

## History 595: Holocaust and Genocide

Spring 2011

Tuesday, Thursday 9-10:15am

University Hall 301

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1-3pm, or by appointment

*While we will never "understand" why [the Holocaust] happened, we must clearly understand the implications of its having taken place.*

-Jan Gross, *Neighbors*

The implications of the attempted destruction of European Jewry by the Nazis during the Second World War, what we term the Holocaust - along with millions of Roma (Gypsies), Poles, Russians, homosexuals, the handicapped, and others are terrifyingly far-reaching. Genocide and ethnic cleansing are central to our understanding of the twentieth century, and beyond. This course moves through memory of the Holocaust and its exploration through literature, intense examination of the complexity of its causes and nature and of the difficult issues surrounding it, problems and practices of remembrance and commemoration (including our local Greater Lafayette Holocaust Remembrance Conference [www.glhrc.org](http://www.glhrc.org)), to a case-based investigation of other 20<sup>th</sup> century genocides, with special attention to the genocide in Rwanda. We will make use of primary sources and secondary literature, fiction, memoirs, film and other media in the course of our examination.

By the end of this course, through your active fulfillment of the requirements, especially the completion of reading and reaction assignments before class meetings so that you can participate in the discussion, you will have:

- deepened your understanding of the events and experiences known as the Holocaust, and selected cases of genocide;
- become familiar with approaches to the study of the Holocaust, and frameworks used for comparative examination of genocide;
- stimulated your thinking about the processes of research, interpretation, remembering, forgetting, and commemorating;
- developed your critical reading, thinking, writing, analyzing, discussing, presenting skills.

**Required Books:** The following books are available for purchase at University and Folletts bookstores, as well as through internet vendors. I will be placing copies of each required text on reserve at Hick's Undergraduate Library.

- Doris I. Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. (2009)

- Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader*

- Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors*

- Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*

- James Waller, *Becoming Evil*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. (2007)

- All other course materials will be available on Blackboard as **e-resources**, and are marked with an asterisk (\*) on the syllabus.
- There will be 3 film screenings: *Katyn*, *Fateless*, and *Sometimes in April* at times to be determined based on class consensus

**Course Requirements:****1. Attendance**

You are expected to come to class on time having completed the reading assignment for the session, submitted your discussion posting, and ready to learn. This is a discussion-based course. The use of electronic devices in the classroom is prohibited. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class session. You are allowed no more than 2 absences. More than 2 absences will result in a grade penalty (1/2 letter grade) for each subsequent unexcused absence. Unexcused means undocumented by a doctor's note, or other valid form of documentation. Late arrivals are disruptive and disrespectful. Two late arrivals equal one absence.

**2. Participation. 25% of course grade**

This grade depends on the quality of your participation in class discussion, and the discussion questions you post on Blackboard. Post a thoughtful question and/or comment for discussion on Blackboard by 5pm each day before we meet (i.e., by 5pm Monday and Wednesday). Use the topic of the class session listed on the syllabus next to the date to organize your thoughts while reading. Go to Discussions under Course Tools, select Create Message, enter your name in the Subject box, and then write your question into the message box.

**3. Reaction Log. 25% of course grade**

You will write 1-page reaction log entries to each week's readings and discussions. Reaction log entries are due by 9pm Thursday. Submit your reaction log entries on Blackboard Assignments. The Blackboard program will not accept entries submitted after the deadline. Go to Assignments and follow the instructions. You will receive a grade for each entry, and a final grade based on overall quality of the reaction log, level of engagement with the material, clarity of expression, and improvement.

**4. Paper 1: Holocaust topic. 25% of course grade**

This 5-7 page paper will examine a topic connected to the Holocaust that you choose from a list distributed in class. More details to follow in class. **Papers are due in class Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.** Email attachments will not be accepted.

**5. Paper 2: Comparative Genocide topic. 25% of course grade**

This 5-7 page paper will examine a topic connected to Comparative Genocide that you choose from a list distributed in class. More details to follow in class. **Papers are due in class Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>.** Email attachments will not be accepted.

**Format Requirements:**

\*\*All written work must be double-spaced using a standard 12 point font, and one-inch margins all around, and conform to the Modern Language Association (MLA) style format. Consult Purdue's OWL web page at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_mla.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html). All material that you use must be cited using footnotes according to MLA style.

**University Policies:****Cheating / Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office.

**Disclaimer:**

In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted once the course resumes on Blackboard or can be obtained by contacting the professor via email or phone.

**Course Evaluations:**

During the last two weeks of the semester, you will be provided an opportunity to evaluate this course and your instructor(s). To this end, Purdue has transitioned to online course evaluations. On Monday of the fifteenth week of classes, you will receive an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the online evaluation site. You will have two weeks to complete this evaluation. Your participation in this evaluation is an integral part of this course. Your feedback is vital to improving education at Purdue University. I strongly urge you to participate in the evaluation system.

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**Course Schedule:**

T, 1/11: Introduction and Overview: What are the Major Issues?

- Doris Bergen, Preface (pp. vii-x)
- James Waller, Preface (pp. xiii-xviii)

**Part I: The Holocaust**

Th, 1/13: From Silence to Voice, From Memory to History

- Judith Sherman, "Preface," from *Say the Name: A Survivor's Tale in Prose and Poetry*\*
- Michal Govrin, "The Journey to Poland," from *In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century*\*

T, 1/18: How do we read the record?

- Lucy Dawidowicz, "Introduction: On Studying Holocaust Documents," pp. 1-21
- István Deák, "The Incomprehensible Holocaust," from *Essays on Hitler's Europe*\*

**DISCUSS FIRST PAPER ASSIGNMENT**

Th, 1/20: What were the Preconditions for the Holocaust?

- Doris Bergen, chapter 1 "Preconditions," pp. 1-28
- Lucy Dawidowicz, chapter 1: "Preconditions," pp. 25-33

T, 1/25: How did the Nazis Rise to Power in Germany? Was 1933 a Revolution?

- Doris Bergen, chapter 2: "Leadership and Will," pp. 29-50
- Karl A. Schleunes, "The Year 1933: Revolution or Continuity in German History," from *Lessons and Legacies, volume III: Memory, Memorialization and Denial*\*

Th, 1/27: How did German Jews, Other Targeted Groups, and the German Public at Large respond to the Nazi "Revolution"?

- Doris Bergen, chapter 3: "From Revolution to Routine," pp. 51-78
- Lucy Dawidowicz, from chapter 5: "The First Ordeal," read chapter introduction (pp. 143-146) and documents: "Wear the Yellow Badge with Pride!" (pp.147-150), "The Reichsvertretung Program after the Nuremberg Laws," (pp. 162-164)

- T, 2/1: How did Nazi Germany Seek War and Systemize its Persecution of Targeted Groups?
- Doris Bergen, chapter 4: "Open Aggression: In Search of War, 1938-1939," pp. 79-100
  - Margaret Buber-Neumann, *Milena*, pp.104-115\*
- Th, 2/3: In What Ways Did Poland Become a Testing Ground for Nazi Policies?
- Doris Bergen, chapter 5: "Experiments in Brutality, 1939-1940," pp. 101-133
  - Lucy Dawidowicz, from chapter 6: "The Ordeals of the Ghettos in Eastern Europe," read chapter introduction (pp. 171-176) and documents: "Janusz Korczak's Appeals for Child Care," (pp. 193-195), "Smuggling in the Warsaw Ghetto," (pp. 197-207)
  - Leyb Goldin, "Chronicle of a Single Day," from *Scribes of the Warsaw Ghetto*\*
- Film Screening: *Katyn* (2007), TBA**
- T, 2/8: How did the Nazi Empire Expand? How did the War Differ by Region? By Country?
- Doris Bergen, chapter 6: "Expansion and Systemization, 1940-1941," pp. 135-150
  - István Deák, "Romania: Killing Fields and Refuge," from *Essays on Hitler's Europe*\*
  - Holly Case, "Territorial Revision and the Holocaust: Hungary and Slovakia During World War II," from *Lessons and Legacies, volume VIII, From Generation to Generation*\*
- Th, 2/10: When, Where, and How did the Nazis Turn To a "War of Annihilation"?
- Doris Bergen, chapter 6: "Expansion and Systemization, 1940-1941," pp. 150-164
  - Timothy Snyder, "Holocaust: The Ignored Reality," *The New York Review of Books*, volume 56, number 12, July 16, 2009\*
  - Kate Brown, "The Final Solution Turns East," from *Lessons and Legacies, volume VIII, From Generation to Generation*\*
  - Lucy Dawidowicz, from chapter 3: "the Interim Phase," read document "Minutes of the Wannsee Conference," (pp. 73-82)
- T, 2/15: How did the Nazis and their Collaborators Carry out the "War of Annihilation"?
- Doris Bergen, chapter 7: "The Peak Years of Killing, 1942 and 1943," pp. 167-191
  - Lucy Dawidowicz, from chapter 7: "The Ordeals of the Judenräte," read introduction (pp. 235-239) and document "From the Minute Book of the Bialystok Judenrat," (pp. 273-287); and chapter 4: "The Final Stage," read document "Auschwitz Observed: Report of Two Escaped Eyewitnesses," (pp. 110-119)
  - David Weiss-Halivni (paragraph midrash) from *The Book and the Sword*\*
  - Jacob Glatstein (poem) "The Dead Do Not Praise God"\*
- Th, 2/17: Was there a Difference between the Experiences of Men and Women in the Camps?
- Doris Bergen, chapter 7: "The Peak Years of Killing, 1942 and 1943," pp.191-203
  - Na'ama Shik, "Infinite Loneliness: Some Aspects of the Lives of Jewish Women in the Auschwitz Camps According to Testimonies and Autobiographies Written Between 1945 and 1948," from *Lessons and Legacies, Volume VII, From Generation to Generation*\*

- Sara Nomberg-Przytyk, "Esther's First Born," from *Auschwitz: True Tales from a Grotesque Land*\*

- T, 2/22: What is Resistance?
- Doris Bergen, chapter 7: "The Peak Years of Killing," pp. 203-214
  - Lucy Dawidowicz, from chapter 9: "Resistance," read introduction (pp. 329-333) and document "Three Communiqués of the Jewish Combat Organization," pp. 354-359
- Th, 2/24: View & Discuss Jan Karski and Rudolf Vrba interviews from Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*
- Jan Karski, "Shoah," in Stuart Liebman, ed., *Claude Lanzmann's Shoah*, pp. 172-174.\*
- FIRST PAPER DUE**
- T, 3/1: When are the Americans Coming?
- Doris Bergen, chapter 8: "Death Throes and Killing Frenzies, 1944-1945," pp. 215-232
  - István Deák, "The British and the Americans," from *Essays on Hitler's Europe*\*
- Film Screening: *Fateless (Sorstalanság) (2005)*, TBA**
- Th, 3/3: Discussion of the film *Fateless*
- Imre Kertész, "Eureka! The 2002 Nobel Lecture," from *World Literature Today*, April-June 2003\*
- T, 3/8: "Is it Possible to be simultaneously a Victim and a Victimizer?"
- Jan Gross, *Neighbors*, pp. xv-94
- \*Nb. The endnotes to *Neighbors* are quite revealing; consult them as you move through the text.
- Th, 3/10: Discussion of *Neighbors*, continued
- Jan Gross, *Neighbors*, pp. 95-end
  - Tomasz Szarota, "The National Debate on Jedwabne," from *Thou Shalt Not Kill: Poles on Jedwabne*\*
- T, 3/15 and Th, 3/17: **NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK**

## Part II: Comparative Genocide

- T, 3/22: Why and How Do We Study Comparative Genocide?
- Robert Melson, "Introduction: Overview and Major Themes," from *Revolution and Genocide*, pp. 1-39.\*
- DISCUSS SECOND PAPER ASSIGNMENT**
- Th, 3/24: Who are the Perpetrators? How do Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing?
- James Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 9-24, 137-161.
- T, 3/29: Who are the Victims?
- James Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 196-220.

- Th, 3/31: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Precedents I
- Juergen Zimmer, "The First Genocide of the Twentieth Century: The German War of Destruction in South-West Africa (1904-1908) and the Global History of Genocide," from *Lessons and Legacies, volume VIII, From Generation to Generation\**
- Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>: Required attendance at the Greater Lafayette Holocaust Remembrance Conference  
GLHRC [www.glhrc.org](http://www.glhrc.org), TBA**
- T, 4/5: Remembering Genocide: Sites and Acts of Commemoration
- Discussion of GLHRC
  - Discussion of selected sites, memorials
- Th, 4/7: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Precedents II
- Robert F. Melson, "The Turkish Revolution and the Armenian Genocide" from *Revolution and Genocide*, pp. 141-170\*
- T, 4/12: Rwanda: What was the Nature of the Genocide?
- Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, pp. 185-233
  - Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak* [selections]\*
- Film Screening: *Sometimes in April* (2005), TBA**
- Th, 4/14: Rwanda: "Hutu" and "Tutsi"
- Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, pp. 41-75
- T, 4/19: Postgenocide Rwanda
- Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, pp. 264-282
- Th, 4/21: Prevention?
- James Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 281-303
- T, 4/26: Learning & Building: Pedagogical Materials & Projects in Rwanda and Slovakia  
**SECOND PAPER DUE**
- Th, 4/28: Concluding Discussion