

Philosophical Responses to the Holocaust

PHILOSOPHY SENIOR SEMINAR

PHIL 4300-01W, Fall 2019

Contact info and meeting times

Instructor Dr. Rosemary Kellison

Office hours in TLC 2245: Tues./Thurs. 8:40-10:10 am, 12:20-1:10 pm, & 3:20-3:50 pm

See CourseDen Announcements for additional office hours every other Wednesday, as well as for any changes in usual office hours. We can also set up appointments for online phone/IM conversations using Google Hangouts.

Virtual office hours via Google Hangouts (IM or video chat): by appt.

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English & Philosophy Department 678.839.6512, TLC 2255

Classroom Humanities 228

Meeting time Tues./Thurs. 2:00-3:15 pm

Course website <https://westga.view.usg.edu>

What this course is about

Senior Seminar is the capstone course in the study of philosophy at UWG. The course will be conducted in a traditional seminar style, with students assuming a leadership role in the classroom. Over the course of the semester, each student will produce and present a high-quality philosophical paper; we will spend significant time on the development, drafting, and revision of this project. Our seminar will focus on philosophical responses to and analyses of the Holocaust, particularly as relating to the topics of antisemitism and Holocaust denial; the problem of evil analyzed from philosophical, theological, and other disciplinary perspectives; and the testimony and experience of survivors.

What you will learn in this course

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- describe and critically analyze several philosophical questions related to or inspired by the Holocaust;
- read academic and literary sources from various disciplines from a philosophical perspective;
- lead a class discussion;
- frame a philosophical question or issue for investigation;
- conduct independent research on a philosophical question;
- make a strong and original philosophical argument;
- and write and orally present a sophisticated academic paper.

These course-specific learning outcomes contribute to the departmental learning outcomes of the Philosophy Program by enabling students better to:

- discuss the views of major historical figures of philosophy,
- critically analyze and explain a philosophical issue in written communications, and
- incorporate and defend a philosophical position in oral communications.

COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED TEXTS

You must purchase the following four texts for this course. Each of these texts is available for purchase at the UWG Bookstore or from online retailers. I've listed them in the order in which you'll need them; note that we'll start with the first book right away.

- Doris L. Bergen, *The Holocaust: A Concise History*, 2nd revised edition (Rowman & Littlefield, ISBN 978-0742557147)
- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate* (Schocken, ISBN 978-0805210477)
- Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Penguin Classics, ISBN 978-0143039884)
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: A Memoir* (Touchstone, ISBN 978-0684826806)

Other required readings will be posted as PDFs on CourseDen, referred to as CD on the course schedule below.

You are required to bring the readings to class with you on the days we are scheduled to discuss them.

ASSESSMENT

GRADING OVERVIEW

Personal Statement and Resume/CV These ungraded materials, due 9/9, are required for all graduating Philosophy seniors and must be completed to earn a passing grade in this course.

Participation (20%) This is a seminar-style course in which the bulk of class time will be devoted to discussion. Your participation is therefore very important to your own and others' learning in this course. To earn an excellent participation grade, you should:

- come to class on time each day.
- be attentive during class, which requires putting away your phones, tablets, and laptops (except to reference assigned readings).
- bring the assigned reading to class and reference specific passages in support of your comments.
- participate in class discussion every class period.
- offer thoughtful, charitable, and critical responses to fellow students' written and spoken work.
- adhere to the discussion ground rules posted on CourseDen.

Your participation will be assessed according to a rubric (available on CourseDen) that measures your conduct and respect for others, use of the readings, quality of reasoning, and frequency of contributions. Participation will be graded three times throughout the semester (once every five weeks).

Regular attendance is expected in this course. Documentation must be provided for an excused absence (from all or part of class). After two unexcused absences, each additional unexcused absence will result in a 1-point deduction from your final course grade. Failure to attend the final class meeting will result in a 2-point deduction to your final grade.

Daily Reading Responses (10%) By 2 pm on each class day (*except the days you are leading discussion; see below for more information*), you will submit a short reading response (about 1 paragraph long) consisting of 1-2 comments or questions about the reading. These responses should be both charitable and critical, meaning that they should demonstrate familiarity with details of the reading, include explanation of why your comment or question is significant, and offer a charitable interpretation of the author's possible response. You can miss 3 days of your choice with no penalty. Late reading responses will not be accepted.

Seminar Papers and Leading Class Discussions (20%) You will lead class discussion twice during the semester. You will begin with an 8-10-minute critical synopsis of the assigned reading's major argument. You will also bring several discussion questions to be discussed during the seminar meeting that day. You should treat these presentations as practice for your Senior Seminar Symposium presentation. Each presentation is worth 5% of your final course grade. Missed presentations cannot be made up.

On the date of your presentation, you must submit at least three discussion questions (which will fulfill your daily reading response requirement for that date) and a seminar paper (consisting of a 750-1000-word critical analysis of the reading) on CourseDen by noon. You are strongly encouraged to discuss your seminar paper and questions with Dr. Kellison ahead of time. Each seminar paper is worth 5% of your final course grade.

Final Paper (50%) Throughout the semester, you will work on a 12-page final paper in which you will defend a philosophical position related to our seminar topic. Your final draft should be a high-quality piece of writing suitable for use as a graduate school writing sample or for submission to a research conference. All papers of suitable quality will be included in the 2019 Senior Seminar Anthology. The components of the final paper assignment are:

- *Paper question (4%, due 9/23)*: a description of the philosophical question you will explore and its significance
- *Abstract and annotated bibliography (4%, due 10/7)*: a 200-word abstract of your paper's expected argument and a bibliography including at least three scholarly sources (at least two of which are not from our course), along with a short description of each source and its relevance to your paper
- *Detailed outline or first three pages (4%, due 10/21)*: a three-page outline or draft of your first three pages; must include a statement of the paper's argument and expected plan
- *First draft (4%, due 11/4)*: a polished draft of at least the first eight pages of your paper
- *Senior Seminar Symposium presentation (10%, text due 11/13 for presentation on 11/15)*: a formal and professional oral presentation of your final paper
- *Second draft (4%, due 11/22)*: a polished, completed draft of your twelve-page paper that responds to feedback from the first draft and Symposium presentation
- *Final paper (20%, due 12/10)*

Late assignment and required meeting policies for final paper:

A 10% deduction will be assessed immediately when any final-paper-related assignment becomes late. An additional 10% deduction will be assessed for each consecutive day your submission is late. If you need an extension for some reason, speak to Dr. Kellison in advance of the deadline to avoid a late penalty. Failure to schedule and attend an out-of-class meeting about your paper with Dr. Kellison by Sept. 30 will result in a 5-point penalty to your final paper grade; additional meetings may be required based on draft submissions.

Grading Scale: A: 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 60-69; F: 0-59

COURSE POLICIES

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Violation of the honor code will incur serious consequences. Please review the academic honor policy at the link below and consult with Dr. Kellison if you have any questions. If you commit a violation of the honor code, you will receive a minimum penalty of a 0 for the assignment. The violation will also be reported to the Student Conduct Specialist in the Division of Student Affairs. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

UNIVERSITY EMAIL POLICY

For privacy and security reasons, you must email professors only from your MyUWG email account. You are expected to check that account regularly.

UNIVERSITY CLOSURE POLICY

Should UWG cancel classes for any reason, our course will continue. You are responsible for checking CourseDen and your UWG email for information on how our course will proceed.

FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability, you are entitled to accommodations. Contact UWG Disability Services for more information, and email Dr. Kellison your SAR immediately in order to obtain accommodations.

FOR HONORS STUDENTS

Any student wishing to receive honors credit for this course must bring the appropriate paperwork and ask Dr. Kellison for approval immediately; Honors Contracts are due by the end of the second week of classes.

For more details on these and other UWG policies, see

<https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>.

COURSE CALENDAR subject to change with advance notice

Introduction: General History of the Holocaust

R 8/15	Course syllabus Doris L. Bergen, <i>The Holocaust: A Concise History</i> , chs. 1–3
T 8/20	Doris L. Bergen, <i>The Holocaust: A Concise History</i> , chs. 4–6 Sign up for presentation dates in class
R 8/22	Doris L. Bergen, <i>The Holocaust: A Concise History</i> , chs. 7–8 & conclusion

Antisemitism

T 8/27	Steven Beller, <i>Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction</i> , chs. 2 (“The Burden of the Past”) & 3 (“The Chosen People”) (CD)
R 8/29	Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate</i> , chs. 1–2 (preface also recommended; be sure you have read to at least pg. 33)
T 9/3	Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate</i> , chs. 1–2, cont.
R 9/5	Jonathan Glover, <i>Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century</i> , chs. 33 (“The Core of Nazism”) & 35 (“The Attack on Humanity”) (CD)
M 9/9	Personal statement & resume/CV due by 12 pm (noon)
T 9/10	In-Class Writing Workshop #1: Identifying a Question and Relevant Scholarly Sources *Instead of reading response: submit at least two potential questions & bring to class with you

Explaining Evil: Perpetrators and Bystanders

R 9/12	Hannah Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil</i> , chs. I–IV
T 9/17	Hannah Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil</i> , chs. V–VII
R 9/19	Hannah Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil</i> , chs. VIII–XII
M 9/23	Philosophical question for final paper due by 12 pm (noon)
T 9/24	Hannah Arendt, <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil</i> , chs. XIV–XV & epil.
R 9/26	Robert Jay Lifton, “The Nazi Doctors” (CD)
M 9/30	Deadline for mandatory out-of-class meeting with Dr. Kellison about final paper
T 10/1	Christopher R. Browning, “Ordinary Men” (CD)
R 10/3	No class—Fall Break
M 10/7	Abstract & annotated bibliography due by 12 pm (noon)
T 10/8	Rainer C. Baum, “Holocaust: Moral Indifference as the Form of Modern Evil” (CD)
W 10/9	Last day to withdraw with a grade of W
R 10/10	Rainer C. Baum, “Holocaust: Moral Indifference as the Form of Modern Evil” (CD)
T 10/15	In-Class Writing Workshop #2: Making a Philosophical Argument *Instead of reading response: submit a draft of your final paper’s thesis

Holocaust Testimony and Survivor Perspectives

R 10/17	Primo Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz: A Memoir</i> , preface & chs. 1–5
M 10/21	Detailed outline or first three pages of final paper due by 12 pm (noon) Special Event: Jacques Sémelin’s visit to UWG
T 10/22	Primo Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz: A Memoir</i> , chs. 6–12
R 10/24	Primo Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz: A Memoir</i> , chs. 13–17
T 10/29	Jean Amery, “Torture” (CD)
R 10/31	Lawrence Langer, “The Dilemma of Choice in the Deathcamps” (CD)
M 11/4	Polished first draft of final paper due by 12 pm (noon)
T 11/5	Abigail Rosenthal, “The Right Way to Act: Indicting the Victims” (CD)

COURSE CALENDAR, cont.

Jewish Theological and Philosophical Responses

R 11/7	Richard L. Rubenstein, selections from <i>After Auschwitz</i> ("The Dean and the Chosen People," "Symposium on Jewish Belief," and "The Symbols of Judaism and the Death of God") (CD)
T 11/12	Hans Jonas, "The Concept of God After Auschwitz: A Jewish Voice" (CD)
W 11/13	Senior Seminar Symposium version of final paper due by 12 pm (noon)
R 11/14	Emil Fackenheim, "The 614th Commandment," "The Commanding Voice of Auschwitz," and "Historicity, Rupture, and <i>Tikkun Olam</i> (Mending the World)" (CD)
F 11/15	Senior Seminar Symposium 10:00 am – 1:00 pm, TLC 1203 <i>*Final paper presentations: attendance mandatory</i>
T 11/19	Melissa Raphael, excerpt from <i>The Female Face of God in Auschwitz</i> (CD)

Holocaust Denial

R 11/21	Deborah Lipstadt, <i>Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory</i> , ch. 1 ("Canaries in the Mine: Holocaust Denial and the Limited Power of Reason") (CD)
F 11/22	Polished second draft of final paper due by 12 pm (noon)
T 11/26 R 11/28	No class—Happy Thanksgiving!
T 12/3	Raphael Cohen-Almagor, "Holocaust Denial Is a Form of Hate Speech" (CD)
R 12/5	Wrap-up meeting to (1) discuss overall course themes and our class anthology and (2) take Philosophy Program exit surveys and course evaluations <i>*Failure to attend will result in doubled deduction to participation grade</i>
T 12/10	Final paper due by 12 pm (noon)