

Prof. Alice Weinreb
Office Hours: Friday 9-11 am
Office: 550 Crown Center
Email: aweinreb@luc.edu

HISTORY 334B
The Holocaust in Europe: History and Memory
Fall 2019
***DRAFT: Subject to Change ***



In this course, we will study one of the defining events of the twentieth century -- the genocide of European Jews – seeking to understand how it took place and its short-and long-term legacies. In class, we will discuss the origins, implementation, and aftermath of the genocide, from the Nazi rise to power and the ‘Final Solution’ through to the post-war Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. In addition to understanding Nazi theory and policy, we will explore victims’ experiences through diaries, songs, community chronicles, memoirs, and other primary sources. We will also tackle some of the questions that still challenge our understanding of the Holocaust today, such as: Was the Holocaust unique, and why does that matter? What does it mean to be a “bystander” of an atrocity? What are the politics of memory and commemoration? Ultimately the course will not only give you a better understanding of a seminal event of modernity, but it will also give you a richer vocabulary for understanding the connection between modernity and violence, the politics of collective memory, and the relationship between history and current struggles for social justice.

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will have:

1. Learned the central events in the origins and development of the Holocaust.
2. Been exposed to key historiographical debates surrounding the Holocaust
3. Gained a historical understanding of key contemporary concerns including racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, and mass violence.
4. Developed techniques of primary source analysis across a wide range of genres.
5. Strengthened their abilities to express ideas both in writing and in class.

Draft Sample Syllabus

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Regular attendance and active participation (25%)

Your participation grade is based on your *active* contribution to class. This includes coming to class prepared and on time, listening respectfully to other students, and asking as well as answering questions. If you have difficulty speaking up in class, please come see me early on in the semester so that we may develop other ways for you to gain participation credit.

2. Six Primary Source Analyses (40%)

Over the course of the semester, you are required to submit six 2-3 page analyses of specific primary sources (some will be assigned, others will be of your choice). These should be based on your own analysis of the sources, but should also be informed by relevant secondary readings from the course.

3. Blog postings (10%)

You are required to maintain an individual blog over the course of the semester. (This may be private or public.) You are required to post at least once every week (you may take two weeks off over the course of the semester.) Each post should explore something new that you learned from either this week's readings or class discussion AND the relevance of this thing to the contemporary moment. These postings should be at roughly 1-2 paragraphs each.

4. A final exam (25%)

Three essay questions based exclusively on class content will be distributed two weeks before the exam is due. You will answer two of the three questions.

REQUIRED READINGS

These books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore and are on Library Reserves as well.

1. Simone Gigliotti and Berel Lang, eds. *Holocaust Reader*
2. Kaplan, Marion A. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*
3. Jurgen Matthaus and Emil Kerenji, *Jewish Responses to Persecution 1933-1946*
4. Art Spiegelman, *Maus II*

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you have special needs, please meet me within the first two weeks of class to discuss your situation. If accommodations are needed, students should contact Services for Students with Disabilities in the Sullivan Center for Student Services, 6339 N. Sheridan Rd., Suite 117.

COURSE GUIDELINES

Classroom Behavior: This course grapples with deeply disturbing and sensitive material. For that reason, basic rules of classroom behavior are especially important, for the sake of the teacher and your fellow students.

Out of respect to myself and other students, please arrive punctually and do not pack up your things to leave until our class session is finished. As a discussion-heavy class, laptop computers are not allowed. Exceptions to this policy can be made only if you meet with me within the first week of class to discuss your situation. All cell phones must be turned off at the beginning of class. Students who are surfing or texting during lecture will be asked to leave.

Because of the difficult content of this course, it is especially important for us to foster a respectful, sensitive, and safe classroom atmosphere. For this reason, I ask that everyone approach the readings as well as our discussions with thoughtfulness and respect. If anyone feels uncomfortable with class discussion, please let me know so that I can do my best to alleviate the source of discomfort.

Written Work: All written work is due in hard-copy and in class on the due date listed unless specified otherwise. All work must be printed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and have your name, the date, and page numbers.

Academic Honesty: I expect students to abide by the policies on academic honesty outlined at www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. In keeping with University policy, plagiarism will not be tolerated. The definition of plagiarism is:

You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone else's words or ideas but fail to credit that person. You plagiarize even when you do credit the author but use his [or her] exact words without so indicating with quotation marks or block indentation. You also plagiarize when you use words so close to those in your source, that if your work were placed next to the source, it would be obvious that you could not have written what you did with the sources at your elbow.¹

Anyone using another's work without attribution, including all things on the web, will fail the assignment and have a letter placed in his or her permanent file. If you ever have any questions about attribution, ask rather than guessing! Remember that it is always better to turn an assignment in late than to risk plagiarizing something.

¹ Wayne Booth, Gregory C. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 167.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 Introduction to the Course

Aug 27: Introduction
Aug 29: European Jewry before WWII

Readings:

Gigliotti & Lang, 'Introduction' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 1-6
A. Dirk Moses, 'Conceptual Blockages' in Gigliotti & Lang, *The Holocaust*, pp. 448-462
Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, pp. 3-16

Week 2 The Context: Germany before Hitler

Sept 3: Antisemitism
Sept 5: World War I, the Weimar republic

Reading for discussion:

'Preconditions' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 11-16
Bernard Lewis, 'Anti-Semites' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 17-43
Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, pp. 17-73
Excerpts from *Jewish Responses*

Week 3 The Rise of Nazism

Sept 10: The Nazi rise to power
Sept 12: Nazi ideology, Jews in the mind of Adolf Hitler

Reading for discussion:

Robert Wistrich, 'From Weimar to Hitler' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 44-67
Adolf Hitler, 'Nation and Race' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 68-81
Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, pp. 94-118

Week 4 Nazi Legal and Economic Policies

Sept 17: Anti-Jewish actions 1933-1936, Nuremberg Laws
Sept 19: The years 1936-1939, *Kristallnacht*

Reading for discussion:

'Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 82-83
'A Racial Europe' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 87-91
Henry Friedlander, 'The Setting' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 92-123
Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, pp. 119-144

Week 5 The Outbreak of War

- Sep 24: Outbreak of WWII, from 'euthanasia' to extermination
Sep 26: Reactions to the Outbreak of War

Reading for discussion:

Raul Hilberg, 'Ghetto Formation' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 124-142
Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, pp. 145-160

Week 6 Jewish Experience in the Early War Years

- Oct 1: Demarcation of Jews, expropriation, forced labor, ghettoization
Oct 3: The evolution of Nazi policy 1939-1941

Reading for discussion:

Christopher Browning, 'From "Ethnic Cleansing" to Genocide to the "Final Solution"' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 143-166
Heinrich Himmler, 'Some thoughts on the treatment of the alien population in the East' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 167-169
Excerpts from *Jewish Responses*

Week 7 Europe under the Swastika

- Oct 8: Mid-semester Break
Oct. 10: The War across Europe: Occupation and Resistance

Film for discussion:

"The Sorrow and the Pity"

Week 8 The East in the Nazi Imagination

- Oct 15: The Slav as a racial category
Oct 17: 'Operation Barbarossa': from mass killing to genocide

Reading for discussion:

'War and the turn to genocide' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 173-176
'Commissar Decree' Gruppenführer Ohlendorf affidavit in *The Holocaust*, pp.177-183
Jürgen Förster, 'Operation Barbarossa' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 184-197
Peter Longerich, 'From Mass Murder to the "Final Solution"' *The Holocaust*, pp.198-219

Week 9

- Oct 22: Who are the Perpetrators; 'willing executioners' or 'ordinary men'?
- Oct 24: What are Bystanders?

Reading for discussion:

Omer Bartov, 'Savage War' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 220-231
Excerpts from *Jewish Responses*

Week 10 Jewish Life and Death during the War

- Oct 29: Jewish responses in the ghettos
- Oct 31: Life and society in concentration camps

Reading for discussion:

Herman Kruk, 'The second winter' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 348-375
Ety Hillesum, 'Letters from Westerbork' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 376-385
Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, pp. 161-237

Week 11 The End of the War

- Nov 5: Jewish Resistance
- Nov 7: Death marches and liberation

Reading for discussion:

Emmanuel Ringelblum, 'Inside the Ghetto' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 313-332
Excerpts from *Jewish Responses*

Week 12 The Dilemma of the Survivors

- Nov 12: The fate of the survivors – Displaced persons and emigration
- Nov 14: Responses to genocide – the outside world

Reading for discussion:

89th Infantry Division: Ohrdruf Camp <http://www.89infdivww2.org/ohrdruf/index.htm>
Life Reborn: Jewish DPs <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/dp/>
Excerpts from *Jewish Responses*

Week 13 Defining Perpetrators, Assessing Guilt

- Nov 19: Assigning Blame – War crimes trials and reparations
- Nov 21: Collective guilt and collective innocence

Reading for discussion:

UN Convention on genocide, in *The Holocaust*, pp. 393-397

Helen Fein, 'Defining genocide as a sociological concept' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 398-419

Mark Levene, 'Is the Holocaust simply another example of genocide?' in *The Holocaust*, pp. 420-447

Week 14 The Legacies of Genocide

Nov 26: The legacies of the Holocaust

Nov 28: Thanksgiving Break

Reading for discussion:

Art Spiegelman, *Maus*

Week 15 Remembering the Holocaust

Dec 3: Holocaust memory and commemoration

Dec. 5: Final class: Wrap-Up discussion

Reading for discussion:

Excerpts from *Jewish Responses*

Film for discussion:

The Nasty Girl

Take-Home Exam due by 5pm, Tuesday Dec. 10th