

**History 4495  
Holocaust in History and Memory  
Western Michigan University  
Summer I, 2010  
Dunbar 2209  
T-Th 9-11:30**

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OFFICE HOURS: WED. 10-12**

**Course Summary:**

This course covers both the history and the memory of the Holocaust, in which 6 million European Jews were murdered by the Third Reich. The Holocaust is a central event in the history of not only Germany, Europe, or Jewry, but of the United States, the middle east, and the entire world during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Debates in this country and in others frequently make reference, whether warranted or not, to the Holocaust and it is a common subject in popular histories. However, very few people understand the causes, the details, and the implications of the Holocaust. This course begins by exploring the roots of anti-Semitism in Germany and elsewhere, then focuses on the specific circumstances in Germany that allowed Nazism to rise to power, the way in which the Third Reich functioned, the timeline of events leading up to the Holocaust, and then continues on after 1945 by exploring the debates over the meaning and causes of the Holocaust, the attempts to understand the behavior of the perpetrators of the Holocaust, and even the attempts to both profit from Holocaust memory as well as to deny that the Holocaust actually took place.

**Course Goals:**

At the end of this course, you should be able to explain clearly the various roots of anti-Semitism that fed into the Holocaust, the structure of the Third Reich, especially the parts of the Nazi apparatus responsible for organizing and carrying out the killing of European Jews, the progressive stages of the Holocaust. You should also be able to explain the different sides in the various debates over who was really responsible for the Holocaust, how the Holocaust became such a central theme in popular culture, and what the arguments of Holocaust deniers are, as well as how to counter those arguments.

**Course Assignments and Grading:**

This is a baccalaureate writing level class. It is the highest level class in the History Department's undergraduate curriculum, and thus the highest level of work is expected of you. There are three writing assignments, all of them substantial in length (at least ten pages utilizing both primary and secondary sources). In accordance with baccalaureate writing policy, you will have the opportunity to rewrite your first two papers for a higher grade. These papers must be turned in by Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 5 pm in my mailbox at the latest. Each of the paper assignments is worth 100 points. Each day that they are late is 10 points. I prefer that they not be e-mailed to me; if it is absolutely necessary, I require that they be in the following file formats: .doc; .docx; .rtf; .txt; .pdf. I cannot open .wps documents.

There will be a midterm on Thursday, June 10, which will mix different formats—some of the exam will be a map, some will be short answer, and some will be essay. This will be worth 100 points.

Class participation makes up the final part of the grade in this class, also worth 100 points. (See **Class Structure** below for detailed information on how the class participation grade is constructed).

Thus, you can gain a maximum of 500 points. Incorrect answers on tests, shortcomings on papers, (see accompanying rubrics), or deductions in class participation (see **Class Structure**) all subtract points from this total. At the end of the semester, your total points are doubled, and that is your grade. (For example, if you end up with 450 points,  $450 \times 2 = 900$ , or, 90, meaning a BA.)

### **Class Structure**

Tuesdays will consist almost always of lectures. There will be, generally, two lectures, each approximately 70 minutes long with a break of ten minutes in between. Thursdays will consist of two discussion sessions, in which we discuss two sets of readings as a class. Like the lectures, these sessions will be approximately 70 minutes long with a ten minute interlude.

### **Presentations**

For each discussion session, four students are assigned as presenters. This means that they, as a group, must make a presentation to the rest of the class on the readings. Each of the four students will have a specific task, so that every one is responsible for part of the presentation. By "responsible" I mean that your individual grade is based on whether that part of the presentation is produced. Your group can choose to work collaboratively, if it wants. If one group member is unable to do the work that week for either an excused or unexcused reason, the rest of the group members are not responsible for that person's tasks. If the absent person has a documented and legitimate excuse, they will be allowed to make up their missed presentation in the form of a 3-page response paper.

The four tasks consist of:

- 1. CREATING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.** One group member is responsible for writing four or five questions based on the reading that will help us as a class find great understanding of the readings. The way these questions will be used is discussed below, under **Discussions**.
- 2. WRITING AND READING A TWO-PAGE, DOUBLE-SPACED SUMMARY OF THE READING.** One group member is responsible for delivering a summary of all the readings assigned to that particular discussion session. This summary must focus not simply on re-narrating the readings, but also highlighting their arguments (if secondary sources) and/or relevance (if primary sources).
- 3. WRITING AND READING A TWO-PAGE, DOUBLE-SPACED REACTION PAPER TO THE READINGS.** One group member is responsible for delivering a thought-provoking and opinionated response to the readings. Responses should voice your agreement or disagreement with an argument, critique of sources, and your own personal reaction to the reading.
- 4. FINDING CONNECTED SOURCES.** One group member is responsible for finding related primary and/or secondary sources, which are similar or connected to the reading in some meaningful way, and summarizing and commenting on them for the class.

Each student will have two presentations. The groups are determined by alphabetical order (using last names). However, each time a student is in a group, the group will consist of at least two different members. The names for each group are listed below each reading session below.

Each presentation is worth 20 points; thus, 40 points, or 40%, of your total class participation grade consists of the presentations.

## **Discussions**

You can be awarded a maximum of 5 points for each reading session—there are twelve sessions, making a maximum of 60 points. Together with your presentation grades, that makes 100%.

The reading discussion session begins with the group's presentation, which should take 10-15 minutes. The group will then disseminate the discussion questions, either with printouts/photocopies, writing on the board, or using a digital projector. Once this happens, the group members will return to their seats, and we will break into small groups, consisting only of two members. This will last 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, we will form into larger groups of 4-6 members, and spent 10-15 minutes

sharing their answers. We will then spend the remaining time hearing from each group and discussing the readings generally.

Your points in class discussion are awarded as follows:

- 1 point for showing up on time
- 2 points for having the reading materials present and visible
- 2 points for actively participating in the discussion.

That is, if you show up but do not have your readings with you and contribute nothing to the discussion, you will only earn 1 point for that session.

Alternatively, if you show up with your materials, prepared for discussion, but you are late, you will lose 1 point for that session. During discussion, I will be circulating to check to see that everyone has their materials out and visible, and that everyone is participating in the discussion.

You are allowed one unexcused absence; beyond that, you must have documented legitimate evidence of your need to miss class. Otherwise you will lose all 5 points for that session.

### **Attendance at Lectures**

Attendance at lectures is mandatory. You are allowed one unexcused absence from lecture; otherwise, if you do not have a documented legitimate excuse, you will have 5 points deducted from your overall point total as it is tallied at the end of the semester.

### **Course Readings**

Books: (Note: the Doris Bergen book is meant as a general reference book for help with your papers, to help study for the midterm, and to generally fill you in whenever you need some facts or background. It is not assigned specifically for any one reading.)

Jan Gross, *Neighbors*

Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*

Art Spiegelman, *Maus I&II*

Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*

Articles and book excerpts: Note: these readings are all available at my Google docs page, which can be accessed here:

<http://docs.google.com/leaf?id=0BxXysrjH7qXvMTFmY2M4MTItM2RlZC00OGU0LWFhYWItNWJiYmE4MTU1ZTJh&hl=en>

This link will be e-mailed to you; please save the e-mail so you can easily copy and paste the above link into your browser.

Omer Bartov, *Disputed Histories*. Chapter 3: "Killing Space: The Final Solution as Population Policy;" Chapter 5: "Ordinary Monsters: Perpetrator Motivation and Monocausal Explanations;" and Chapter 6: "Germans as Nazis: Goldhagen's Holocaust and the World."

Detlev Peukert, "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science," in Caplan and Childers, eds., *Reevaluating the Third Reich* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1993), 234-252.

Jane Caplan, "National Socialism and the Theory of the State" in Caplan and Thomas Childers, eds., *Reevaluating the Third Reich*. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1993), 99-113.

Geoff Eley, "Ordinary Germans, Nazism, and Judeocide." In Eley, ed., *The "Goldhagen Effect": History, Memory, Nazism—Facing the German Past*. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 1-32.

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (excerpt)

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews. Volume I: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1997). Chapter 1: "Into the Third Reich;" and Chapter 3: "Redemptive Antisemitism."

Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998). (Chapter One)

Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*. (New York: The Free Press, 1993). Chapter 1: "Canaries in the Mine: Holocaust Denial and the Limited Power of Reason;" and Chapter 9: "The Gas Chamber Controversy."

Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German Jews: A Dual Identity*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Chapter 1, "The Bifurcated Soul of the German Jew."

Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. (Selected documents)

## **SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Week One**

Tuesday, May 11

Lecture One: Jews and Anti-Semitism in Europe. Covered topics include: history of anti-Semitism in Europe from the Crusades to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the emergence of political and scientific anti-Semitism; the development of Zionism; the experience of German Jews versus other Jews, especially “Eastern” Jews.

Lecture Two: World War One and its aftermath. Covered topics include: The Versailles Treaty; German war aims on the Eastern Front and colonialism; the Russian Revolution and communist movements in Germany and elsewhere; the establishment of the Weimar Republic.

Thursday, May 13

Reading One: Mendes-Flohr, *German Jews: A Dual Identity*, Chapter 1 “The Bifurcated Soul of the German Jew”

*Presenting: Apple, Beery, Carroll, Cody*

Reading Two: Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, documents on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century anti-Semitism: (#s 4, 5, 7, 13, 14, 15, 19 20, 24, and 26)

*Presenting: Easlick, Hamlin, Klein, Koopsen*

### **Receive first writing assignment**

### **Week Two**

Tuesday, May 18

Lecture One: The Weimar Years, 1919-1933. Covered topics include: cultural and economic modernization and Americanization in Germany and Europe during the 1920s; the Great Depression and the disintegration of the Weimar Republic; the rise of Fascism and Nazism.

Lecture Two: Nazism. Covered topics include: ideology of Nazism, “racial science” and modernity, personality and psychological profile of Adolf Hitler, structure of the Nazi Party; electoral and political strategy of Nazi Party; *Machtergreifung* of Nazism in 1933.

#### Thursday, May 20

Reading One: Peukert, “The Genesis of the ‘Final Solution’ from the Spirit of Science” (something from Weimar Republic Sourcebook?); Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *Jew in the Modern World*, document #1, Hitler “A Letter on the Jewish Question” and #2 “Mein Kampf”

*Presenting: Merkel, Nieder, O’Kon, Osborn*

Reading Two: Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, Chapter 1, “Into the Third Reich”.

*Presenting: Perryman, Prater, Reynhout, Scanlon*

### **First Writing Assignment Due; Receive Second Writing Assignment**

## **Week Three**

#### Tuesday, May 25

Lecture One: The Third Reich. Covered topics include: structure of the Nazi state; development of the SA, SS, and SD; development of anti-Jewish laws and racial hygiene; euthanasia programs; build up to war; ascension of Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich and Adolf Eichmann.

Lecture Two: World War Two. Covered topics include: The Madagascar and Lublin plans; the General Government; the ghettos; Operation Barbarossa; the Kommissarbefehl; the Einsatzgruppen; Operation Reinhard; the transition from mobile to stationary killing

#### Thursday, May 27

Reading One: Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, Documents #3-20; Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, Chapter One “In Public: Jews Are Turned Into Pariahs”

*Presenting: Schleichert, Siwik, Tabbert, Watters*

Reading Two: Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*

*Presenting: Weich, Wilson, Apple, Beery*

## **Week Four**

### Tuesday, June 1

Lecture One: Auschwitz. Covered topics include: the Wannsee Conference; the structure of the death camps, especially Auschwitz-Birkenau; the science and biology of mass killing; medical experiments and “The Angel of Death”; surviving and resisting in the death camps; the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Lecture Two: Collaborators and Aftermath. Covered topics include: collaborators to genocide from France to Lithuania; the Kielce pogrom; the Nuremberg Trials; the Eichmann Trial; Simon Wiesenthal and Nazi Hunting

### Thursday, June 3

Reading One: Jan Gross, *Neighbors*, Omer Bartov, *Disputed Histories*. Chapter 3: “Killing Space: The Final Solution as Population Policy”

*Presenting: Carroll, Cody, Easlick, Hamlin*

Reading Two: Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, documents #21-27; Art Spiegelman, *Maus I & Maus II*

*Presenting: Klein, Koopsen, Merkel, Nieder*

## **Second Writing Assignment Due**

## **Week Five**

### Tuesday, June 8

Lecture One: The Return of the Holocaust as Memory. Covered topics include: The establishment of Israel; the 1968 generation in West Germany; Raul Hilberg and Fritz Fischer; the *Holocaust* TV Series.

Lecture Two: Explanations. Covered topics include: Stanford Prison Experiment; Milgram Experiments; The “Third Wave” experiment; Hannah Arendt and the “Banality of Evil;” the “Sonderweg” thesis; intentionalists versus functionalists; the totalitarianism theory

Thursday, June 10

No reading: Midterm exam

**Receive Third and Final Writing Assignment**

**Week Six**

Tuesday, June 15

Lecture One: The Historians' Debate. Covered topics include: the Bitburg Controversy; the *Historikerstreit*; the Goldhagen Controversy

Lecture Two: Denial. Covered topics include: Holocaust deniers, the Lipstadt-Irving trial, the Gas chamber controversy.

Thursday, June 17

Reading One: Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners (excerpt)*; Omer Bartov, *Disputed Histories*, Chapter 5: "Ordinary Monsters: Perpetrator Motivation and Monocausal Explanations;" and Chapter 6: "Germans as Nazis: Goldhagen's Holocaust and the World;" Geoff Eley, "Ordinary Germans, Nazism, and Judeocide."

*Presenting: O'Kon, Osborn, Perryman, Prater*

Reading Two: Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust*, Chapters 1 and 9

*Presenting: Reynhout, Scanlon, Schleichert, Siwik*

**Week Seven**

Tuesday, June 22

Lecture One: Memorializing the Holocaust. Covered topics include the US Holocaust museum; holocaust museums from Texas to Berlin to Israel; the Holocaust in Hollywood.

Lecture Two: Film screening *Schindler's List* (part one)

Thursday, June 24

Reading One: Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*

*Presenting: Tabbert, Watters, Welch, Wilson*

Reading Two: Film screening *Schindler's List* (part two) and discussion

**Third and Final Writing Assignment, as well as all rewrites, due Wednesday June 29<sup>th</sup> in my mailbox or under my office door by 5 pm.**

### **Standard disclaimers**

Academic Honesty:

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the *Undergraduate Catalog* (pp. 274-275) that pertain to Academic Integrity. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

Electronic Mail:

The only email address that should be used for communication between WMU students and WMU faculty and staff is the email address associated with a BroncoNet ID. This email address typically takes the form "firstname.middleinitial.lastname@wmich.edu." An example is buster.h.bronco@wmich.edu. Students cannot automatically forward email from this address to other addresses. Students can access this email account or get instructions for obtaining a BroncoNet ID at GoWMU.wmich.edu.