

HISTORY 3416G
The Holocaust
Winter 2021, Tuesdays 10:30-12:20; Thursdays 10:30-11:20

Instructor: Professor Eli Nathans

Office Hours: Wednesdays from 3:00-4:30 (via Zoom or telephone; email in advance to schedule a time; other times are also possible if this is inconvenient)

Department of History, Office: Lawson Hall 2217 (no in person meetings until notice to the class)

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This course will be taught on-line via Zoom, in synchronous mode. This means that the entire class will meet twice a week on Zoom, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Classes will not be recorded.

Course Description:

Examines why and how the Nazi government undertook to murder European Jews, and also the educated elite of Poland, Soviet POWs, Roma and Sinti, and the mentally handicapped. We examine the roles played by Hitler and close associates, contemporary responses to the murders, and the postwar historiography of the subject.

Prerequisite(s):

1.0 History course at the 2200 level or above.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Antirequisite(s):

The former History 3427E

Course Syllabus:

This course examines the largely successful effort of Nazi Germany to murder the Jews of Europe, as well as related programs of murder conducted against Soviet prisoners of war; intellectual and political leaders of Poland, Poles who resisted Nazi domination in any way, as well as Poles who had the misfortune to live in territories slated for Germanization and who were subjected to often murderous deportations; Roma and Sinti; and mentally handicapped individuals, especially but not only in Germany. We examine the larger causes of these crimes, in the sense of the larger historical preconditions, experiences, and beliefs that made such crimes seem both possible and – to Nazi leaders and a not insignificant number of their followers – desirable. We examine how these crimes were carried out, by whom, and at whose direction. We examine the assistance provided by certain of Germany's allies and neutral states, and also the responses of conquered peoples. We examine how Jews sought to protect themselves, and how Germany's enemies responded to, or failed to respond to,

German policies of mass murder. And we will also examine, briefly, the post-war consequences of these crimes.

As this discussion indicates, this course will examine very disturbing subjects. The texts we read and the documentary excerpts that we view may cause great distress. To take this class you must be prepared for such emotions. In popular culture there is often an attempt to find a happy ending, a silver lining, even in the most terrible historical episodes. This class focuses on the evidence and its interpretation. There are very few silver linings.

Because the literature on the Holocaust is vast, composing the syllabus for this course involved making choices about the subjects to be covered. One of the choices concerns the countries on which we will principally focus. We examine closely the development of policy in Germany, including the roles of Hitler, the SS, and the German army. A significant amount of attention is devoted to Poland and to the conquered territories of the Soviet Union. Less attention is paid to other countries whose governments or populations were pressured to join, or joined voluntarily, in policies of persecution and murder. The course focuses on those regions where most killing took place. In examining the responses to these events of Germany's enemies, we focus especially on Canada, in part because a fine book was written on this subject and because this course is offered at a Canadian university. A more complete treatment of the subject would examine in more detail the responses of the other countries that fought Germany, and also of the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox churches. We devote only a modest amount of time to examining the prosecution, or failure to prosecute, those responsible for the crimes we examine, and to the ways in which the Holocaust has come to be remembered and discussed in the popular media, in educational institutions, and in other public forums. A class lasting one semester cannot cover all aspects of this subject.

Although the events examined in this class took place over two generations ago, historians continue to deepen our understanding of the subject. The generational change in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in probing works of history that were extremely difficult to research or publish earlier. In this class we read several examples, including Christian Streit's article on the German army's treatment of Soviet POWs, based on an earlier book published in German, as well as Juergen Forster's examination of the German army's planning for the invasion of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire between 1989 and 1991 also led to numerous new studies, both because of a new access to sources and because historians from the countries of the former Eastern bloc were permitted to ask previously forbidden questions. For a range of reasons the leaders of the Soviet Union sought to prevent investigation into the specifically antisemitic character of Nazi policies, and also many aspects of the conduct of the inhabitants of those parts of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe conquered by Germany. These barriers to exploring archives and memories of this period are no longer as rigid. Jan Grabowski's study of the experience of Jews in one rural district of Poland between 1942 and 1944 is a product of this change, as is Omer Bartov's study of the Holocaust in the town of Buczacz (now Buchach), now in western Ukraine. Among the aspects of the history of the period that has attracted significant attention in the past several decades is the experience of women. We read excerpts from one exemplary study with this focus, Marion Kaplan's *Between Dignity and Despair*. Finally, it sometimes requires time and a great deal of reflection for the most thoughtful histories of such a period to be written. Saul Friedlaender's *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Extermination*, is such a work; numerous excerpts from it are assigned.

Since the 1980s the attention paid to the Holocaust in Europe and North America has been challenged by individuals and groups who see this focus as a species of Eurocentrism, or a means to legitimize the state of Israel, or to distract from the crimes Europeans, especially the British and French, committed in their colonial empires, or simply a privileging of a particular set of crimes that cannot be objectively justified. We will consider some of these claims at the end of the course.

Finally, a word about nomenclature. The term Holocaust is derived from the Greek *holokauston*, meaning a burnt offering to the gods. Part of this original meaning clearly is completely out of place, false. Those murdered were in no sense a sacrifice to the gods. The term has been applied to the mass killing of Jews and members of other groups by Nazi Germany presumably because the image of burning bodies, dead and sometimes also alive, both reflects the historical reality and also conveys some of the horror that these historical events should – usage of the term suggests – make us feel. The word Shoah, the Hebrew term meaning calamity, is to my knowledge used to refer exclusively to the killing of European Jews. It, like the term genocide, is more abstract. The term Holocaust has increasingly been understood, as used here, to refer to the entire complex of Nazi programs of mass killing. Studying these crimes together helps us understand the reasons for each.

Learning outcomes

Students who pass this class will be able to:

Explain the reasons for the intensification of antisemitic feeling in Germany and other European countries from the middle of the nineteenth century, and in particular after the Russian Revolution and the First World War;

Explain the reasons for mass violence engaged in by some Europeans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and more generally the causes of group animosity, war, and civil war in Europe in this period;

Explain how and in what stages the Nazi regime implemented first discriminatory measures and then programs of murder against Jews and other groups that the regime wished to eliminate;

Explain the responses to these murders of the peoples of different countries in occupied Europe, and also foreign observers and governments;

Explain Jewish responses to the existential threat posed by Nazi rule;

Construct analytic, logical, and clear historical arguments in essays on a range of assigned subjects;

Actively engage in analytic discussions of the assigned materials.

Required Course Materials:

Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many. Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1945* (University of Toronto Press, 2012).

Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews. Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Indiana University Press, 2013).

Peter Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust. From Antisemitism to Genocide* (Cambridge, 2013).

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. by Stuart Woolf (Collier Books, 1993).

I have also given students the chance to write an essay based on Bernard Wasserstein's *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*. The book has been published in several editions by different presses, in 1979, 1988, and 1999. Any of these versions is fine. Unfortunately, because it is out of print, I was unable to order it for the class. Students interested in writing an essay based on it will either have to borrow one of the two copies found in the Western library system, or find it in a different library, or order a used copy on-line.

In addition to the assigned books, which will be available in the Western bookstore, the course will assign selections from numerous other secondary and, to a more limited extent, primary, sources, found in the Resources section of the course website. These documents will also be available for purchase in a coursebook from the Western bookstore.

Methods of Evaluation:

Contributions to class discussions. The Zoom classes will be conducted largely as discussions of the assigned primary and secondary works, and of the excerpts from documentaries shown in class. Students are expected to participate periodically in class discussions, using the raised hand feature of Zoom. Students participating by telephone will also be given a chance to speak. In calling on students, the instructor will give priority to students who have not commented previously in a class, or in recent classes. Students will be able to earn full credit in this part of the class if they respond to a question posed by the instructor once every two weeks, or at least six times in the course of the semester, and the answers they give reflect a careful reading of the assigned sources. Quality, not quantity or length, is the key.

5%

Part of the course grade will be based on responses to questions on the assigned readings or, in some classes, regarding excerpts from documentaries shown in class. The syllabus provides the questions posed and indicates whether the response is due before class – in the case of assigned sources – or after class, in the case of questions regarding excerpts from documentaries shown in class. Responses should be roughly 150-300 words in length and be uploaded to the Assignments section of the course website. Responses to assigned readings are due by 10:00 am on the day of the class that will discuss the assigned text or text on which the question is based. Responses to excerpts from documentaries are due by midnight of the day of the class. Please note that the excerpts from documentaries shown in class cannot be made available to students outside of class due to copyright rules. All responses to questions must be written by the student, and not be copied from, or based on, outside sources. Students may not work with each other to compose responses.

Please also note that there may be certain times of the day when the Assignments feature of OWL may not function because no more than 3,000 individual users at a time may use this feature of OWL. If this happens, please send the response directly to the instructor's email account as an attachment in Word.

In calculating this part of the course grade, the lowest two marks will not be counted.

No responses to questions are due in the first week of classes, because students may add or drop the class in this period. No responses to questions are due before or after classes on days when essays are due.

20%

Three essays, each approximately six to eight pages (1700-2500 words) in length. Essays are due on the date given below. All due dates are Mondays, the day before discussion of the text will take place in class. Essays must be submitted to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by midnight on the due date. No research is required for the essays beyond the assigned text and related materials that are part of the course assignments. **Late essays on the assigned subjects are not accepted. Students who miss the deadline for the submission of an essay will be assigned a different question based on a different source. The grade on the alternative essay will be marked down by ten points on a hundred point scale to reflect the failure to meet the original deadline for submission. If a request for an accommodation is received from an Academic Counseling Office, this can lead to a waiving of the ten point penalty, but not the acceptance of an essay on one of the assigned subjects. Self-Reported Absences may not be used to delay submission of the essay or to avoid the ten point penalty.**

25% for each essay (times three)

There will be no mid-term or final examination in this class.

Essay Questions and Due Dates:

February 8th: Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. by Stuart Woolf (Collier Books, 1993).

On page 87 of Levi's book he writes that he does not accept what he calls "the most facile and obvious deduction" suggested by the conduct of prisoners and those in positions of authority at Auschwitz, that "man is fundamentally brutal, egoistic and stupid in his conduct once every civilized institution is taken away" He suggests that there are other "fundamental values" that can be learned from an examination of behavior in the camp. What are the fundamental values that Levi writes that he learned from his experience as a prisoner in Auschwitz? Please base your analysis on examples from the assigned text; there is no reason to do any further reading. Please use standard footnote form when citing from Levi's book.

March 1st: Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews. Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Indiana University Press, 2013).

Based on Jan Grabowski's book, how can one explain the conduct of non-Jewish Poles towards Jews seeking to escape murder at the hands of the German occupiers in Dabrowa Tarnowska County between the start of 1942 and January of 1945? You may also, if you wish, refer to other assigned documents and class materials that shed light on the relationship between Christian Poles and Polish Jews, even though none of this material relates directly to Dabrowa Tarnowska County. Again, please use standard footnote form when citing from sources.

March 22nd: Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many. Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1945* (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 1-189. In responding to the question please also consider the assigned selection from Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 134-82, and Deborah Lipstadt, "America and the Holocaust," *Modern Judaism* 10:3 (1990): 283-96.

Based on the assigned texts noted above, how can one explain the unwillingness of Britain, the United States, and Canada to permit the immigration of a larger number of Jewish refugees from Germany and the countries Germany occupied, or countries that were allies of Germany, between 1933 and 1945?

Alternative essay topic for March 22nd: Students who borrow or buy a copy of Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, any edition, may instead write on the following question, based on the entirety of that book: "Based on Bernard Wasserstein's account, how can one explain the policies adopted by the British government in response to the desperate efforts of Jews to flee Germany and, from 1938, the various countries conquered by Germany?"

Weekly responses to questions and the essays: To submit the responses to questions found in the syllabus due before (or, in a few cases, after) class, you must upload an electronic copy to the Assignments section of the course OWL website. Note that plagiarism detection software licensed to Western University is used for textual similarity review. All materials submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. While students are encouraged to discuss the assigned texts and also the questions posed for the responses to assigned readings due before each class, **responses to questions may not be shared with other students.**

Absences, illnesses, and tardy submissions of assignments.

Since essays are linked to class discussions of texts, no late essays will be accepted, even with a request for an accommodation from an Academic Counseling office or a Self-Reported Absence. Students who miss the submission deadline for an essay will be asked to write on a different subject, to be assigned by the instructor. A penalty of ten points will be deducted from all make-up essays. If the instructor receives a request for an accommodation from an Academic Counseling Office with respect to the submission of an essay, this penalty will be waived.

No credit will be given for responses to assigned texts submitted after 10:00 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays on the day they are due, or for responses to questions about documentaries submitted after midnight on the day of the class, absent a request for an accommodation from an Academic Counseling Office or a Self-Reported Absence.

Please keep all preparatory notes and early drafts of essays. The instructor may ask for these materials.

Accommodation for missed assignment deadlines with a Self Reported Absence:

SRA's may not be used with respect to the essay assignments in this class.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Weekly Topics:

- 1. Week of January 11th No responses to questions due this week. The questions are posed in the syllabus only to provide grounds for reflection, and to suggest the topics of discussion in class.**

Tuesday: Introduction. European Jews in the long nineteenth century, 1789-1918. Emancipation and intensified forms of antisemitism.

Peter Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust. From Antisemitism to Genocide* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1-68.

Questions to consider for class discussion:

What was distinctive about the social and economic positions of Jews in France, Russia, and Hungary, according to Kenez, and what effect did these distinctive positions have on the form, intensity, and sources of antisemitism in each country in the periods before and after the First World War?

Thursday: Sources of conflict and mass violence in European societies in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including challenges to existing political regimes and borders; rising popular nationalism; ethnic and class tensions within states; imperialism; and the catastrophic experiences of the First World War and its consequences, including the Armenian genocide, the Russian Revolution, the collapse of the German and Austro-Hungarian empires, and the economic and political crises of the interwar period.

Leo Kuper, *Genocide. Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (Yale University Press, 1981), 11-18.

Saul Friedlaender, *The Years of Extermination. Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945* (Harper Perennial, 2007), xiii – xxvi.

Questions to consider for class discussion:

With respect to Kuper: Into what categories does Kuper divide the different forms taken by genocide in human history? Why does he argue that colonialism tended to lead to genocide? What distinguishes modern forms of genocide from more traditional varieties?

With respect to Friedlaender: Friedlaender argues, at page xvii of the introduction, that the Nazi campaign to murder the Jews of Europe was fundamentally a product of the attack of a new revolutionary right on liberal society and on “the revolutionary brand of socialism.” The revolutionary right “targeted the Jews as representatives of the worldviews they fought and, more often than not,

tagged them as the instigators and carriers of those worldviews.” To what extent is Friedlaender’s claim supported, or called into question, by Kenez’s account of the antecedents of Nazi antisemitism? Why was it, according to Friedlaender, that the Nazi variant of antisemitism reached a “unique level of incandescence”? (xx) According to Friedlaender, how can the diaries and letters of the victims of Nazi persecution, together with the postwar testimony of survivors, promote our historical understanding of the period? (xxiv-xxvi)

2. Week of January 18th

Tuesday: The Nazi Party and German society, 1920-33; Hitler’s beliefs and methods; European Jews in the interwar period.

Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust*, 71-102.

Nazi Party Platform, 1920

Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston, 1943), 37-65, 176-86.

Friedlaender, *The Years of Extermination*, 3-10.

Questions to consider for class discussion:

The National Socialist Party Platform of 1920: What were the principal national and socialist goals of the Nazi Party, according to the party platform?

Mein Kampf: What goals and methods of the socialists that he observed in Vienna did Hitler claim repelled him? Which of their goals did he find legitimate, worth supporting? What tactics did they use that Hitler argued should be adopted by the nationalist right, and why? How did he explain his growing hatred for Jews? What connections were there between the hatred for Socialists and the hatred for Jews? What were the most important principles of propaganda, according to Hitler? How were these principles used effectively against Germany in the First World War?

Friedlaender: What characteristics of European Jews does Friedlaender emphasize in this excerpt from his book?

Please submit a response to one of the following two questions to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by midnight on the day of the class:

How does the excerpt shown from the BBC documentary *Lesson from History* explain many Germans’ willingness to support Hitler and the Nazi Party between 1920 and the end of the 1932?

What do the excerpts from the documentary *Image Before Me* suggest were the most important characteristics of the Jews who lived in Poland in the two decades before the German invasion in 1939, and what does the documentary suggest about the relationship between Polish Jews and other Poles?

Thursday: The appointment of Hitler as chancellor; Hitler's consolidation of power; Nazi domestic and foreign policies 1933-1939; Nazi antisemitic policies, 1933-39.

Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust*, 103-23.

Avraham Barkai, "Exclusion and Persecution: 1933-1938," from *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, *Renewal and Destruction 1918-1945*, ed. Michael Meyer (Columbia University Press, 1998), 197-230.

Ingo Mueller, *Hitler's Justice. The Courts of the Third Reich*, trans. by Deborah Lucas Schneider (Harvard University Press, 1992), 90-111.

Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair. Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 50-54, 94-118.

Peter Longerich, *Holocaust. The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews*, trans. by Shaun Whiteside (Oxford University Press, 2010), 98-115.

Hermann Graml, *Anti-Semitism in the Third Reich*, trans. by Tim Kirk (Blackwell, 1992), 5-23.

Please answer one of the following questions and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

Based on Barkai's chapter in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* and the excerpts from Kaplan's book, please briefly describe how the Jewish community responded to intensifying persecution in Germany between 1933 and 1939.

Based on the Barkai chapter, and the selections from books by Longerich and Graml, please explain the strategy of the Nazi leadership in instigating Kristallnacht. What role did Hitler play, and how did the government and the Nazi Party present the pogrom to the public? What was the purpose of this policy of subterfuge, and what effect did it have on the carrying out of the Party's intentions?

3. Week of January 25th

Tuesday: Nazi policies in Poland, 1939-1941. Murders of Poles and Jews, deportations, and the formation of Jewish ghettos. Eastern Poland and the Baltic states under Soviet rule, 1939-1941. Jews become scapegoats for Stalinism

Friedlaender, *The Years of Extermination*, 11-30, 53-58.

Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust*, 127-47.

Alexander Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland. Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity* (University of Kansas Press, 2003), 1-28, 64-5, 72-5.

Martin Winstone, *The Dark Heart of Hitler's Europe. Nazi Rule in Poland under the General Government* xii-xiii, 57-85.

Jan Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation, The Generalgouvernement, 1939-1944* (Princeton University Press, 1979), 73-86.

Shmuel Krakowski, "The Fate of Jewish Prisoners of War in the September 1939 Campaign," 1-25, 33-4 (from https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/microsoft%20word%20-%206215.pdf, accessed on September 27, 2020).

Jan Gross, *Revolution from Abroad. The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton University Press, 1988), 31-37, 178-82, 187-95, 216-19.

Please answer one of the following questions and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

How did German occupation forces attempt to turn Polish society into, in essence, a large reservoir of unskilled labor at the disposal of Germany?

What group hatreds were promoted by Soviet policies and methods of rule in the part of Poland occupied by the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1941?

Thursday: Murder of the handicapped in Germany. Persecution and murder of the Roma and Sinti.

Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: Euthanasia in Germany 1900–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 130-43, 160-80.

Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wipperman, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 113-27.

Florian Freund, "Genocidal Trajectory: Persecution of Gypsies in Austria, 1938-1945," in *The Nazi Genocide of the Roma. Reassessment and Commemoration*, ed. Anton Weiss-Wendt (Berghahn Books, 2013), 53-67.

Please answer one of the following questions and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

What forms were taken by resistance to Hitler's policy of killing the mentally handicapped?

What measures did the Nazi regime take to persecute Roma and Sinti?

4. Week of February 1

Tuesday: The invasion of the Soviet Union, the starvation of Soviet soldiers captured by the German army, and the start of the systematic murder of European Jews

Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust*, 151-75, 196-204.

Juergen Forster, "Operation Barbarossa as a War of Conquest and Annihilation," from *Germany and the Second World War*, vol 4, *The Attack on the Soviet Union* (Clarendon Press, 1998), 481-5, 1140-1149, 1160-1161, 1172-1177.

Christian Streit, "Soviet Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Wehrmacht," from *War of Extermination. The German Military in World War II, 1941-1944*, eds. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (Berghahn Books, 2000), 80-91.

Longerich, *Holocaust*, 179-99.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

What role did the German army play in planning and implementing Nazi policies of mass starvation and other forms of killing in the period between the start of the invasion of the Soviet Union and the end of 1941?

Thursday: Explaining the frequency of barbaric behavior by the SS, German police, and the German army in Poland, Ukraine, and other conquered territories, especially in the East

Hannes Heer, "How Amoral became Normality: Reflections on the Mentality of German Soldiers on the Eastern Front," from *War of Extermination. The German Military in World War II, 1941-1944*, eds. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (Berghahn Books, 2000), 329-344.

Omer Bartov, *Anatomy of a Genocide. The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz* (Simon & Schuster, 2018), 179-209, 216-223.

Anatoly Podolsky, "The Tragic Fate of Ukrainian Jewish Women under Nazi Occupation, 1941-1944," in *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust*, ed. by Sonja Hedgepeth and Rochelle Saidel (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 94-107.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

How can one account for the brutality displayed by many, but not all, German soldiers and police officials in Poland, Ukraine, and other conquered territories, especially in the East?

5. Week of February 8 Essay due on Monday (submit to Assignments section of the course website)

Tuesday: The death camps; Hitler's role.

Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust*, 261-88.

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. by Stuart Woolf (Collier Books, 1993).

Essay question for the Primo Levi essay:

Please respond to the following question: On page 87 of Levi's book he writes that he does not accept what he calls "the most facile and obvious deduction" suggested by the conduct of prisoners and those in positions of authority at Auschwitz, that "man is fundamentally brutal, egoistic and stupid in his conduct once every civilized institution is taken away" He suggests that there are other "fundamental values" that can be learned from an examination of behavior in this labor and extermination camp. What are the fundamental values that Levi writes that he learned from his experience as a prisoner in Auschwitz? Please base your analysis on examples from the assigned text; there is no reason to do any further reading. Please use standard footnote form when citing from Levi's book.

The essay is due by midnight on Monday, February 1st. Late essays are not accepted. Students who miss this deadline will be assigned a different question based on a different source. The grade on the alternative essay will be marked down by ten points on a hundred point scale to reflect the failure to meet the original deadline for submission.

Friedlaender, *The Years of Extermination*, 197-212, 265-67, 276-80, 479-83.

Minutes of the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, from Lucy Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader* (Behrman House), 72-82.

Longerich, *Holocaust*, 410-18. Operation 1005.

No response to a question about the readings is due before class, since students will be submitting an essay on Primo Levi's book.

Thursday: The Holocaust in Rumania and Hungary

Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust*, 176-95, 235-6

Please answer one of the following questions and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

Why did the Rumanian government conduct an independent policy of killing Jews, and why did it cease to do so?

What forces within Hungary opposed the killing of Jews, and which forces promoted this killing?

No classes during the week of February 15: reading week

6. Week of February 22

Tuesday: What Germans, German allies, conquered nations, and Germany's enemies, knew of the Holocaust, and when they learned.

Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret. Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's 'Final Solution'* (Little, Brown: 1980), 17-35, 229-35.

David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution. Public Opinion under Nazism* (Blackwell, 1992), 101-15.

Sönke Neitzel, *Tapping Hitler's Generals. Transcripts of Secret Conversations, 1942-1945* (Frontline Books, 2007), 7-11, 167-71, 228-31.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

What generalizations can one make about when many Germans learned about the mass killings of Jews?

Thursday: The Holocaust in Western Europe. The Catholic churches and the Holocaust.

Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust*, 205-34.

Guenter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (Da Capo Press, 2000; original 1964), 284-93.

Friedlaender, *The Years of Extermination*, 515-17, 570-73.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

How does Kenez explain the different experiences during the war of Jews in France, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries?

7. Week of March 1 Essay due on Monday (submit to Assignments section of the course website)

Tuesday: Jews' attempts to save themselves and their families: Poland

Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews. Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Indiana University Press, 2013) 1-148, 171-3.

Zygmunt Klukowski, *Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939-44*, trans. by George Klukowski (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 184-201. Dr. Klukowski was a physician in a town that is now in the southeast of Poland.

Nechama Tec, *Dry Tears. The Story of a Lost Childhood* (Oxford University Press, 1984), 60-65, 141-44, 194-203.

Please submit an essay based on the following question to the Assignments section of the class OWL website by midnight of Monday, March 1st:

Based on Jan Grabowski's account, how can one explain the conduct of non-Jewish Poles towards Jews seeking to escape murder at the hands of the German occupiers in Dabrowa Tarnowska County between the start of 1942 and January 1945?

You may also, if you wish, refer to other assigned documents and class materials that shed light on the relationship between Christian Poles and Polish Jews, even though none of this material relates directly to Dabrowa Tarnowska County.

Late essays are not accepted; they will not be read. Students who miss this deadline will be assigned a different question based on a different source. The grade on the alternative essay will be marked down by ten points on a hundred point scale to reflect the failure to meet the original deadline for submission.

No response due to a question before class, since students will be submitting an essay on Jan Grabowski's book.

Thursday: Non-Jewish Poles who aided Jews for moral reasons

Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous. The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (New York: Henry Holt, 2003), 101-27.

Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews. Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Indiana University Press, 2013), 149-70.

Respond to the question after class, and submit the response, of 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by midnight on the day of the class:

Based on the excerpts from the documentary shown in class, how can one explain Francisca Halamajova's extraordinary willingness to hide Jewish families, and also a German soldier, and her unusual success in this undertaking?

8. Week of March 8

Tuesday: Jewish resistance

Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust. The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 457-67, 479-93.

Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (Yale University Press, 2001), 119-51.

Samuel Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelbaum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Indiana University Press, 2007), 209-24, 285-99.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

What forms were taken by Jewish resistance to Nazi efforts to murder all Jews?

Thursday: Open

No response to a question due.

9. Week of March 15

Tuesday: Attempts to rescue Jews, or to resist the Nazi regime on moral grounds

Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust*, 573-621.

Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous. The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (New York: Henry Holt, 2003), 181-97, 387-95.

John Michalczyk, *Confront: Resistance in Nazi Germany* (Peter Lang, 2004), 196-205. Please note that this account of the White Rose resistance group was written by Georg (Juergen) Wittenstein, who participated in some of the activities of the group but was spared execution in 1943.

Fliers of the White Rose group, from *Nazism 1919-1945. A Documentary Reader*, ed. by J. Noakes and G. Pridham, vol. 4, *The German Home Front in World War II* (Exeter: 1984), 456-9.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

What circumstances and other factors enabled some societies and nations to resist the Nazi program of mass murder of European Jews with a significant degree of success?

Thursday: Britain and the United States and the Jews of Europe.

Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Clarendon Press, 1979), 134-82 (Chapter Four: "The 'Final Solution'").

Deborah Lipstadt, "America and the Holocaust," *Modern Judaism* 10:3 (1990): 283-96.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

Why did the British government urge the Turkish government to force the *Struma* to return to the Black Sea, with catastrophic results for the passengers, and why did British policy on Jewish refugees who reached Turkey change in the course of 1942?

10. Week of March 22 Essay due on Monday (submit to Assignments section of the course website)

Tuesday: Canada and the Rescue of European Jews

Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many. Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1945* (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 1-189.

Optional Reading: reviews of *None is Too Many*

<https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/haf/1985-v39-n2-haf2339/304354ar/>

https://www-jstor-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/stable/pdf/41298824.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_SYC-5187_SYC-5188%2Ftest&refreqid=fastly-default%3A2684aa2dc8c085a253086abe39032b5c

Please submit an essay based on the following question to the Assignments section of the class OWL website by midnight of Monday, March 22nd, based on the assigned reading from:

Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many. Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1945* (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 1-189; Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 134-82; and Deborah Lipstadt, "America and the Holocaust," *Modern Judaism* 10:3 (1990): 283-96.

Based on the assigned texts noted above, how can one explain the unwillingness of Britain, the United States, and Canada to permit the immigration of larger numbers Jewish refugees from Germany and the countries Germany occupied, or countries that were allies of Germany, between 1933 and 1945?

Alternative essay topic for March 22nd: Students who borrow or buy a copy of Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, any edition, may instead write on the following question, based on the entirety of that book: Based on Bernard Wasserstein's account, how can one explain the policies adopted by the British government in response to the desperate efforts of Jews to flee Germany and, from 1938, the various countries conquered by Germany?

Late essays are not accepted; they will not be read. Students who miss this deadline will be assigned a different question based on a different source. The grade on the alternative essay will be marked down by ten points on a hundred point scale to reflect the failure to meet the original deadline for submission.

No response due to a question before class, since students will be submitting an essay on one of the essay questions given above.

Thursday: The Soviet Union

Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, Vol. 3, 1914-2008 (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 563-87, 603-24.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

According to Polonsky, how did the war “transform the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union”? (p. 587) Why did the situation of the Jews in Poland and in the Soviet Union deteriorate so rapidly at the end of the war and in the immediate postwar period?

11. Week of March 29

Tuesday: Postwar trials

Hilary Earl, *The SS-Einsatzgruppen Trial, 1945-1958. Atrocity, Law, and History* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 46-58, 71-79, 90-95, 296-301.

Omer Bartov, “Guilt and Accountability in the Postwar Courtroom. The Holocaust in Czortkow and Buczacz, East Galicia, as seen in West German Legal Discourse,” *Historical Reflections* 39:2 (2013): 96-123.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

What laws, rules, or circumstances prevented the postwar punishment of Nazi criminals who participated in policies of mass murder, or led to light sentences, based on the texts assigned for this class?

Thursday: Compensating victims

Marilyn Henry, “Fifty Years of Holocaust Compensation,” *The American Jewish Yearbook* 102 (2002): 3-21, 26-35, 39-45, 52-71.

Note: this article could not be included in the coursepack. Please see the Resources section of the coursewebsite, document number 49, or https://www-jstor-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/stable/pdf/23604537.pdf?ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_SYC-5187_SYC-5188%2F5187&refreqid=fastly-default%3Aa506a7b8dac1230cb5c1bea89cc83518

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

Based on Henry’s summary, what were the most important factors that led the German government, German firms, and German individuals to attempt to compensate individuals damaged by Nazi policies, especially Jews, as well as to pay the costs of the resettlement of survivors? What factors created obstacles to efforts at compensation?

12. Week of April 5

Tuesday: Holocaust denial; The Holocaust in historical perspective.

Lawrence Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment: making law and history in the trials of the Holocaust* (Yale University Press, 2001), 212-25.

Judgment of the court in *David Irving v Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt*, April 11, 2000, accessed on October 6, 2020 at <https://www.hdot.org/trial-materials/judgment-and-appeal/>). Please note that only a part of this judgment is assigned; the selections are found on the course website.

Please answer the following question and submit your response, of roughly 150-300 words, to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 10:00 am on the day of the class:

What methods did the court in the Irving libel lawsuit conclude that Irving employed to distort the history of the Nazi period?

Thursday: Closing reflections

Victor Klemperer, "I believe in Him," "The Star," "The Jewish War," *The Language of the Third Reich. LTI _Lingua Tertii Imperii, A Philologist's Notebook*, trans. by Martin Brady (Athlone Press, 2000), 103-9, 117-18, 166-71, 172-73.

Chancellor Angela Merkel speech at Auschwitz, December 6, 2019, accessed on October 6, 2020 at <https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkin-en/news/speech-by-federal-chancellor-dr-angela-merkel-marking-the-10th-anniversary-of-the-auschwitz-birkenau-foundation-auschwitz-6-december-2019-1704954>

No responses to questions are due for this class.

Use of Electronic Devices

Students may use computers and other electronic devices when taking the final examination, but must formulate their own responses to questions themselves. Copying from the web is prohibited. Information available on the web is often incomplete and sometimes incorrect. Evaluation of answers will be based on materials assigned for the course.

Additional Statements:

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document,

<https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>, for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness