

History 261
The History of the Holocaust

Paul Hanebrink
MTH 12.35-1.55pm
Fall 2011

hanebrin@history.rutgers.edu

Office Hours: TH 2.30-4.30
and by appointment
Office: Van Dyck 101A

Rutgers University

TA: Nova Robinson
e-mail: novar@eden.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: M 2.30-3.30 (Van Dyck 009)

Description of Course and Course Learning Goals

This course is a detailed examination of the programs of persecution and mass murder carried out by the Nazi German regime between 1933 and 1945. Several themes will be prominent throughout the semester. First, we will examine and try understand when and how policies of exclusion can be transformed into a systematic program of murder. In this regard, we will examine not only the development of Nazi Germany as a “racial state,” but also the role of ideologies, such as antisemitism, nationalism, and racism, in shaping policies of exclusion in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Second, we will focus on the place of the Holocaust in European, and not only German, history. The events we associate with the Holocaust took place across the continent of Europe and were shaped by local histories; throughout the course, we will pay close attention to the interaction between Germans, Jews, and non-German native populations. Third, we will try to understand how eyewitness memories, historical research, and media representations all shape our contemporary understanding of what the Holocaust was and why it seems so important to us today. The mass murder of European Jews will be the central focus of this course. We will, however, also discuss programs of discrimination and murder carried out against other groups (e.g. Roma, the disabled, and Poles) and attempt to place these phenomena within the context of Nazi German racial policy.

Course Requirements:

- 2 midterms (20% each)
- Final (30%)
- 5-6 pp. Term Paper (30%)

The exams (midterms and final) will take place in class on the dates given below; the final exam will be taken in class at the time designated by the university exam schedule. You will also be asked to write a book review.

SAS Core Goals:

This course has been certified for SAS Core Goals I, J, and L. In other words, this course will teach skills to: (I) Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis; (J) Identify and critically assess ethical issues in social science and history; and (L) Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.

If you have any questions about what this means, please come to my office hours or speak with the dean of your college.

Course Sakai Site

Some of the course readings 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.

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* (ISBN: 9780742557154)

Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair. Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (ISBN: 9780195130928)

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

Donald Niewyk, ed. *The Holocaust. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (ISBN: 9780547189468)

Class Schedule

I. Creating Nazi Society

Week 1

Sept. 1: Getting Started

Week 2

Sept. 5: No Class – Labor Day

Sept. 8: Germans and Jews: Background

Reading: a) Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 10-16
b) John Weiss, “Anti-Semitism Through the Ages,” in Niewyk, 12-23

Week 3

Sept. 12: Fascism, Racism, and the Origins of the Nazi Party

Reading: a) Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 1-11, 29-52
b) Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 17-50

Sept. 15: The Nazi Party in Power

Reading: a) Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 53-56, 64-77
b) Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 50-74

Week 4

Sept. 19: Excluding Jews

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

Sept. 22: Targeting Others: The Disabled, Roma, and Asocials

Reading: a) Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 11-26, 56-60, 63-64, 99-100, 125-129
b) Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 94-119
c) Henry Friedlander, “The Opening Act of Nazi Genocide,” in Niewyk, 38-55

Week 5

Sept. 26: The International Context: Refugees Amidst the March to War

Reading: a) Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 77-90, 94-97
b) Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 119-145

Sept. 29: No Class – Rosh Hashanah

II. War and Genocide

Week 6

Oct. 3: **EXAM 1**

Oct. 6: Planning for a War of Annihilation

- Reading:
- a) Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 101-110, 145-155, 161-170
 - b) Omer Bartov, "Hitler's Army," in Niewyk, 76-83
 - c) Selected Documents (Extracts from Commissar Order, *Einsatzgruppen* Reports, Excerpts of Hitler's Speech of January 30, 1939)

Week 7

Oct. 10: A Decision in Principle

- Reading:
- Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 159-160
 - Ian Kershaw, "Hitler's Decisive Role," in Niewyk, 23-38

Oct. 13: Murder Squads in Poland and Ukraine

- Reading:
- a) Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 118-125
 - b) Christopher Browning, "Ordinary Men," in Niewyk, 84-99
 - c) Patrick Desbois, *Holocaust by Bullets*, excerpts

Week 8

Oct. 17: The Nazi New Order in Europe

- Reading:
- Robert Paxton and Michael Marrus, "Western Europeans and the Jews," in Niewyk, 206-217
 - b) Gutman and Krakowski, "The Poles Helped Persecute the Jews," in Niewyk, 180-192
 - c) Richard Lukas, "The Poles Were Fellow Victims," in Niewyk, 192-206

Oct. 20: The Politics of Rescue

- Reading:
- a) Nechama Tec, "Righteous Gentiles," in Niewyk, 217-225
 - b) William D. Rubenstein, "The Myth of Rescue," in Niewyk, 228-240
 - c) Walter Laqueur, "The Failure to Comprehend," in Niewyk, 252-267
- Optional:
- Michael Phayer, "The Silence of Pope Pius XII," in Niewyk, 240-252

Week 9

Oct. 24: **EXAM 2**

III. Jewish Responses to Murder

Oct. 27: Life and Death in the Ghettos

- Reading:
- a) Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 110-117
 - b) Selected Documents on the Ghettos of Warsaw and Łódź

Week 10

Oct. 31: The *Judenrat*

- Reading:
- a) Dan Diner, "Why the Jewish Councils Cooperated," in Niewyk, 165-177
 - b) Selected Documents on the Ghettos of Warsaw and Łódź

Nov. 3: Taking Up Arms: The Partisans of Vilna

- Reading:
- a) Raul Hilberg, "Two Thousand Years of Jewish Appeasement," in Niewyk, 144-150

- b) Yehuda Bauer, "Forms of Jewish Resistance," in Niewyk, 150-165
- c) Selected Documents on Warsaw and Vilna

Week 11

Nov. 7: Memorializing Resistance: Discussion of Selected In-Class Images and Screenings

IV. The Camps

Nov. 10: Concentration Camps, Death Camps

Reading: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 174-193

Week 12

Nov. 15: Industrial Killing

Reading: Bruno Bettelheim, "Helpless Victims," in Niewyk, 104-109
Terrence Des Pres, "The Will to Survive," in Niewyk, 109-115
Primo Levi, "The Gray Zone," in Niewyk, 115-128

Nov. 17: No Class

Week 13

Nov. 22 (Tuesday! Your Thursday Classes Meet!): Life, Death, and the Nazi Slave Labor System

Reading: Begin reading Chil Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka* and finish over the Thanksgiving holiday.

(NB: We will not meet on Monday, Nov. 21. Your Weds. classes, if you have them, will meet that day.)

Nov. 24: **THANKSGIVING**

Week 14

Nov. 28: Remembering Survival: **CLASS DISCUSSION OF CHIL RAJCHMAN**

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

V. The Power of Memory

Dec. 1: Seeking Justice

Reading: Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 221-228

Week 15

Dec. 5: The Holocaust as Moral History: Discussion of *Night and Fog* (In-Class Screening)

Dec. 8: Memory and Representation: Discussion of Selected In-Class Screenings

Week 16

Dec. 12: Review. **TERM PAPER DUE**

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 Thursday, December 22, 2011, 12-3pm.