

***HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST***  
**JDST 4511 & UNIV 4511**

**Dr. Sara Abosch**

**University of Memphis, Spring 2011**

**Class: Tuesday & Thursday 1:00-2:25 Mitchell Hall 423**

**Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-11:00, and by appt., Mitchell Hall 422**

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**Course Description:**

This course will explore aspects of the history of the Holocaust. As the Holocaust was part of a much larger conflict that enveloped the world between 1939 and 1945, we will consider historical, political, and cultural antecedents beyond the confines of the Nazi regime in Germany. We will address questions such as: How and why did the Holocaust happen? What is genocide? What is antisemitism and how did it develop in the modern era? What role do ideologies and beliefs play in what happened? Do culture, ethnicity, and religion matter? What are the categories of analysis and explanation used by historians and other students of the Holocaust? Can events of such enormity and inhumanity be adequately explained by the tools of rational discourse? Can such events truly be integrated into European history or must they stand on their own?

**Course Objectives:**

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with the events, developments, and historical interpretations that comprise our understanding of the Holocaust and its various meanings through readings, lectures, discussion, and film. Emphasis will be placed upon improving students' analytical and conceptual skills through discussion, analysis of primary sources, writing, and speaking on topics related to the subject matter.

**Course Requirements:**

We will have several in-class discussions. Where appropriate, original documents or website links will be provided for supplemental reading. Students are expected to have read the assigned materials **before** each class. Regular attendance and participation count toward the semester grade. The written requirements include 6 response papers (3-4 pages each); occasional 1 page summary essays—topics assigned in class (these will count toward participation grade), and a final exam. Guidelines for the review papers will be given out in class.

The final grade will be calculated as follows: class participation (15%), response papers (6 x 10%=60%), final exam (25%). Late assignments will be penalized. You must hand in all written work to be assigned a grade for the course. Cheating and/or plagiarism will **NOT** be tolerated and will be grounds for failing the particular assignment and the course. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, ask!

*Attendance & Participation:* Regular attendance and participation in class and reading discussions count toward the semester grade. Class begins at the scheduled time and attendance is taken at the beginning of class. More than **2** unexcused absences will affect your course grade. Students are responsible for any work missed.

*In-class Etiquette:* **Turn off all electronic communication devices before class begins and put them away.** Texting, tweeting, IM'ing, emailing, etc. are not permitted during class. Notes are to be hand-written.

Note-taking is a skill that students need to master. Students must get instructor's permission for computer use in class.

### **Grading Scale:**

The course grading scale is as follows: A=100-93; A-=92-90; B+=89-87; B=86-83; B-=82-80; C+=79-77; C=76-73; C-=72-70; D+=69-67; D=66-63; F=62 or below (the university does not grant a D-).

Assignments and lecture topics may be modified during the course of the semester as the instructor determines class interests and needs.

### **Required Books:**

The following books are available for purchase at the university bookstore. They may also be purchased used from: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.booksprice.com](http://www.booksprice.com), [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com), [www.alibris.com](http://www.alibris.com), etc.

- Bergen, Doris. *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (2009). Course textbook.
- Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (1998, first published 1992).
- Evans, Richard J. *Lying About Hitler: History, Holocaust and the David Irving Trial* (2002).
- Gouri, Haim. *Facing the Glass Booth: The Jerusalem Trial of Adolph Eichmann 2* (2004, first published 1962).
- Gross, Jan. *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (2001).
- Levy, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity* (2008, first published 1958)
- Wiesel, Elie. *Night* (2006, first published 1958).

### **Original documents & supplemental material:**

Additional material will sometimes be discussed in lecture. This material will be available online or provided by the instructor. A partial list of internet addresses of use for this course is:

- Google Alerts for terms: 'Holocaust' 'Nazi' will provide you with a daily e-mail summary of current news articles on these topics. Please bring articles that interest you to class.**
- Internet Modern History Sourcebook, Documents: [www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html)
- Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive: [www.spielbergfilmarchive.org.il/](http://www.spielbergfilmarchive.org.il/)
- US Holocaust Memorial Museum, information, exhibits, research sources: [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)

### **Class Schedule:**

January 13	Initial impressions: Introductory remarks. What was the Holocaust? <b>Class Exercise:</b> Taking a history—How historical events and group membership shape our lives. <b>1 page writing assignment:</b> What is the Holocaust?
<b>January 18</b>	Origins and Development of Antisemitism (I) Bergen, 1-28 ( <b>What is the Holocaust? Due.</b> )
January 20	Antisemitism, Origins & Developments (II); Social Darwinism, Eugenics, Mass Culture
January 25	The Situation in Europe—World War I and Aftermath Bergen, 29-50
January 27	Interwar Period—Failure of Democracy & Rise of Totalitarianism (I)

	Bergen, 79-100
February 1	Interwar Period (II)
February 3	Collapse of Poland & Fall of the West Bergen, 101-134
<b>February 8</b>	Ordinary Men? German Actions in the East Browning, Entire. <b>First Response Paper due.</b> Guidelines will be handed out in class, Feb 2.
February 10	To the East: Operation Barbarossa, the USSR, Blitzkrieg defeated?
February 15	War & Terror before the “Final Solution” Bergen, 135-166
February 17	The Nazi Final Solution: Of Deportations and Death Camps Bergen, 167-214
<b>February 22</b>	Perpetrators or Victims? Gross, Entire. <b>Second Response Paper due.</b> Guidelines will be handed out in class, Feb 16.
February 24	Resistance: Partisans, Ghetto Fighters & Survivors
March 1	Resistance (cont.) Movie (Part 1): <i>Defiance</i> .
March 3	Movie (Part 2): <i>Defiance</i>
<b>March 8</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
<b>March 10</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
March 15	The Ghettos in all their Variety
March 17	Warsaw’s Rise and Fall: A Ghetto Created & Destroyed
<b>March 22</b>	Life in a Death Camp—Survival in Auschwitz Levi, Entire. <b>Third Response Paper due.</b> Guidelines will be handed out in class, March 15.
March 24	Transit Camps & Death Camps: Jewish Life & Slave Labor in the Occupied West
<b>March 29</b>	Life in a Death Camp—Night & Despair in Auschwitz & Buchenwald Wiesel, Entire <b>Fourth Response Paper due.</b> Guidelines will be handed out in class March 22.
March 31	End of the Nazi Regime Bergen, 215-232
April 5	What Now? Of Nuremberg, the Cold War & Reparations Bergen. 233-243.
April 7	The State of Israel as Legatee: Fact or Fiction?
April 12	Eichmann in Jerusalem: The Aftermath Gouri, Part I, 1-152
<b>April 14</b>	Gouri, Part II, 153-315 <b>Fifth Response Paper due.</b> Guidelines will be handed out in class, April 7.

April 19  
**April 21**

'Never Again!': The World Community & the End of Genocide?  
Holocaust Denial: Lying About Hitler  
Evans, entire.

**Sixth Response Paper due.** Guidelines will be handed out in class, April 14.

**April 26**

**Course Wrap-up. Review for Final Exam: Bring any questions you may have.**  
**General essay topics will be given out in class.**