

**HIST 4420 The Holocaust**  
**May 2016**  
**CRN 50304**  
**8:00 – 11:25**  
**TLC 1203**

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Office hours: Monday-Friday 1:00 -- 3:00, or by appointment

### **Course Description**

In this course we will survey the history of the Holocaust from its origins through its legacy. We will focus our attention on the following questions:

- Where can we locate the ideological origins of the Holocaust?
- When, how, and why did the Third Reich settle on a policy of trying to kill all of the Jews of Europe?
- What motivated the perpetrators? How did they feel about their actions and how did they justify them?
- In what ways did Jews respond to the regime's persecution and genocidal policy?
- What did ordinary Germans know about the Holocaust and how deeply were they implicated?
- What did people in other countries allied with or occupied by the Germans know about the Holocaust and what did they do?
- What did the Allies and the Vatican know and do about the German persecution of the Jews of Europe?
- How did the Third Reich's effort to murder the Jews of Europe relate to its policies regarding the disabled, so-called "Gypsies," homosexuals, prisoners of war, and others?
- What is the place of the Holocaust in the history of Germany and the wider world?
- What light does the study of the Holocaust shed on the character and limits of historical inquiry?

### **Prerequisites**

Each student should have already completed three credits of global history and three credits of U.S. history. Any student registered for the course who has not completed the prerequisites should see me.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course I hope that students will be able to do the following:

- demonstrate an understanding of the history of the Holocaust;
- analyze primary and secondary sources for their historical content and interpretations;
- craft persuasive, written historical arguments based on evidence; and
- think historically.

### **Required Materials:**

Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators – Victims -- Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), ISBN 9780060995072.

Miklos Nyiszli, *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account*, trans. Tibere Kremer and Richard Seaver (New York: Arcade, 1993) ISBN 9781611450118.

### **Grading**

Class Participation:	10 percent
Notebook:	15 percent
Source presentation:	10 percent
Midterm examination:	15 percent
Paper:	20 percent
Quiz grade:	5 percent
Final Examination:	25 percent

Thoughtful contributions made in class discussions will be credited in the class participation grade, while behavior (such as tardiness) that impedes other students' learning will be penalized. The criteria for participation grades are as follows:

- A Excellent: the student's contributions made the course substantially better. The student made regular, thoughtful contributions informed by engagement with assigned material. The student offered original insights or posed productive questions.
- B Good: the student's contributions made the course noticeably better. The student made occasional contributions to class. The insights were solid, but not strikingly original.
- C Satisfactory: the student's contributions made the course marginally better. The student engaged in class discussions but comments and questions were not as well grounded in material from the course or as productive as they should have been.
- D Unsatisfactory: the student neither improved nor detracted from the course. The student showed up but did not meaningfully contribute to discussion in the course. Comments showed unfamiliarity with the assigned material or otherwise failed to advance understanding in the course.
- F Failing: the student made the course worse by interfering with the learning of fellow students.

Each student must maintain a notebook related to the course. For each day of class the notebook should contain at least five pages of writing. There should generally be at least two pages of writing on the assigned reading and three pages on class material. The writing in the notebooks must be legible and related to the course. Students may submit typewritten notes rather than a notebook. The notes must be turned in with the final examination. The notebooks will be graded according to the following scale:

- A Excellent: 50+ pages (5,000 words)
- B Good: 40-49 pages (4000-4999)
- C Satisfactory: 30-39 pages (3000-3999)
- D Unsatisfactory: 20-29 pages (2000-2999)
- F Failing: fewer than 19 pages (less than 2000)

Each student must lead discussion of one source. The student discussion leader should begin by briefly framing the source by explaining its origins and context. The discussion leader should not simply read from the source or an introduction to it. The student should then lead a class discussion of the source. The discussion leader should conclude by summarizing the discussion, including explaining how the source helps to answer important questions in the course. The discussion should last from 10 to 15 minutes. Grades will be based on the quality of the analysis, the effectiveness of the student's oral presentation, and the quality of discussion elicited. Students are encouraged to critically evaluate the sources, draw connections among sources, and connect them to the big questions in the course.

The midterm examination will be given over the last 90 minutes of class on May 13. The midterm will include a primary source that we have not read together in class. Students will be asked to write an essay using the primary source along with material we have covered in the course to answer a particular question pertaining to the Holocaust.

The final examination will ask students to write an essay answering a question related to the Holocaust. Students will have some choice among the questions they answer. Students may use their notebooks or printed notes in the final examination, but *not* the books, other printed sources, or electronic devices.

There will be one quiz on the last day of class. Additional quizzes may be assigned if students do not appear to be keeping up with the reading.

Each student must write a three-page typed paper asserting a historical claim and supporting it with evidence from a source or sources. The paper is due on the date that we will discuss the source or sources used as evidence in the paper. Students must submit their paper no later than Friday, May 20, in which case the paper must use Nyiszli's *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account*. Late papers will be penalized by deducting one letter grade for each day the assignment is late. The papers will be evaluated on the following points:

1. Does the paper meet the requirement of academic honesty? Pass/fail
2. Does the paper clearly articulate its point in a thesis?
3. Does the paper demonstrate thoughtful analysis of the material?

4. Does the paper effectively use evidence to support its analysis?
5. Does the paper have a coherent organization?
6. Does the paper effectively express its ideas in standard English?

No extra credit will be offered.

### **Policies**

I expect each student to understand and to comply with the University of West Georgia's policies on Academic Honor and Academic Dishonesty. They may be found in the Student Code of Conduct, on the web at [http://www.westga.edu/assetsSA/handbook/2015-2016\\_Student-Code-of-Conduct\\_Rev062415.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsSA/handbook/2015-2016_Student-Code-of-Conduct_Rev062415.pdf).

Academic honesty prohibits taking credit for someone else's work. Justice requires that punishment fit the infraction. Egregious academic dishonesty will result in failing the course and may also bring additional penalties imposed by the university.

I encourage any student who has questions or needs help with the course to come to my office hours or send me an email to set up a time to talk.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and university policy, I will make reasonable accommodation for any recognized disability. Students should contact me during the first three weeks of the course and present documentation from the University's Student Development Center.

I strongly encourage students to attend class. Students who attend class tend to learn more and get better grades than those who do not. Class discussion sometimes affords new insights that cannot be planned or even predicted. In case of absence, it is the responsibility of the student to obtain notes from a classmate covering what was missed. I do not penalize students for absences, but students receive no credit for participating or on any tests or quizzes on missed class days. A student who does not take a quiz or test in class with the rest of the class receives a zero. I do not permit students to take any test, quiz, or other graded work at any time other than in class as administered except in rare cases of prior approval by the instructor or with a physician's note.

For university-wide policies, please see:

[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common\\_Language\\_for\\_Course\\_Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf)

### **Course Schedule**

May 9 Introduction  
How to teach about the Holocaust?

May 10 To the Nazi seizure of power

Hilberg, ix-19

Hitler's first statement on the Jews from September 1919

[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=3909](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3909)

The Nazi Party Program (CourseDen)

*Mein Kampf* excerpt (CourseDen)

May 11 The racial state and its enemies, 1933-1939

Hilberg, 65-74, 118-25

Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service

[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1520](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1520)

Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring  
[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1521](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1521)

Walter Groß on Nazi racial policy  
<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/gross.htm>

Heinrich Himmler on homosexuality (CourseDen)

Stenographic report of meeting following *Kristallnacht*  
[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1524](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1524)

Hitler's Reichstag Speech, January 30, 1939 (CourseDen)

Detlev Peukert, "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution'" (CourseDen)

May 12 War and radicalization, 1939-1941

Hilberg, 20-50

The euthanasia order  
[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1528](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1528)

The Commissar order  
[http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1548](http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1548)

The Einsatzgruppen reports (CourseDen pp. 42-44, 77-81, 107-8, 128-29, 133-37, 227-29)

May 13 From war of annihilation to genocide, 1941-1942

October 28, 1941 entry from the Tory diary (CourseDen)

Goebbels, "The Jews are Guilty!" article, 16 November 1941  
<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/goeb1.htm>

### **Midterm exam**

May 16 The nadir

Hilberg, 51-64, 105-17, 126-69

The Wannsee Protocol  
[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1532](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1532)

Hoess memoir excerpt (CourseDen)

Speech by Chaim Rumkowski (CourseDen)

February 4, February 8, April 8, and April 9, 1943 entries from the Tory diary (CourseDen)

The Kovno police  
[http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/our\\_collections/until\\_the\\_last\\_jew/dov\\_levin.pdf](http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/our_collections/until_the_last_jew/dov_levin.pdf)

May 17 Perpetrators and resisters

Hilberg, 170-85

January 20, 1943 entry from Tory diary (CourseDen)

Himmler's speech at Posen

<http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/h/himmler-heinrich/posen/oct-04-43/ausrottung-transl-imt.html>

Sources from the Warsaw Ghetto (CourseDen)

Timothy Schroer, "Civilization, Barbarism, and the Ethos of Self-Control among the Perpetrators," *German Studies Review* 35, no. 1 (2012): 33-54 (accessible through Project Muse).

May 18 The Allies, the Vatican, and others

Hilberg, 217-68

José M. Sánchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust: Understanding the Controversy* excerpt (CourseDen)

Saul Friedländer, *Pius XII and the Third Reich* excerpt (CourseDen)

Robert S. Wistrich, "The Vatican and the Shoah," *Modern Judaism* 21, no. 2 (May 2001): 83-107, especially pp. 92-97 (access through JSTOR).

*Collier's* excerpt from Karski's report (CourseDen)

Sources on the bombing of Auschwitz (CourseDen)

May 19 Ordinary Germans, allied countries, the occupied, and the Roma

Hilberg, 75-102, 195-216

Etty Hillesum documents (CourseDen)

July 7, 1941 entry from Tory diary (CourseDen)

Károly Bari, "The Holocaust in Gypsy Folk Poetry" (CourseDen)

Hoess on the Gypsies (CourseDen)

Guenter Lewy, "Himmler and the 'Racially Pure Gypsies,'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 2 (1999): 201-14 (accessible through JSTOR).

May 20 The end

Hilberg, 186-91

Nyiszli, *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account*

Adolf Hitler's last testament

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/document/3569-ps.htm>

Additional sources as requested

**Paper due**

May 23 The legacy of the Holocaust

Speech by Richard von Weizsäcker on the fortieth anniversary of the war's end

[http://www.mediaculture-online.de/fileadmin/bibliothek/weizsaecker\\_speech\\_may85/weizsaecker\\_speech\\_may85.pdf](http://www.mediaculture-online.de/fileadmin/bibliothek/weizsaecker_speech_may85/weizsaecker_speech_may85.pdf)

Ernst Nolte on "the past that will not pass away"

[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1064](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1064)

Social Philosopher Jürgen Habermas on Critical Memory

[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1187](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1187)

Cover letter to the Report of the President's Commission on the Holocaust

<http://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/presidents-commission/cover-letter>

Daniel H. Magilow, "Counting to Six Million: Collecting Projects and Holocaust Memorialization," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* 14, no. 1 (Fall 2007): 23-39. (Access through library database.; note that this article is not on electronic reserve.)

### **Quiz**

May 24 Reading Day

May 25 Final examination  
8:00 – 10:00 am