

**PLEASE NOTE: THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO  
CHANGE AS THE COURSE MIGHT NOT, IN  
FUTURE, BE CROSS LISTED AS AN  
UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE SEMINAR!**

**History 450 A01/ Germanic and Slavic Studies 580 A01**

# **The Holocaust**

**Fall 2018**

**CRNS: 11995/11872**



**Time:** Mondays, 2:30-5:20 pm

**Instructor:** Dr. K. Semmens

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Thursdays, 1:00 – 2:00pm, or by appointment

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**Course Website:** <http://coursespaces.uvic.ca/>

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This undergraduate/graduate seminar course examines the origins, progression, central characters, and enduring legacies of what is arguably the most horrific event of the twentieth century: the Holocaust. It is intended for students with a substantial background in twentieth century German and/or European history.

The Holocaust was the systematic mass murder of the Jews of Europe by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War. This course will therefore prioritize Jewish experiences of Nazi terror. However, the course will also look at how Nazi racial policy targeted other social and ethnic groups. In addition, we will cover the post-1945 representation of the Holocaust by historians, film makers, museum and memorial designers, and even graphic artists, in an attempt to assess the meaning the Holocaust still has today. Everyone should be clear at the outset that studying the Holocaust is deeply upsetting. All of us, at various points during the term, will find ourselves disturbed and unnerved.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Students who successfully complete requirements for History 450/GMST 580 will be able to:

- describe and compare the evolution, key events and central figures of the Holocaust in diverse European countries at various times between 1933 and 1945
- distinguish diverse axes of identity (eg. race, gender, class, religion, nation) that shaped Holocaust experiences, both of victims and perpetrators
- identify key turning points in Holocaust history, and describe the relationship between those turning points and the course of the Second World War generally
- identify, describe, and evaluate distinct scholarly approaches to historical questions about perpetrators, bystanders and victims
- read original evidence, scholarly arguments, and relevant popular depictions closely and critically
- devise an independent primary source analysis, exploring and synthesising a range of sources, weighing their relative merits and limitations, and crafting a coherent and convincing argument about the historical value of that source
- devise, as a group, and complete an individual final in-class essay that explains and evaluates themes, concepts, and approaches relevant to the cultural history of the Holocaust
- devise, research and complete an object-based (ie. primary source based) research essay on the Holocaust

We will practice these skills regularly in reading for discussions, preparing discussion questions, debating and discussing readings and ideas, writing primary source analyses, writing the in-class essay and research essay.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

This is a cross-listed undergraduate History course/graduate Germanic and Slavic Studies course. There are therefore two different sets of evaluation criteria.

As a 450 student you will be evaluated on your seminar participation (25%), discussion questions (5%) and primary source analysis (35%) but you have a choice for your remaining assignment (35%). You can choose (A) the in-class essay (26 November) or (B) the research essay (due 10 December).

As a 580 student, you will be evaluated on your seminar participation (25%), discussion questions (5%), oral presentation (15%) and research essay (35%), but you have a choice for your remaining assignment (20%). You can choose (A) the primary source analysis (due 29 October) or (B) the in-class essay (26 November). See more details in ASSIGNMENTS below.

### **HISTORY 450:**

PLEASE NOTE: Students must complete assignments 1, 3 and 4 to pass the course.

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|--|-----|
| 1. Seminar Participation (ongoing)   | 25% |
| 2. Discussion Questions (ongoing)  | 5%  |
| 3. Primary Source Analysis (due 29 October)  | 35% |
| 4. (A) In-Class Essay (written 26 November) – or –<br>(B) Research Essay (due 10 December) | 35% |

### **GERMANIC AND SLAVIC STUDIES 580:**

PLEASE NOTE: Students must complete assignments 1, 3, 4 and 5 to pass the course.

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| 1. Seminar Participation (ongoing)   | 25% |
| 2. Discussion Questions (ongoing)  | 5%  |
| 3. (A) Primary Source Analysis (due 29 October) – or –<br>(B) In-Class Essay (written 26 November) | 20% |
| 4. Oral Presentation (19 November)   | 15% |
| 5. Research Essay (due 10 December)  | 35% |

## READINGS:

Assigned readings are the same for 450 and 580 students. Please see the COURSE SCHEDULE. The following texts are required and are available at the UVic Bookstore:

Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*.

Art Spiegelman, *Maus*.

Elie Wiesel, *Night*.

Judith Isaacson, *Seed of Sarah*.

All other required readings, photographs and oral histories are available online via the CourseSpaces website. Please contact me right away if there are any problems accessing these materials.

## ASSIGNMENTS:

### 1. Seminar participation (25%) – 450 and 580 students

Seminars allow students to enter into a dialogue with other students, the instructor, the authors we read and, indeed, the past itself. ***Simply attending classes is not enough***. Both the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions will be assessed. Top participation grades will go to students whose comments convey a thorough understanding of assigned material, provide useful comparisons across readings, offer independent critical interpretations, and engage the ideas of their peers. Because of the importance of discussion to this class, students who miss more than two classes without a doctor's note or equivalent risk receiving an incomplete for the course.

*Please see the Participation Grading Rubric available on CourseSpaces.*

At any time during the term, I am happy to give feedback and/or an interim participation grade should students wish. See CourseSpaces for a reminder!

### 2. Discussion questions (5%) – 450 and 580 students

I want to hear more from you! What questions are going through your minds as you read and think about the Holocaust? Each week, before the beginning of class, you will submit a list of at least **five (5)** typewritten questions that arose from that week's readings and from thinking about that week's topic specifically (ie. not just questions about the Holocaust in general). You do not need to answer them. You may submit them either in hardcopy form at the start of class or via CourseSpaces as a Word doc or pdf.

To receive full marks (5%), you need to submit 9 sets of at least 5 applicable, appropriate, typewritten, edited and proofread questions on that week's topic and specific readings. You may only submit these questions before the beginning of the relevant class (Mondays, 2:30pm). You may submit them at any time before then, but no late questions will be accepted and no handwritten questions will be accepted.

PLEASE NOTE: These questions should not include the discussion questions I have posted on CourseSpaces.

Evaluation: 9 sets of questions = 5%; 8 sets = 4%, 7 sets = 3%; 6 sets = 2%; 5 sets = 1%; 0-4 sets = 0%.

### **3. Primary Source Analysis (35% for 450 students; 20% for 580 students, Option A)**

You will analyze a primary source of your choice relating directly to the topics and themes covered in this course, **due Monday, 29 October 2018 at 2:30pm**. The purpose of this assignment is to read, analyze and contextualize your chosen primary source. Ultimately, you are answering the question: How valuable is it as an historical source? A copy of the source (photograph, postcard, newspaper article, document, etc., etc.) must accompany your paper. You must use *at least three academic secondary sources* to complete your analysis, **not including course texts, readings, encyclopedias, newspaper articles or websites**. Some of the questions you might wish to consider include:

- What can you say about the author of the document?
- What perspective did he or she have on the event?
- What were his or her biases, prejudices, etc.?
- What was the purpose behind creating the document?
- Is its timing significant?
- How reliable is the document?
- Is it internally consistent?
- What kinds of sources might be used to corroborate or challenge it?
- How does it differ from what historians have later said about its subject matter?

Word length: 1500 words. **You must include a 'Works Cited', a cover page, footnotes or endnotes, and numbered pages.**

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Late primary source analyses will be penalized **3% per day**. No rewrites will be granted and **NO PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSES WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER 5 NOVEMBER 2018**. Late assignments should be submitted to the History Department office, Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm. **DO NOT SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS BY E-MAIL!**

### **4. Essay Presentation (15%) – 580 students ONLY**

On **Monday, 19 November 2018**, in a short (approx. 5-7 minute) oral presentation with powerpoint slides and/or other visual accompaniment, 580 students will introduce the topic of their research essay, the material objects it is based on, the key secondary sources being consulted and any tentative thesis and conclusions.

### **5. In-Class Essay – 35% for 450 students, Option A; 20% for 580 students, Option B)**

On **Monday, 26 November 2018, at 2:30pm**, students will write a two hour open book, in-class essay. We will discuss possible essay questions together as a class and the

instructor will devise the final essay question based on student input. During this in-class essay, students may consult their course texts and/or their class notes, but **not** their laptops – ie. You should print off your class notes if you have been taking them on your laptop. **You must write the essay on this date and at this time.**

NOTE: Students choosing other assignment options do not attend class today.

## **6. Research Essay (35%) – Option B for 450 students and ALL 580 students**

“The Holocaust in Objects”: In consultation with the instructor, interested 450 students and all 580 students will choose 3-5 related “objects” (artifacts, photographs, documents, diary excerpts, posters, etc. – ie. primary sources) connected to a Holocaust topic of their choice and will use them as a foundation for their research essays. The objects can be used as evidence, as illustration, as sources, etc., alongside at least 10 academic secondary sources (ie. articles from peer reviewed journals and academic monographs). Word count: 3000. We can meet as a group and individually to discuss this essay further.

**Due: Monday, 10 December 2018 by 4:00pm**

### **\*\*\*PLAGIARISM\*\*\***

Students are expected to submit their own original work and are not permitted to re-submit material written for another course. Plagiarism consists of using the words and ideas of another author without appropriate citation, including material taken from Internet websites (ie. Wikipedia)! Any plagiarism and/or insufficient citations will be penalized, ranging from a zero on the assignment to a failing grade for the course. See the University calendar and the History Department’s statement attached here. **Please note: I reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software or other platforms to assess the integrity of student work and I am required by the History Department to submit all cases of suspected plagiarism to our Undergraduate Coordinator for further investigation without exception. *If you still have questions, please ask me.***

### **COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)**

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

### **September 10 – Introduction: Modern Anti-Semitism and European Jews before the Holocaust**

### **September 17 – Hitler and the Holocaust**

#### Readings:

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (*at least* Vol. 1, Chapters X, XI and Vol. 2, Chapters III, IV); Robert Carr, “*Mein Kampf*: The Text, its Themes and Hitler’s Vision”, *History Review* 57, (March 2007): 30-35

#### Suggested readings for this topic and next week:

Chapter 2 and Chapter 8 in Dan Stone, ed. *The Historiography of the Holocaust*

### **September 24 – The Beginning of the End: The 1938 Pogrom and the Evolution of the ‘Final Solution’**

#### Readings:

Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 119-200

#### Online Survivor Testimony:

“Survivors Remember Kristallnacht”, USHMM website

### **October 1 – The Perpetrators**

#### Readings:

Chapters 1, 3 and 5 (pp. 25-54, 78-96 and 120-142) in Olaf Jensen and C-C. W. Szejnmann, eds. *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers*

#### Website:

Browse photographs in the “Auschwitz Album”, USHMM website

### **October 8 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING MONDAY**

### **October 15 – The Camps: Part I**

#### Readings:

Elie Wiesel, *Night*

### **October 22 – The Camps: Part II**

#### Readings:

Judith Isaacson, *Seed of Sarah*; Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 1-16

## **October 29 – Children and the Holocaust**

### **\*PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSES DUE\***

#### Readings:

Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 94-118; Joanna Sliwa, “Coping with Distorted Reality: Children in the Krakow Ghetto,” *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture & History* 16, n. 1/2 (2010): 177-202.

#### Website:

Listen to at least two different oral histories on “Children during the Holocaust”, USHMM website

## **November 5 – Other Voices, Other Victims**

#### Readings:

Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair*, 201-228

#### Plus *at least two* of:

Guenter Lewy, “Introduction”, Chapter 1, and Chapter 10 in *Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies* (ebook, p.1-23, 152-166); Henry Friedlander, “Step by Step: The Expansion of Murder [of the Disabled], 1939-1941”, *German Studies Review* 17, no. 3 (1994): 495-507; Stefan Micheler and Patricia Szobar, “Homophobic Propaganda and the Denunciation of Same-Sex-Desiring Men under National Socialism”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 11, no. ½ (2002): 95-130; Thomas Earl Porter, “Hitler’s Rassenkampf in the East: The Forgotten Genocide of Soviet POWs,” *Nationalities Papers* 37, n. 6 (2009): 839-859; Jerry Bergman, “The Jehovah’s Witnesses’ Experience in the Nazi Concentration Camps: A History of their Conflicts,” *Journal of Church and State* 38, n. 1 (1996): 87-113.

## **November 12 – NO CLASS – READING BREAK**

## **November 19 – Representation, Memory and Holocaust Denial**

### **\*PRESENTATIONS FROM 580 STUDENTS\***

#### Readings:

Art Spiegelman, *Maus*; Frederick Schweitzer and Marvin Perry, Chapter 5, “Denying the Holocaust” (p.175-212) in *Anti-Semitism: Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present*

## **November 26 – \*IN CLASS ESSAY\***



### **December 3 – Museums and Memorials**

#### Readings:

Harold Marcuse, “Holocaust Memorials: The Emergence of a Genre”, *American Historical Review* 115, no.1 (2010): 53-89

#### Images:

Browse images of “Holocaust Memorials” at <http://chgs.umn.edu/museum/memorials/>

**December 10 - \*RESEARCH ESSAYS DUE\***