

HIS 392-01 – The Holocaust: History & Meaning

Spring 2023, Seminar, 3 credit hours

Time: MW, 2:00-3:15pm

Location: MHRA 1204

Professor Information

Dr. Teresa Walch

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9:00-11:00am (and by appointment) in MHRA 2117

Email: tmwalch@uncg.edu

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*, 3rd edition (New York and London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). ISBN: 9781442242289.
 - also available as an [unlimited user e-book](#) via Jackson Library
2. 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 deeper 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!

Every student is allowed up to 3 excused absences from the course. Any additional missed classes (or unexcused absences) will negatively affect your grade. If you miss more than 5 classes, I will recommend that you drop the course.

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. Your responses are due on Canvas each week by Wednesday before class begins at 2:00pm. 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) – 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 in a paper that is 5-6 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* (5-6 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

Midterm Grades

In keeping with UNCG policy, I will post a midterm grade for you in UNCGenie by the end of Week 7 of the term (February 24). That grade will not appear on your transcript or in your GPA calculations. Instead, it is intended to help you and your academic advisor understand how you are doing in the course up to that point. If you review your midterm grade and have any concerns, I encourage you to talk to me so we can make a plan together for your success in this class.

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

Weekly Responses – Late weekly responses will not be accepted. You must submit them each week before class begins on Wednesday at 2:00pm. You may skip 2 weekly responses with no penalty, no explanation needed. For students who do not miss any weekly responses, I will omit your two lowest-scoring grades from your final grade. Any more than two missed responses will receive a zero for the assignment.

Other Assignments – 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 60%. If you think you will need an extension for any of these assignments, please get in touch with me *ahead of time* to request one.

The final essay must be turned in on time, no exceptions.

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** – Please visit me during my office hours to ask any questions you have about the course, assignments, etc. This semester, I will be hold office hours every Tuesday from 9:00-11:00am (in MHRA 2117). If this time does not work for you, please contact me to 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.
- 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.

Electronic Devices

You must have the assigned readings available to you in class, either as a printout or on an electronic device. Laptops and tablets are **only** permitted for this purpose and for notetaking. You are strongly encouraged to take notes during class. Cell phones are not permitted in class at any time.

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 2023, please uphold UNCG's culture of care to limit the spread of Covid-19 and other airborne illnesses. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- engaging in proper handwashing hygiene.
- self-monitoring for symptoms of Covid-19.
- staying home when ill.
- complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to isolate if ill.
- completing a [self-report](#) when experiencing Covid-19 symptoms or testing positive for Covid-19.
- following the CDC's [exposure guidelines](#) when exposed to someone who has tested positive for Covid-19.
- staying informed about the University's policies and announcements via the [Covid-19](#) website.

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, 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 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.

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

Monday, January 9 – Introduction to the “Holocaust”

Wednesday, January 11 – Jews in Modern Europe

- Bergen, 1-7, 13-37
- Waitman Wade Beorn, “Beyond the Pale: Pre-War Jewish Life in Eastern Europe,” *The Holocaust in Eastern Europe* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 9-27. (chapter 1)

Week 2 – Race, Colonialism, and 19th-Century Germany

Monday, January 16 – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – NO CLASS

Wednesday, January 18 – Race, Colonialism, and 19th-Century Germany

- Bergen, 37-39
- Peter Hayes, “Targets: Why the Jews?” in *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, 4-35

Week 3 – World War I and Weimar Germany

Monday, January 23 – World War I and Its Legacies

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

Wednesday, January 25 – Politics & Culture in Weimar Germany

- Eric Weitz, “Walking the City,” in *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 41-80. (chapter 2)

Week 4 – The Rise of National Socialism

Monday, January 30 – The Rise of National Socialism

- Bergen, 45-67

Wednesday, February 1 – Library Workshop: Visual History Archive & Google *My Maps* Tutorial

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

Week 5 – The Nazis in Power

Monday, February 6 – Consolidating Power & The Reichstag Fire Debate

- Bergen, 69-73
- Benjamin Carter Hett, *Burning the Reichstag* (Prologue & Chapter 4)

Wednesday, February 8 – Insiders & Outsiders: Creating the “Volksgemeinschaft”

- Richard J. Evans, “Who burned down the Reichstag?” in *The Hitler Conspiracies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 85-120.
- Benjamin Carter Hett, “Are Historians Too Credulous of the Single Culprit Explanation of the Reichstag Fire?” *History News Network* (12 December 2021)
- ** optional: Bergen, 73-97

Week 6 – Nazi Germany in the Early 1930s

Monday, February 13 – German Foreign Policy in the 1930s

- Bergen, 97-107
- Waitman Wade Beorn, “Nazis and the Imaginary East,” in *The Holocaust in Eastern Europe* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 49-60. (chapter 3)

Wednesday, February 15 – “Other” Victims of Nazism & Life in Concentration Camps

- Nikolaus Wachsmann, “The Policy of Exclusion: Repression in the Nazi State, 1933-1939,” in *Nazi Germany*, ed. Jane Caplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 122-145.

FIRST PAPER due on Canvas before class on Wednesday, February 15 @ 2:00pm

Week 7 – The Late 1930s & the Outbreak of World War II

Monday, February 20 – Anti-Jewish Persecution in Germany & “Kristallnacht”

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

Wednesday, February 22 – The Outbreak of World War II

- Bergen, 129-142, 167-186

Week 8 – Ghettoization

Monday, February 27 – Ghettoization

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

Wednesday, March 1 – Class with Dr. Anne Parsons: “Roots of Resistance” exhibit

PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY for Holocaust Testimony Assignment due on Canvas before class on Wednesday, March 1 @ 2:00pm

UNCG Spring Break (March 4-12)

Week 9 – The Shift to Mass Murder

Monday, March 13 – Operation T4: “Euthanasia” Program

- Bergen, 159-165

Wednesday, March 15 – Operation Barbarossa & The Wannsee Conference

- Bergen, 186-210

Week 10 – NO CLASS THIS WEEK – work on your Holocaust Testimony Assignments

Monday, March 20 – NO CLASS

Wednesday, March 22 – NO CLASS

Week 11 – Extermination Camps

Monday, March 27 – Operation Reinhard

- Bergen, 237-258

Wednesday, March 29 – Auschwitz-Birkenau

- Kluger 89-112
- movie: *Son of Saul*

Week 12 – Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders?

Monday, April 3 – Occupied, Allied & Enemy States of Nazi Germany

- PBS documentary: “The U.S. and the Holocaust”

Wednesday, April 5 – “Ordinary People” in Europe during the Holocaust

- Waitman Wade Beorn, “Perpetrators, Collaborators, and Rescuers,” in *The Holocaust in Eastern Europe* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 247-271. (chapter 11)
- Primo Levi, “The Grey Zone,” in *The Drowned and the Saved*

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY ASSIGNMENT due on Canvas before class on Wednesday, April 5 @ 2:00pm

Week 13 – Resistance & the End of War

Monday, April 10 – Resistance

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

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

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

Week 14 – Postwar Europe

Monday, April 17 – Life After the War

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

Wednesday, April 19 – Postwar Memory of the Holocaust in Europe

- Kluger, 205-214

Week 15 – Holocaust Denial & Antisemitism Today

Monday, April 24 – Holocaust Denial

- Deborah E. Lipstadt, “Holocaust Denial: From Hard-Core to Soft-Core,” in *Antisemitism: Here and Now*
- movie: *Denial* (2016)

Wednesday, April 26 – Antisemitism Today

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

FINAL PAPER due on Canvas by Monday, May 1 @ 11:59pm