

**University of Florida
Spring Semester 2015**

JST 3930 section 0978 / EUH 1273

CHALLENGING PAST: HOLOCAUST, JEWISH HISTORY, AND MOVIES

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Course description

The goal of this course is to provide students with knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust, a paradigmatic and most horrific genocide of the twentieth century. The course approaches the Holocaust from two perspectives. First, it examines and situates the Holocaust within a larger context of modern European and Jewish history in order to understand the complex issues involved with an aid of a variety of primary historical texts and historical scholarship. Second, it examines diverse (political, historical, ethical, religious, moral) challenges of and responses to the Holocaust, seen as everyday reality or historical past through the lens of movie camera.

Classes will be a combination of lectures, discussions and movie screenings. Discussion will draw on the assigned readings, mainly on primary texts and on the movies seen in the class. Grading in the course is based on written assignments and on class work (i.e. discussion) that demonstrates critical thinking.

Core readings

1. Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust* (New York, 2002). (Henceforth: Bauer, History)
2. Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). (Henceforth: Marrus, The Holocaust in History).
3. Additional readings are listed in the class schedule below.

Primary sources

Thematic selection of primary sources from:

1. Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 1995);
 2. William W. Hallo, David Ruderman, Michael Stanislawski, editors, *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews. Source reader* (New York, Praeger, 1984);
 3. Lucy Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader* (Behrman House, 1976);
 4. Richard Levy, *Antisemitism in the Modern World* (D.C.Heath, 1991);
 5. David Engel, *The Holocaust. The Third Reich and the Jews* (Longman, 2000);
- and other publications will be announced, posted, and distributed by instructor on regular basis.

Movies

Show dates will be announced in class prior to the showing. Film guides with a

background information and class assignments on video materials will be distributed as well.

1. *Schindler's List* (USA, 1993);
 2. *Pianist* (Poland, France, Germany, UK, 2002);
 3. *Defiance* (USA, 2008);
 4. *Quarrel* (Canada, 1991);
 5. *Pawnbroker* (USA, 1964);
 6. *Everything Is Illuminated* (USA, 2005);
 7. *Life Is Beautiful* (Italy, 1997);
 8. *Boy In Striped Pajamas* (USA, 2008);
 9. *Aftermath* (Poland, 2013);
 10. *Commissar* (USSR, 1967);
 11. *Triumph of the Will* (Germany, 1935);
 12. *Ordinary Fascism* (USSR, 1965);
- More titles may be added during semester.

Please note, that all readings, including core readings, primary sources, and other assignments, will be available as PDF files through the course web site at e-Learning.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. Four Quizzes: will be given every three- to four-weeks period, and will test your knowledge (such as facts, names, dates) of class material (mainly lectures and readings). Each quiz is 5% of the final grade, 20% total.
2. Two Reaction Papers (3-4 pages): one question pertaining to the current theme will be posted weekly. Students are expected to pick up any of those questions, and answer them by integrating readings (especially primary sources) into their essays. First paper is due on Week VIII (February 26). Second paper is due on Week XV (April 21). Each paper is 10% of the final grade, 20% total.
3. Two film reviews (3-4 pages): an essay answering questions raised in class discussion of the movies, and relating movies to other materials discussed in class. First review is due on Week VIII (February 26). Second review is due on Week XV (April 21). Each paper is 10% of the final grade, 20% total. You may want to present your review in class instead of submitting it in writing. Extra credit will be given. If interested, please contact instructor.
4. Final Exam: The exam will be an essay drawing on topics discussed in class during semester. 20% of the final grade.
5. Attendance and Participation: You are expected to participate in in-class discussions. This presumes that you DO the reading, COME to class, and PARTICIPATE intelligently and soundly in the discussion. 20% of the final grade.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Weeks I-IV How and Why Should We Study the Holocaust? Jews and Modernity: The Emergence of Jewish Question and Modern Anti-Semitism

January 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, 29

Readings

Marrus, *The Holocaust in History*, 1-30.
Bauer, *History*, Chapters 1-4.

Primary sources

Genocide: definition by Raphael Lemkin; materials on Genocide of Armenians.
Jews and Modernity: Luther and Clermont-Tonnerre on Jews.
Jewish question: Jewish (modern Judaism) and non-Jewish (modern anti-Semitism) responses.

Movies

Quarrel.
Triumph of the Will.
Ordinary Fascism.

Quiz 1: **January 29**

Weeks V-VIII Establishment of the Nazi State. Nazi Policy Towards the Jews, 1933-1939

February 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 26

Readings

Bauer, *History*, Chapters 5, 6

Primary sources

Hitler's speeches.
Nuremberg Laws.

Movies

Schindler's List.
Pianist.
Defiance.

Quiz 2: **February 26**

First reaction paper due: **February 26**

First film review due: **February 26**

Weeks IX-XI The Final Solution: Mass Murder

March 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26

Readings

Bauer, *History*, Chapters 7-10.
Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History*, 31-51.

Primary sources

Testimony of war area mass shootings.
Testimony from the extermination center.

Movies

Pawnbroker.
Everything Is Illuminated.
Commissar.

Quiz 3: **March 26**

Weeks XI-XV Responses to the Holocaust

March 31, April 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21

Readings

Bauer, History, Chapters 11-13.
Marrus, The Holocaust in History, 55-183.

Primary sources

Jewish reactions to the genocide (resistance, compliance, moral dilemmas).
Attempts at rescuing the Jews.

Movies

Life Is Beautiful.
Boy in Striped Pajamas.
Aftermath.

Quiz 4: **April 16**

Second reaction paper due: **April 21**

Second film review due: **April 21**

Final exam: **TBA**