

## Exile Under Nazism and Communism

Jewish Studies 01:563:270/History 01:510:263/European Studies 01:360:292

12 College Avenue, Room 107

**DRAFT SYLLABUS**  
(subject to change)



**Professor Nancy Sinkoff**

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This course will explore the experience of Poles, Ukrainians, and Polish Jews under Nazi and Communist rule in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through history, travel writing, memoir, poetry, and film. Jews lived in Polish lands for a millennium and by the eighteenth century comprised 10% of Poland's urban population. However, the almost total destruction of Polish Jewry in World War II made the Jews a 'phantom limb,' a shadowy non-presence, in the post-war period. Post-war Poles and Ukrainians also experienced devastating dislocations due to the war and to the Communist takeover. All three peoples have

produced a wealth of memoir literature that explores the meanings of home, exile, longing, and the human need for connection to place that is shared, in this case study, by Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians. The paradox of this literature is that these nations appear unaware of the similar themes that their memoirs employ and evoke.

In order to understand the experience of belonging and exile, this course will introduce students to the history of Poland, beginning in its “Golden Age,” which saw the expansion of Jewish settlement throughout the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—which included Ukrainian lands—and continuing to the effects of the partitions in the late eighteenth century, in which Poland and its peoples became subjects of the Russian, Habsburg, and Austrian Empires. In the nineteenth century, the “national” principle prevailed in East Central Europe, affecting Polish, Ukrainian, and Jewish national aspirations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The course will investigate the dislocations caused by World War I, the exhilaration of the reestablishment of Polish statehood in the interwar period, and then focus on the catastrophic invasion and occupation of western Poland by the Nazi Third Reich in 1939 (and then of Soviet-occupied eastern Poland in 1941), and the subsuming of Polish sovereignty under Communism in 1946.

Students are required to read the materials in advance of our sessions. We will pay careful attention to the primary sources—all of which are available on Sakai—in class. Additional readings, in the form of articles and book chapters, have been uploaded on Sakai. The secondary sources will allow you to a) deepen your understanding of the history we’re engaging and b) enter into the contemporary scholarly conversation about the meaning of that history. Films, two poetry readings—one by a Polish poet, the other by a Ukrainian poet—and two guest lectures (one on the experience of the Roma under Nazism and one on the persistence of East European Jewish memory culture in contemporary Israel) will enhance students’ understanding of historical exile and its personal artistic expression.

### **Learning Goals:**

Acquire an overview of the major issues related to Nazi and Communist rule in Central Europe—particularly Poland—in the twentieth century, grounded in the history of the region from the sixteenth century forward.

Encounter the interconnected history of Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians: their shared pasts, their dissonant pasts, and their complicated memories of both.

Engage in the craft of history by studying a variety of primary sources, such as autobiographies, legal charters, poetry, and testimonies, and through reading secondary interpretations, including scholarly articles and textbook readings.

Develop skills of communicating orally and in writing through classroom discussion, oral presentations, and writing assignments.

**Required Text (available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore/Barnes and Noble, Ferren Mall, 732-246.8448):**

**Brian Porter-Szűcs, *Poland in the Modern World: Beyond Martyrdom* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014), ISBN: 978-1-4443-3218-6.**

**Primary Historical Sources (PHS), Secondary Interpretive Sources (SIS), Maps, and Images** are posted on Sakai ([sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu)). Click on **Exile Under Nazism and Communism, Spring 2016, Resources, folders: Primary Sources, Secondary Sources, Maps, or Images** to find what you need. Reminder: **All** primary sources should be printed out and brought to class in hard copy form.

### **Course Requirements and Grading:**

- 1. Attendance and participation in class:** Students are required to prepare the course readings and to participate actively. Students **must** bring the primary sources, printed from the Sakai site, to class on assigned dates. You may **not** read them from your computer or mobile device during class. Attendance will be taken at every class. Students with more than three unexcused absences will have their grade lowered by ½ step for each missed class.
- 2. Take-Home Midterms:** The exams will focus on analyses of the primary sources assigned in class. **15%/each = 30%**
- 2. Book Review (Oral Presentations and Written Review):** Students will write a four-five page review of a book, either a novel or a memoir, and to present their review orally to the class. The oral presentations will be done in student pairs or in groups of three. The written review will be done individually. A list of books will be given out in class on 2/2. **Oral presentation (10%), 4/26 or 4/28 ; Written Review (20%). Both components = 30%**
- 3. Mapping Project:** As part of the preparation for your book reviews (see #2), students will work with a Digital Humanities platform to “map” the locations—including biographical information, historical photographs, and other visual materials—in the books and in their authors’ imaginations and memories on a digital site. A **required** session will be held at the DH lab at the library at the start of the course. Students will use the digital site for their oral presentations; student will submit the data sheets, with images, etc. as part of their final written book review. **20%.**

**4. Questions/Responses to Poetry Readings and Guest Lectures.** Students will be required a) to prepare questions for a guest poet, Professor Anna Frajlich [Polish-American] and for a guest lecturer, Tamar Latzman, and b) to pose these questions to them after their presentations. Questions should be derived from the course materials (both those prior to and those assigned for each session) and are due on those sessions. **5%/each = 10%**

**5. Assignment based on Video testimony. 10%.**

**\*\*All of these components must be met to fulfill completion of the course\*\***

**1. Tues. 1/16: Introduction: Polish Geography, Jewish Geography; Multiple Exiles**  
"Polin," S. Y. Agnon, from *Ir u-Melo'ah/The City and its Fullness* (handout)  
Anne Applebaum, "Introduction, *Between East and West: Crossing the Borderlands of Eastern Europe.*" (handout)  
Terms for Polish History. (SIS, Sakai)

**2. Thurs. 1/18: The Polish Kingdom and the Origins of Polish Jewry**  
Patrice Dabrowski, *Poland: The First Thousand Years*, pp. 5-40. (SIS, Sakai)  
Gershon David Hundert, "Some Basic Characteristics of the Jewish Experience in Poland." (SIS, Sakai)  
Israel Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland*, "Introduction" and "Early Documentary Mention." (SIS, Sakai)

**3. Tues., 1/23: The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: Politics and Peoples**  
Patrice Dabrowski, *Poland: The First Thousand Years*, pp. 106-140 (SIS, Sakai)

**4. Thurs., 1/25: Legal Structure, Socio-Economic Conditions (Jews, Serfs, Poles) in the Commonwealth**  
Charter of Bolesław the Pious. (PHS, Sakai)  
Adam Teller, "The Legal Status of Jews on the Magnate Estates in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century." (SIS, Sakai)  
Govind Sreenivasan, "Serfdom in East Central Europe." (SIS, Sakai)

**5. Tues., 1/30: Cossack Might in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century [\*\*Book Review Assignment and List Given Out\*\*]**  
Nathan Neta Hannover, excerpts from *The Abyss of Despair* (PHS, Sakai)  
Dabrowski, pp. 177-209 (SIS, Sakai)  
Chone Shmeruk, "Yiddish Literature and Collective Memory: The Case of the Chmielnicki Massacres." (SIS, Sakai)

**6. Thurs., 2/1: LIBRARY DIGITAL HUMANITIES SESSION. Alexander Library, 169 College Avenue, rooms 413 and 415 (4<sup>th</sup> floor).**

**7. Tues., 2/6: The Partitions of Poland**

Porter-Szűcs, pp. 6-42.

Dabrowski, pp. 262-302. (SIS, Sakai)

Map, "The Partitions of Poland." (Sakai)

**8. Thurs. 2/8: Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians Become Austrian, Russian, and Prussian Subjects (and Citizens) in the Long Nineteenth Century**

Preamble to Joseph II's *Toleranzpatent* for Galicia, 1789. (PHS, Sakai)

German and Hebrew Diplomas from Joseph Perl's Modern School. (Images, Sakai)

Israel Bartal, "Austria and the Jews of Galicia," and "The Conservative Alliance: Galicia under Emperor Franz Josef." (SIS, Sakai)

Piotr Wandycz, "From the Congress of Vienna to 1830." (SIS, Sakai)

John-Paul Himka, "Religion and State in Austrian Galicia." (SIS, Sakai)

**9. Tues., 2/13: Polish Nationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century [\*\*Take-Home Midterm #1 Handed Out\*\*]**

Adam Mickiewicz, "The Books of the Polish Nation." (PHS, Sakai)

Dabrowski, 303-337. (SIS, Sakai)

Peter Brock, "Polish Nationalism." (SIS, Sakai)

**10. Thurs., 2/15: World War I, the End of Empire, Poland's Rebirth, Ukrainian Disappointments**

Porter-Szűcs, pp. 43-89.

Dabrowski, pp. 362-383. (SIS, Sakai)

**11. Tues. 2/20: The Interwar Polish State [\*\*Midterm #1 Due\*\*]**

Joseph Rothschild, "Poland," in *East Central Europe Between the Wars*. (SIS, Sakai)

Porter-Szűcs, pp. 90-125.

**12. Thurs., 2/22: National Minorities: The Jewish Community**

Film: "Struggles for Poland"

**13. Tues. 2/27: The Rise of the Third Reich and the Beginning of WWII, 1939-1941**

Felix Gilbert, *The End of the European Era: 1890 to the Present*, pp. 270-299. (SIS, Sakai)

Porter-Szűcs, pp. 144-166.

**14. Thurs. 3/1: Soviet Crimes in Poland at the Start of the War**

FILM: "Katyń," by Andrzej Wajda (2007).

[http://www.wajda.pl/en/o\\_sobie.html](http://www.wajda.pl/en/o_sobie.html)

Katyń Text (PHS, Sakai)

Katyń Headstone Plaque (Images, Sakai)

**15. Tues., 3/6: National Minorities: The Case of the Roma [\*\*Questions Due\*\*]**

Visiting Lecturer: Dr. Joanna Talewicz-Kwiatkowska, Fulbright Visiting Scholar at Rutgers from Poland, "The Fate of the Roma Under Nazism and Communism."

Porter-Szűcs, pp. 126-143.

Guenter Lewy, "Gypsies in German Concentration Camps." (SIS, Sakai)

Yehuda Bauer, "Gypsies." (SIS, Sakai)

**16. Thurs. 3/8: WWII, 1941-1945**

Reinhard Heydrich, "Instruction to Chiefs of the *Einsatzgruppen*, September 21, 1939" and other sources from Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *Holocaust Reader*. (PHS, Sakai)

Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, "Preface," *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry* (PHS, Sakai)

Timothy Snyder, "Holocaust: The Ignored Reality," *New York Review of Books*. (SIS, Sakai)

Mark Mazower, "War of Annihilation: Into the Soviet Union." (SIS, Sakai)

**SPRING BREAK, 3/10-18, no class on 3/13 or 3/15**

**17. Tues., 3/20: Warsaw's End**

Marek Edelman, excerpts from *The Ghetto Fights* (1945). (PHS, Sakai)

Czesław Miłosz, "Campo di Fiori" and "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto." (PHS, Sakai)

Grossman, "Treblinka." (PHS, Sakai)

"Recollections: A set of memoirs and diary entries by the Warsaw Uprising participants collected and translated by the Polish Academic Information Center at SUNY-Buffalo."

<http://www.warsawuprising.com/witness.htm> (PHS, Sakai)

Porter-Szűcs, pp. 166-185.

**18. Thurs., 3/22: Postwar Poland, Sovietization**

Porter-Szűcs, pp. 186-230.

Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, "Preface," and Chapter One, "The Pill of Murti-Bing." (PHS, Sakai)

**Recommended:** Screening at home: "Struggles for Poland: Bright Days of Tomorrow."

**19. Tues., 3/27: Post-Stalinist Poland [\*\*Take-Home Midterm #2 Handed Out\*\*]**

Porter-Szűcs, pp. 231-257.

Adam Wazyk, "Poem for Adults." (PHS, Sakai)

**Recommended:** Screening at home: "Struggles for Poland: Sweepers of Stairs."

**20. Thurs., 3/29: 1968: Jewish Exile from Poland [\*\*Questions Due\*\*]**

Visiting Presentation: "Exile as a Journey," Anna Frajlich, Polish-American now living in New York City.

Selections of Frajlich's poetry. (PHS, Sakai)

Łukasz Hirszowicz, "The Jewish Issue in Post-War Communist Politics," in *The Jews in Poland*, pp. 199-208. (SIS, Sakai)

Dariusz Stola, "The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967-1968." (SIS, Sakai)

**21. Tues., 4/3: Ukrainians, Jews, and Germans during World War II [\*\*Midterm #2 Due\*\*]**

Grossman, "Kiev-Baba Yar." (PHS, Sakai)

Timothy Snyder, "Communism and Cleansed Memories." (SIS, Sakai)

John-Paul Himka, "Ukrainian Collaboration in the Extermination of the Jews During the Second World War: Sorting Out the Long-Term and Conjunctural Factors." (SIS, Sakai)

**Recommended:** <http://ukrainianjewishencounter.org/>

**22. Thurs., 4/5: Postwar L'viv/Lvov/Lwów**

Applebaum, "Lviv/Lvov/Lwów," pp. 199-218 (PHS, Sakai)

Christopher Mick, *Lemberg, Lwow, L'viv, 1914-1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City* (SIS, Sakai)

**23. Tues., 4/10: Communism's End and the Beginning of New Memory**

FILM: "Three Stories of Galicia" (2010)

**24. Thurs., 4/12: Contemporary Ukraine [\*\*Questions Due\*\*]**

Visiting Presentation: Serhiy Zhadan, Ukrainian poet now living in L'viv.

Selections of Zhadan's poetry (PHS, Sakai)

John-Paul Himka, "The Reception of the Holocaust in Post-Communist Ukraine." (SIS, Sakai)

**25. Tues., 4/17: Contested Memories of the Polish-Jewish Past (Auschwitz and Jedwabne)**

Documents from the Auschwitz Convent Controversy (PHS, Sakai)

Antony Polonsky, "Poles, Jews, and the Problems of a Divided Memory." (SIS, Sakai)

James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (SIS, Sakai)

Michael Steinlauf, "Memory Reconstructed" and "Memory Regained." (SIS, Sakai)

**26. Thurs., 4/19: The Repressed East European Jewish Past Returns [\*\*Questions Due\*\*]**

Visiting Presentation: Tamar Latzman, Israeli Videographer now living in Tel Aviv.

"My Soul Cleaveth Unto Thee." (SIS, Sakai)

"Spirits in the Material World: Interview with Rachel Elior on dybbuks." (SIS, Sakai)  
Simon Rabinovitch, "Diaspora, Nation, and Messiah." (SIS, Sakai)

**27. Tues., 4/24: Student Reports**

**28. Thursday, 4/26: Student Reports**

**FINAL BOOK REVIEWS, with MAP DATA SHEETS, IMAGES, etc., DUE on Thursday, May 5, via email: [nsinkoff@rutgers.edu](mailto:nsinkoff@rutgers.edu)**

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:** The History Department at Rutgers has established a set of guidelines setting forth the department's policy on appropriate classroom etiquette for both professors and students (<http://history.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies/52-academics/undergraduate-program/108-policy-on-mutual-responsibilities-and-classroom-etiquette>). The guidelines endeavor to create a classroom environment appropriate for effective learning. They note that students who conduct private conversations (either with a fellow student or using a cell phone) or read material, *particularly on-line or on a phone* not related to the class while the class is in progress distract the attention of the professor and fellow students from course material. It is critical that you do not engage in these activities. If you do, I will ask you to leave the classroom if you engage in such activities. You will not receive credit for attending class if you are asked to leave because of rude or inappropriate behavior.

Because of this policy, you should not enroll in this course if your work schedule or obligations for a sports team conflict with the class period. Such conflicts will NOT be excused absences. Medical issues necessitating multiple absences are the only causes that I will consider as legitimate grounds to mitigate the attendance penalty.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

**PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism is unacceptable. Any work you hand in must be done independently and with appropriate citations. Not only direct quotation, but also paraphrasing someone else's work, requires an endnote or footnote. Cases of plagiarism will immediately be sent to the appropriate college dean for review. The current academic integrity policy can be found here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

**EXAM EXCUSE POLICY:** Excused absences from exams will only be granted for students who can document a medical or family emergency. Students who feel a personal emergency is sufficiently grave to warrant an excused absence must speak with the dean of their college, and obtain a written letter from him/her explaining the



nature of the emergency. Otherwise, non-attendance at an exam will result in failure of that exam.

**EMAIL CONTACT:** Every student has been given an official Rutgers email address by the university. I will use the email program through the SAKAI website to make any necessary changes to the syllabus and for announcements. Therefore, if you do not use your Rutgers' email regularly, it is your responsibility to set up your Rutgers account to forward to the appropriate address.