

CASI 206
Culture and the Holocaust
Fall 2014

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Course Description

CASI 206 is an interdisciplinary examination of the Holocaust, the deliberate murder of six million Jews, Slavs, Gypsies, and other political and racial "undesirables" by the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. Major topics to be discussed include: the degree to which the Holocaust is "unique" in the annals of history; the debate between "intentionalists" and "functionalists" in Holocaust research; the degree to which traditional, religiously based anti-Semitism was responsible for the horrors of the death camps, and conversely, the degree to which more modern trends in society, politics, and science must be held accountable; the knowledge, or lack thereof, possessed by the German people at the time the murders were taking place; and the way in which the world has chosen to "memorialize" the Holocaust in fiction, film, and culture.

All these questions continue to stir debate. Virtually all of them are the subject of intense discussion (and often angry controversy) among the scholars who have studied them. This course will be no exception. You will undoubtedly hear points of view being presented that will conflict with your own, or that will simply be disturbing. You are encouraged, first of all, to consider the material being presented, and second, to formulate your own response to it. We hope this course will be a forum for a great deal of discussion and debate, and we hope that each of you will contribute to a frank, open atmosphere.

Rationale for inclusion in the Global Awareness category of the General Education curriculum:

Study of the Holocaust, the systematic extermination of six million Jews, Slavs, "Gypsies," and other "undesirables" by the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler, offers an extraordinary opportunity to examine the various mechanisms that produce a culture of intolerance and to see how, in a modern state, such a culture of intolerance can ultimately lead to genocide. "Culture and the Holocaust" meets the Global Awareness requirement of the general education curriculum because it presents a number of examples of the apparatuses by which modern regimes have managed to marginalize populations, subject them to horrific abuse, and, often enough, kill them—indeed, the Holocaust has become almost a blueprint for oppressive regimes throughout the globe interested in the politics and practice of mass murder. The course asks students to evaluate the roles of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. It asks students to think about what sorts of actions—religious, political, military—might have prevented the slaughter. Finally, the course asks students to reflect on how it is possible, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, that genocide has continued throughout the world, paying close attention to related and perhaps similar events, questioning the degree to which the Holocaust can be "compared" to the Armenian genocide, Stalin's programs of collectivization and his desire to "liquidate the kulaks as a class," the horrors of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, and the massacre of the Tutsi people in Rwanda in 1994.

Required Texts:

1. Berenbaum, Michael. *The World Must Know* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; Revised edition, 2005). ISBN-10: 080188358X
2. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998). ISBN-10: 0060995068
3. Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Touchstone, 1996). ISBN-10: 0684826801
4. Millu, Liana. *Smoke Over Birkenau* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998). ISBN-10: 0810115699
5. Schlink, Bernhard. *Flights of Love* (Vintage, 2002). ISBN-10: 0375725555
6. Spiegelman, Art. *Maus I* (New York: Pantheon, 1986). ISBN-10: 0394747232
7. Weiss, Peter. *The Investigation* (London: Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd, 2000). ISBN-10: 0714503010

There may be other required readings from time to time, either handed out in class or placed online.

You are also required to view the following films, which are considered course texts:

<i>The Reader</i>	<i>Jud Suss</i>
<i>Night and Fog</i>	<i>Triumph of the Will</i>
<i>Defiance</i>	<i>Selling Murder</i>

Several of these films will be shown in class. You will, however, be asked to watch a few on your own.

As the semester progresses we will have a number of guest speakers visit our class. Questions about their lectures will appear on your examinations.

There will also be a number of evening extra credit opportunities. These will be announced as the semester progresses.

Films and/or guest speakers may be added as requirements as the course unfolds.

Requirements:

CASI 206 is a lecture/discussion class. Students are required to attend lectures, read the books, see the films, attend presentations, and participate in classroom discussions. Usually, one of the members of the faculty team will direct the class each day, although both will always be present. Your learning will be tested by three examinations.

Technology:

Students cannot use computers, tablets, or cell phones during class time. If you are seen using a computer, tablet, or cell phone, you will be asked to leave.

Schedule:

UNIT I: Introduction to the Holocaust: Ideological and Historical Roots

Background Reading: Berenbaum, *The World Must Know*, pp. 1-65.

Topic: Course Introduction

Topic: Introduction to the Holocaust (Film: *Night and Fog*)

Topic: The Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism (Film: *Jud Suss*)

Topic: The Rise of National Socialism

Topic: Race Science and the Nazis

Topic: The Culture of National Socialism (Film: *Triumph of the Will*)

Examination #1: Wednesday, October 9

UNIT II: Einsatzgruppen, the Ghettos and the Camps

Background Reading: Berenbaum, *The World Must Know*, pp. 66-153.

Topic: *Selling Murder*

Topic: Einsatzgruppen: Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*

Topic: Ghettos

Topic: The Camps : Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
Millu, *Smoke Over Birkenau*

Examination #2: Wednesday, November 13

UNIT III: The Holocaust Today: Perception, Memory

Background Reading: Berenbaum, *The World Must Know*, pp. 154-235.

Topic: Resistance: *Defiance*

Topic: War Crimes: Weiss, *The Investigation*

Topic: The Holocaust in Modern Germany: Schlink, *Flights of Love*
(Film: *The Reader*)

Topic: The Next Generation: Spiegelman, *Maus*

Examination #3: Monday, December 16, 1:30-300 PM

There will be a number of EXTRA CREDIT opportunities, each worth 10 points:

1. Dr. Jonathan Sarna, "That Obnoxious Order: Ulysses S. Grant and the Jews," Tuesday, September 16, EMU Student Center Ballroom, 7:30 PM.
2. Maxwell Street Klezmer, Saturday, November 1, EMU Student Center Ballroom, 6:45.
3. Dr. Cary R. Nelson, "Bait and Switch: The Purpose of the Movement to Boycott Israel," Wednesday, November 19, EMU Student Center Auditorium, 7:30 PM.
4. Rabbi Shmuly Yanklowitz, Tuesday, December 2, EMU Student Center Ballroom, 7:30 PM>