-5 pages)
- 20% – *Holocaust Testimony Assignment* (5% = preliminary bibliography; 15% = final assignment)
- 25% – *Final Paper* (6-8 pages)

Final Grade Scale:

Letter Grade	% points accumulated
A	≥ 93.0
A-	90.0-92.9
B+	87.0-89.9
B	83.0-86.9
B-	80.0-82.9
C+	77.0-79.9
C	73.0-76.9
C-	70.0-72.9
D	60.0-69.9
F	<60.0

Assignment Submission and Format

You will submit all assignments in this course electronically on Canvas, either as a text entry, as a Word document, or other (as indicated on the specific assignment). No assignments will be accepted either by email or on paper. Your papers and assignments will be submitted via Turnitin.

Policy on Late Work

The penalty for all other late assignments is 1/3 of a letter grade *for each day an assignment is late* (including weekends). After 10 days late, the maximum grade an assignment can receive is 50%. If you think you will need an extension for any of these assignments, please get in touch with me *ahead of time*.

Communication

I will be in contact with you regularly throughout the semester. I will primarily update you via the “*Announcements*” feature in the course Canvas site. Announcements contain information relevant to the whole class. Please check Canvas each time you access the course for new announcements and read them promptly. If I need to contact you about an individual matter, I will send an *email* to your UNCG email account. Please also check your UNCG email daily.

If you have a question about the course or assignments, you have three options:

- 1. Office Hours** – What are “office hours”? By “office hours,” professors mean the time they typically set aside in their weekly schedule to be in their offices to answer student questions. You may come to ask any questions you have about the course, assignments, etc. This semester, I will be offering virtual office hours via Zoom every Monday from 3:30-4:30pm. You can find the Zoom link for my office hours on Canvas. These are group office hours, so you may find yourself visiting my office hours along with several of your classmates. This can also be a wonderful opportunity for you to get to know some of your classmates better during the semester. There is a “waiting room,” however, so once you click on the Zoom link, you will need to wait until I approve you to join the office hours. If you wish to meet, and this time does not work for you (or if you wish to discuss more personal matters not conducive to group office hours), please contact me, and we will schedule a different appointment.
- 2. General Discussion Board** – In most cases, the best place to post general questions related to course content, assignments, and materials is the “General Discussion Board” on Canvas. Your question will most likely be relevant for others in the class as well. I encourage you to post your questions here and to answer your classmates’ questions that you see here. This should be the default space for everyone to go with their questions. I will regularly check the discussion board to reply to any unanswered questions and comments. You may of course also contact me via e-mail, but please be aware that it may take me 24 hours or more to respond. You will most likely receive a response on Canvas much sooner.
- 3. Email** – I will respond to emails sent to me Monday-Thursday within 24 hours. I will respond to emails received Friday-Sunday the following Monday. If you email me about a matter that is already addressed in the syllabus or on Canvas, I will refer you to those places to find the answer. And if your question is relevant for the whole class, I will ask you to post it on the General Discussion Board.

Technical Support

I cannot answer or help you resolve any questions regarding technology. Students with technical issues with the course and email should contact 6-TECH for support either by email or phone or chat ([6TECH Help](#)). If you need some additional help and information with Canvas, please refer to this [Canvas Student Guide](#).

UNCG Covid-19 Statement

Though not directly relevant for HIS 223, since we meet online, if you are on campus this semester, it is important to remember that as UNCG returns to face-to-face course offerings in fall 2020, the campus community must recognize and address concerns about physical and emotional safety. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Wearing a face covering that covers both nose and mouth](#)
- Observing [social distance](#) in the classroom
- Engaging in proper hand washing hygiene when possible
- [Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.

UNCG Chancellor Frank Gilliam has challenged us to create a Culture of Care at UNCG where we all wear face coverings and social distance, less to protect ourselves but rather more to protect everyone around us. It shows that you care about the well-being of everyone around you. UNCG has created this video featuring the student body presidents to better explain how and why this is so important. Please watch this video before the first day of classes: <https://youtu.be/Mb58551qxEk>.

Health and Wellness Statement

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling [336-334-5874](tel:336-334-5874), visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu.

Academic Integrity

All the work you submit in this course must be your own. You are expected to properly cite and acknowledge any material that you quote, paraphrase, or summarize. Your papers and final exam will be submitted via Turnitin. Each student is required to sign UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course. If you have any questions, I encourage you to visit UNCG's webpages on [plagiarism](#) and [academic integrity](#). Please also carefully read UNCG Writing Center's handout on "[Avoiding Plagiarism](#)."

Accommodations

UNCG seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) in 215 Elliott University Center, 334-5440, oars.uncg.edu.

Religious Holidays

It is expected that instructors will make reasonable accommodations for students who have conflicts due to religious obligations. Please make arrangements with me in advance of any conflict. For more information on UNCG's Religious Obligations policy, visit: [UNCG's Religious Obligations Policy](#).

Note on Syllabus Materials & Updates

The listed readings below constitute only *some* of the assigned readings and materials. In each module on Canvas, you will find the complete list of materials (all required readings, lectures, videos, etc.) for each week, so please refer to each module on Canvas as the authoritative list.

If needed, there may also be adjustments to the syllabus and calendar throughout the semester. In such cases, I will notify you within a reasonable timeframe.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 20) – Introduction to the “Holocaust”

Week 2 (January 21-27) – Jews in Europe & Modern Antisemitism

- Bergen, 1-7, 13-37
- Bartov, 1-36

Week 3 (January 28-February 3) – Colonization and Modern Warfare

- Bergen, 37-43
- Bartov, 37-81

Week 4 (February 4-10) – Interwar Europe and the Rise of National Socialism

- Bartov, 82-128
- Carter Hett 1-34, 53-54, 94-161
- optional: Bergen, 45-67

**** Class Meeting: [Monday, February 8, 3:30-4:45pm](#) – Introduction to Holocaust Video Testimonies**

Week 5 (February 11-17) – The Creation of the “Volksgemeinschaft”

- Carter Hett, 162-235
- Bergen, 69-97

**** Class Meeting: [Monday, February 15, 3:30-4:45pm](#) – Introduction Holocaust Testimony Assignment using Google’s My Maps**

Week 6 (February 18-24) – Nazi Foreign Policy & the Outbreak of World War II

- Bergen, 97-107, 167-186
- Bartov, 129-157

FIRST PAPER due on Canvas by Tuesday, February 23 @ 11:59pm

Week 7 (February 25-March 3) – No Class or Assignments

Wednesday, March 3 = UNCG Health and Wellness Day. Classes dismissed.

Week 8 (March 4-10) – Persecution of Jews and other Victims in the “Reich” (March 4-10)

- Bergen, 107-127
- Kluger, 15-69

PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY for Holocaust Testimony Assignment due on Canvas by Tuesday, March 9 @ 11:59pm

Week 9 (March 11-17) – Ghettoization & “Euthanasia”

- Bergen, 145-165
- Kluger, 70-88

Week 10 (March 18-24) – Operation Barbarossa & Mass Murder

- Bergen, 186-196
- Bartov, 158-231
- Mark Roseman, excerpts from *The Wannsee Conference and the final solution: A Reconsideration* (on e-reserve)

Week 11 (March 25-31) – Extermination Camps

- Bergen, 207-210, 237-258
- Kluger, 89-112

Week 12 (April 1-7) – Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders?

- Bartov, 232-288

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY ASSIGNMENT due on Canvas by Tuesday, April 6 @ 11:59pm

Week 13 (April 8-14) – Resistance

- Bergen, 211-213, 260-273
- Excerpts from *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow* (on e-reserve)
- Zivia Lubetkin, excerpts from *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt* (on e-reserve)
- Nechama Tec, excerpts from *Defiance* (on e-reserve)

Week 14 (April 15-21) – International Actors & Bodies

- Bergen, 287-310
- Kluger, 113-214

Week 15 (April 22-28) – Postwar Memory

- Bartov, 289-298
- Krug, *whole book*

FINAL PAPER due on Canvas by Thursday, April 29 @ 11:59pm