

# HIS 392-01 – The Holocaust: History & Meaning

Spring 2022, Seminar, 3 credit hours  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45am, MHRA 2207

## Professor Information

Dr. Teresa Walch  
Office: MHRA 2217  
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00pm (and by appointment)  
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## Graduate Assistant

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## 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. Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (New York and London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). ISBN: 9781442242289.
  - also available as an [unlimited user e-book](#) via Jackson Library
2. Waitman Wade Beorn, *The Holocaust in Eastern Europe: At the Epicenter of the Final Solution* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018). ISBN: 9781474232180.
  - also available as a [multi-user ebook](#) via Jackson Library
3. 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

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 as e-books via Jackson 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!

Because Covid-19 continues to affect our lives, each student is allowed up to 3 excused absences from the course. If you test positive for Covid-19, there will be an option to attend the class virtually (if you're feeling well enough) while you are in quarantine, as mandated by UNCG. Any additional missed classes (or unexcused absences) can negatively affect your grade. The most important thing is to *stay in regular contact with me* about any absences so I can help you succeed in this course in this tumultuous time.

**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 must post your responses online by Wednesday @ 11:59pm

(the day before our Thursday class meetings), and you should read your classmates' responses before class begins. You may miss or skip **three** 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) – For this assignment, you will grapple with a historiographical debate surrounding the February 1933 Reichstag Fire in a paper that is 4-5 pages long.

**Final Paper** (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5) – The final assignment for this course will ask you to reflect upon some of the overarching themes of the course (particularly the role of conspiracy theories in the history of the Holocaust) in a paper that is 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.

## 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 office hours every Wednesday from 1:00-3:00pm (in MHRA 2117). If this time does not work for you, please contact me, and we can schedule a different appointment.

**2. General Discussion Board** – The best place to post general questions related to course content, assignments, and materials is the “General Discussion Board” on Canvas. I encourage you to post your questions there, and if you’re able, to answer any questions you see from your classmates there. I will regularly check the discussion board to reply to any unanswered questions and comments.

**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 am unable to help resolve any questions regarding technology. Students with technical issues with the course 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

As we return for spring 2022, 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. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- [Following face-covering guidelines](#)
- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19
- Staying home when 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
- Completing a [self-report](#) when experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, testing positive for COVID-19, or being identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive

- Staying informed about the University's policies and announcements via the [COVID-19](#) website

Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats at every class meeting. Students may move their chairs in class to facilitate group work, as long as instructors keep seating chart records. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings are also available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow the basic standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and other requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact OARS (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health services, will review requests for accommodations.

**Spring 2022 Course Delivery:** This course is scheduled to be taught in-person and all participants are required to wear face coverings in the class at all times. Students are strongly encouraged to wear three-layer surgical-style face coverings in class which are available at [designated on-campus locations](#). No food or drink (including water) is allowed in the class. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may require changes to our meeting plan. If I need to change the format of the course temporarily due to outbreaks of illness, I will announce this via email and the course Canvas page.

**Students who test positive:** Students who test positive for COVID-19 are required to [self-report](#) and isolate per [university guidelines](#).

## 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](mailto: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 will be submitted via Turnitin. 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](#)."

## What is Plagiarism?

Representing the words, thoughts, or ideas of another, as one's own in any academic exercise. Plagiarism may occur on any paper, report, or other work submitted to fulfill course requirements. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- submitting work done by another, whether a commercial or non-commercial enterprise, including the Internet, as one's own work
- failure to properly cite references and/or sources
- submitting, as one's own, work done by or copied from another including work done by a fellow student, work done by a previous student, or work done by anyone other than the student responsible for the assignment
- Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more members of the group does none of the group's work and participates in none of the group's activities, but attempts to take credit for the work of the group.

## 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](http://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 secondary and primary source readings, 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 – Introduction to the “Holocaust” & Jews in Modern Europe

#### **Tuesday, January 11 – Introduction to the “Holocaust”**

#### **Thursday, January 13 – Jews in Modern Europe**

- Bergen, 1-7, 13-37
- Beorn, 1-27

## Week 2 – Colonialism and Modern Warfare

### Tuesday, January 18 – Racial Ideology & German Colonialism

- Bergen, 37-39
- Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, “Racism”

### Thursday, January 20 – World War I and Its Legacies

- Bergen, 39-43
- Richard J. Evans, “Was the German army ‘stabbed in the back’ in 1918?”

## Week 3 – Interwar Europe and the Rise of National Socialism

### Tuesday, January 25 – Weimar Politics & Culture

- Eric D. Weitz, “Walking the City,” in *Weimar Germany*, 41-79
- “Berlin and the Countryside” documents in *Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, 412-428

### Thursday, January 27 – Rise of National Socialism

- Bergen, 45-67

## Week 4 – Library Workshops

### Tuesday, February 1 – Library Workshop: Intro to USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive

\*\*\* meet in Library Lab 177A

### Thursday, February 3 – Library Workshop: Google My Maps Tutorial

\*\*\* meet in Library Lab 177A

## Week 5 – The Nazis in Power

### Tuesday, February 8 – Consolidating Power & The Reichstag Fire Debate

- Bergen, 69-73
- Richard J. Evans, “The Conspiracists,” *London Review of Books* 36, no. 9 (8 May 2014)
- Benjamin Carter Hett, “‘This Story Is about Something Fundamental’: Nazi Criminals, History, Memory, and the Reichstag Fire,” *Central European History* 48, no. 2 (2015): 199-224.
- Richard J. Evans, “Who burned down the Reichstag?”
- Benjamin Carter Hett, “Are Historians Too Credulous of the Single Culprit Explanation of the Reichstag Fire?” *History News Network* (12 December 2021)

### Thursday, February 10 – Insiders & Outsiders: Creating the “Volksgemeinschaft”

- Bergen, 73-97

## Week 6 – Persecution of Jews and other Victims in the “Reich”

### Tuesday, February 15 – Anti-Jewish Persecution in Germany & “Kristallnacht”

- Bergen, 107-126
- Kluger, 15-69

**Thursday, February 17 – Other Victims & Life in Concentration Camps**

- Tina Campt, “Confronting Racial Danger, Neutralizing Racial Pollution: Afro-Germans and the National Socialist Sterilization Program,” in *Other Germans*, 63-80

**FIRST PAPER due on Canvas by Wednesday, February 16 @ 11:59pm**

**Week 7 – Nazi Foreign Policy & the Outbreak of World War II**

**Tuesday, February 22 – German Foreign Policy in the 1930s**

- Bergen, 97-107
- Beorn, 49-69

**Thursday, February 24 – The Outbreak of World War II**

- Bergen, 129-140, 167-186
- Beorn, 71-118

**Week 8 – Ghettoization**

**Tuesday, March 1 – Ghettos in Eastern Europe**

- Bergen, 140-159
- Kluger, 70-88
- Beorn, 151-159

**Thursday, March 3 – NO CLASS**

**PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY for Holocaust Testimony Assignment due on Canvas by Wednesday, March 2 @ 11:59pm**

**UNCG Spring Break (March 5-13)**

**Week 9 – The Shift to Mass Murder**

**Tuesday, March 15 – Operation T4: “Euthanasia” Program**

- Bergen, 159-165

**Thursday, March 17 – Operation Barbarossa & the “Holocaust by Bullets”**

- Bergen, 186-206
- Beorn, 119-149

**Week 10 – Systemization of Mass Murder**

**Tuesday, March 22 – The Wannsee Conference**

- Bergen, 207-210
- Beorn, 201-207



**Thursday, March 24 – NO CLASS**

**Week 11 – Extermination Camps**

**Tuesday, March 29 – Operation Reinhard**

- Bergen, 237-251

**Thursday, March 31 – Auschwitz-Birkenau**

- Bergen, 251-258
- Kluger 89-112

**Week 12 – Roles & Agency in the Holocaust**

**Tuesday, April 5 – Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders?**

- Beorn, 159-200, 247-271

**Thursday, April 7 – Resistance**

- Bergen, 211-213, 260-273
- Beorn, 225-246
- documentary: *Who Will Write our History?* (2018)

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

**Week 13 – The Final Stages & Life After the War**

**Tuesday, April 12 – The End of World War II & the Holocaust**

- Bergen, 275-295
- Kluger, 113-149

**Thursday, April 14 – Life After the War**

- Bergen, 297-310
- Kluger, 150-202

**Week 14 – Postwar Memory & Holocaust Denial**

**Tuesday, April 19 – Postwar Memory of the Holocaust in Europe**

- Kluger, 205-214
- Richard Ned Lebow, “The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe,” in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, 1-39

**Thursday, April 21 – Holocaust Denial**

- movie: *Denial* (2016)
- Deborah E. Lipstadt, “Holocaust Denial: From Hard-Core to Soft-Core,” in *Antisemitism: Here and Now*
- Richard J. Evans, “Thoughts on a Movie, Memories of a Trial”

Week 15 – Antisemitism Today

**Tuesday, April 26 – Antisemitism Today**

- Deborah E. Lipstadt, “A Taxonomy of the Antisemite,” in *Antisemitism: Here and Now*

**FINAL PAPER due on Canvas by Monday, April 31 @ 11:59pm**