

**NB: This is a sample syllabus that reflects the variety of topics we will cover and the kind of work that we will do. Specific readings and lecture topics are subject to change.**

**History 261  
The History of the Holocaust**

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Fall 2016  
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Office Hours: TTH 4:00-5:00pm

**Description of Course and Course Learning Goals**

What was the Holocaust? How did the Holocaust become the “capital-H” Holocaust? And how did the Holocaust come to occupy such a central role in the politics and culture of our own time? This course examines the history and memory of Nazi genocide. Topics will include antisemitism and racism, Nazism, the relationship between war and genocide, collaboration and resistance, ghettos, concentration camps, resistance, and memory of the Holocaust in the United States. Our goal will be to examine the main aspects of the history of the Holocaust, so that we can begin to ask informed questions about how consciousness of the Holocaust affects the way that we think about persecution and genocide in our own time. Our readings will cover a wide range of materials, including scholarly works, primary sources, memoirs, video testimonies, films, and art.

**Course Requirements:**

- 2 Midterm Exams (25% each)
- 5-6 pp. Term Paper (25%)
- Final (25%)

See Class Schedule for the dates of the Midterm and Final Exams. All Exams will be held in our regular classroom. There are no alternate exam days.

**Course Sakai Site**

Some of the course readings are marked with an asterisk (\*). This means that they will be available through our Sakai course website at sakai.rutgers.edu. You will also find a copy of this syllabus posted there, in case you should lose this one. From time to time, I will also post additional materials. If there are any changes to the syllabus, I will announce these in class and then post them on the website. You are expected to check the course website regularly to get all readings not available for purchase and to learn about any changes to the schedule.

**Term Paper:**

For the term paper, you will write a critical review of an interview of a single survivor available in the Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. I will give you more information about the paper and about the Visual History Archive later in the semester. The final paper will be due in class on the date given below.

**Assignment Policy**

One letter grade per calendar day will be deducted from your term paper grade if it is turned in late. Exceptions will only be considered in the case of a documentable emergency. The only acceptable documentation is a letter from the office of the dean of your college, stating the nature of the emergency. Essays submitted via email will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to make back-up files of your work.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is unacceptable. Cases of plagiarism will immediately be sent to the appropriate college dean for review. When I hand out the paper topic, we will discuss what constitutes plagiarism. In the meantime, go to <http://history.rutgers.edu/undergrad/plagiarism.htm> for more information.

**Turnitin.com**

All term papers must also be submitted to turnitin.com for review. I will give you more detailed instructions about how to do this later in the semester. Papers not submitted to turnitin.com will not receive a grade. Plagiarized papers will be handled in the way described above.

**Exam Excuse Policy:**

Excused absences from exams will only be granted for students who can document 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. No excused absence will be granted without a letter from the dean of your college. Students who are unclear about the course's requirements should speak to me early in the semester.

**Email Contact:**

Every student has been given an official Rutgers email address by the university. If changes to the syllabus become necessary, or if any announcements to all students need to be made, I will use the email address for each student supplied to me by the registrar. If this is not the email account you regularly use, it is your responsibility to set up your Rutgers account to forward to the appropriate address.

**Books Available for Purchase at Rutgers University Bookstore**

Readings for each class session are given on the course schedule. You are expected to have read and thought about each reading before you come to class. Apart from the four books listed below, all other readings will be available for download on our course Sakai site. These are marked with an asterisk (\*).

The following have all been ordered through Rutgers University Bookstore. They can also be purchased on-line, through sites such as Amazon.

Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide. A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2009 – ISBN: 9780742557154)

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Holocaust in Poland* (Harper Perennial Reprint, 1993 – ISBN: 9780060995065)

Marion Kaplan. *Between Dignity and Despair. Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1999 – ISBN: 9780195130928)

Chil Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka. A Memoir.* (Pegasus Books, 2012 – ISBN: 9781605981390)

Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness* (Cornell University Press, 2006 – ISBN: 9780801473166)

**Class Schedule**

9/6

Thinking about the Holocaust Today: The Themes of the Course

**I. Germans and Jews**

9/8 Between Antisemitism and Assimilation

Reading: Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 17-50

9/13

Who Were the Nazis? What Did They Believe?

Reading: Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 62-74 and 94-119

9/15

Excluding Jews

Reading: Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 119-145

## II. Race, Empire, and Genocide

9/20 Racial Enemies, Racial Strength

Reading: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 129-166

9/22 Occupying Poland

Reading: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 167-207

9/27 The Invasion of the Soviet Union

Reading: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 207-237

9/29 The War Against the Jews

Reading: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 237-275.

10/4 **NO CLASS – ROSH HASHANAH**

10/6 **Midterm Exam #1**

10/11 **NO CLASS – YOM KIPPUR**

## III. Ghettos

10/13

The Paradoxes of Nazi Economic Policy

Reading: \*Christopher Browning, “Jewish Workers in Poland: Self-Maintenance, Exploitation, Destruction”

10/18

The *Judenrat*

Reading: \*Dan Diner, “Why the Jewish Councils Cooperated.”

10/20

The Question of Resistance

Readings: \*Richard Middleton-Kaplan: “The Myth of Jewish Passivity.”

## IV. Camps

10/25

Life and Death in the Lager

Reading: \*Christopher Browning, “Jewish Workers and Survivor Memories: The Case of the Starachowice Labor Camp”

10/27

How ‘modern’ was the Holocaust? Industrial Killing

Reading: Chil Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*

11/1

Imagining the Unimaginable

Reading: Chil Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*

11/3 **MIDTERM EXAM**

## V. Moral Choices

11/8

The Perpetrators

Reading: Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 38-78, 121-133

11/10

Collaboration: Nazi Allies and Puppet States

Reading: \*Vladimir Solonari, "Model Province: Explaining the Holocaust of Bessarabian and Bukovinian Jewry"

11/15

Moral Choices in the Bloodlands

Reading: \*Jan Grabowski, "Rural Society and the Jews in Hiding"  
\*Nechama Tec, "Righteous Gentiles"

11/17 **NO CLASS**

11/22

"A Problem from Hell:" Intervening in Genocide

Reading: \*Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell*, 31-47.

**ESSAY DUE IN CLASS**

11/24 **THANKSGIVING**

## VI. The Holocaust as Moral History

11/29

After the War

Reading: Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, 1-56

12/1

The Survivor as Witness

Reading: Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, 56-96

12/6

From *Holocaust* to *Schindler's List*: The Holocaust in American Life

Reading: Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, 96-145

12/8

Holocaust Museums

Reading: \*Dan Stone. "Memory, Memorials and Museums."

12/13

The Holocaust and Human Rights

Reading: \*Aleida Assmann. "The Holocaust – a Global Memory? Extension and Limits of a New Memory Community."

**The Final Exam will take place IN OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM on the day and at the time determined by the university exam schedule. That day is Tuesday, December 20, 8-11pm.**

