HISTORY 444
The Holocaust in History and Literature
Fall Semester 2010
MWF 10:00am-10:50am
Room: 1228 Faner Hall
Southern Illinois University

Instructor: Jonathan Wiesen
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Office Hours: Monday: 11:00 to 12:00, 1:00 to 2:00
Wednesday: 11:00 to 12:00, 1:00 to 2:00
Friday: 11:00 to 12:00

Course Description: This course introduces students to Nazi Germany’s systematic mass murder of Europe’s Jews and other minorities during the Second World War. While its primary focus is the history of these genocides and the historical discussions and debates that have arisen since 1945, it also attempts to present the students with a literary perspective on the Holocaust. Topics to be covered include the history of anti-Semitism, the debate over the role of Hitler in the Holocaust, the mindset of the perpetrators, Jewish reactions to the Holocaust, Holocaust denial, the “uniqueness” of the Holocaust, and memory after Auschwitz. We will read documents from the time period, contemporary historical studies on the Holocaust, and survivor accounts of their experiences.

Format and Expectations: Classes will meet on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays. Regular attendance is required to achieve a good grade. More than three unexcused absences may result in a lower final grade. Discussions are an integral part of the course and you are expected to come to class with the assigned readings, prepared to participate actively. Those who are shy or otherwise inhibited are encouraged to speak to me outside of class so that we can together devise ways of increasing your comfort level.

Assignments and Grading: Final grades will be calculated using the formula below. I will apply these grades with some flexibility. Solid class participation and/or improvement over the course of the semester will likely weigh more heavily in the final grade than indicated below, as will, conversely, a lack of initiative or missed classes. The three papers will be based on a specific book or set of readings. Paper topics will be distributed about two weeks beforehand in class. Papers are due at the beginning of the class on the dates indicated below. Late papers will be marked down a grade a day. You will occasionally be expected to turn in a short weekly assignment—such as a paragraph, a single page, or a list of questions—in preparation for discussion. These will be graded with a check or check plus and will contribute to your overall participation grade.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 Papers (4-5 pages each)</td>
<td>200 points each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>150 points</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>150 points</td>
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At the end of the semester, the points will correspond to the following letter grades:
Total of 1000 points: 900-1000 = A, 800-899 = B, 700-799 = C, 600-699 = D, Below 600 = F

Books: The following books are available at the University Bookstore, 710, and Saluki Bookstore. One copy of each book has also been placed on reserve at Morris Library.

Rita Botwinick, A Holocaust Reader
Marion Kaplan, Between Dignity and Despair
Gita Sereny, Into That Darkness
Tadeusz Borowski, This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen
Cynthia Ozick, The Shawl
Art Spiegelman, Maus I (My Father Bleeds History)

Weekly Topic Outline and Assignments

Week 1
Aug. 23 Course Overview/Why Study the Holocaust?
Aug. 25 The “Old World” of Jewish Europe
Aug. 27 Discussion

Readings: Botwinick, 24-36, 40-44

Week 2
Aug. 30 Jewish Emancipation and Assimilation
Sept. 1 Anti-Semitism: The History of an Ideology
Sept. 3 Discussion

Readings: Bergen, Ch. 1
Botwinick, 1-23, 124-27

Week 3
Sept. 6 No Class, Labor Day
Sept. 8 Germany after World War I and the Rise of Hitler
Sept. 10 The Great Depression and the Triumph of Nazism

Readings: Bergen, Ch. 2
Botwinick, 45-64, 132-35

Week 4
Sept. 13 The “Third Reich” and Racial Persecution; FIRST PAPER DUE
Sept. 15 Jewish Reactions to Persecution, 1933-38
Sept. 17 Discussion

Readings: Bergen, Ch. 3
Kaplan, 1-119
Botwinick, 112-23

**Week 5**  
**Sept. 20**  
The Escalation of Terror  
**Sept. 22**  
World War II  
**Sept. 24**  
Discussion  

Readings:  
Bergen, Chs. 4 and 5  
Sereny, 21-90  
Kaplan, 119-201

**Week 6**  
**Sept. 27**  
The “Final Solution” I: Planning  
**Sept. 29**  
The “Final Solution” II: Implementation  
**Oct. 1**  
Discussion  

Readings:  
Bergen, Ch. 6  
Botwinick, 162-77  
Sereny, 93-142

**Week 7**  
**Oct. 4**  
The Nazi Perpetrator  
**Oct. 6**  
Film: *Lodz Ghetto* (part 1)  
**Oct. 8**  
Film: *Lodz Ghetto* (part 2)  

Readings:  
Bergen, Ch. 7 (pp. 167-203)  
Botwinick, 65-88, 145-52, 154-61

**Week 8**  
**Oct. 11**  
No Class  
**Oct. 13**  
Discussion of *Lodz Ghetto* and readings on ghettos: **SECOND PAPER DUE**  
**Oct. 15**  
Wrap-up discussion of Sereny  

Readings:  
Sereny, 145-250

**Week 9**  
**Oct. 18**  
Life in the Concentration and Death Camps  
**Oct. 20**  
Slave Labor  
**Oct. 23**  
Discussion  

Readings:  
Borowski (entire)

**Week 10**  
**Oct. 25**  
Resistance  
**Oct. 27**  
Heroes and Rescuers  
**Oct. 29**  
Discussion
Readings:  Bergen, Ch. 7 (pp. 203-14) 
           Botwinick, 153-54, 187-205

**Week 11**
Nov. 1   The End of the Holocaust
Nov. 3   EXAM
Nov. 5   Discussion

Readings: Bergen, Ch. 8
           Botwinick, 177-186

**Week 12**
Nov. 8   Film on the Liberation of the Camps
Nov. 10  Discussion of Film
Nov. 12  Art, Memory, and the Holocaust

Readings: Ozick (entire)

**Week 13**
Nov. 15  Jewish Life After the Holocaust
Nov. 17  Discussion of Ozick and Spiegelman
Nov. 19  Film TBA

Readings: Spiegelman (entire)

**November 20-28, Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 14**
Nov. 29  Remembering the Holocaust I: Trials and Traumas
Dec. 1   Remembering the Holocaust II: Excerpts from Film Shoah
Dec. 3   Discussion; THIRD PAPER DUE

Readings: Bergen, Conclusion

**Week 15**
Dec. 6   Lecture and Discussion: Holocaust Denial
Dec. 8   Lecture and Discussion: The Uniqueness of the Holocaust
Dec. 10  Review for Final

Readings: Handouts on Holocaust denial

**Final Exam, Friday, Dec. 17, 10:10am-2:10pm**