

Jay Geller
Office: 207 Divinity
Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00-12:00; and by
appointment

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O: 343-3968
e-mail: jay.geller@vanderbilt.edu

Religious Studies 229//Religion/Divinity 3524
The Holocaust: Its Meanings and Implications

(Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:15, Wilson Hall 122 Tuesday 6:00-9:00, CL109)

"In ancient sacred ritual a holocaust was the most costly of animal sacrifices: an offering in which the victim was totally consumed by fire."

—Franklin Littell

"*Warum*" (Why)? I asked him in my poor German. "*Hier ist kein warum*" (there is no why here), he replied, pushing me inside with a shove."

—Primo Levi

"History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme."

—Mark Twain (or not)

This course examines the systematic destruction of European Jewry and other groups during World War II, its background, and its aftermath. It addresses the attempts by victims, bystanders, perpetrators, and their descendants—and we are all their descendants—to create meaningful narratives about an event that appears to lack discernible meaning. To that end it focuses upon historical accounts, case studies, memoirs, fiction, and theology and such issues as history, memory, witness, conscience, language, evil, and otherness that they raise.

Further the Holocaust has called into question the categories, institutions, and identities through which individuals and communities understand themselves and their world. In this course we will be doing some rethinking of what we mean by these categories, institutions, and identities, as well as of our place in the world as we ask the question: what is at stake personally and as a community, **here, now**, in studying such events? No prior study is presupposed of these events that have come to be known as the Holocaust.

Particular emphasis is upon the many roles of film in both the Third Reich and the postwar world. National Socialism employed films to mobilize support for its rule and to inculcate its racial-eugenic worldview. In the wake of the Holocaust, film has been employed for other purposes: to document, to bear witness, to mitigate or reduce its import, to provide meaning, to unmask attempts to mystify or suppress the past, to explore relationships between those events and contemporary societies, to say the unsayable, to examine the life of the traumatized victim.

Requirements:

1. Reading and discussion. **(5 points)**

Each class will be a mix of lecture and discussion; there will be Tuesday evening screenings of course-related films. If you are unable to attend the Tuesday screening **the film will be available and on reserve by late Wednesday morning** in the

Media Center on the main level of Heard Library. In addition, students are **strongly recommended** to attend all events in the Vanderbilt University Holocaust Lectures Series (**VUHLS**), "Neighbors."

Students will be encountering some individuals who were denied choice, others who had to make choiceless choices, still others who made choices but denied responsibility for the consequences, and others still who assumed responsibility for their actions whether chosen or not. What is required from students is the willingness to come to grips with material that is difficult to deal with in terms of both form and content. Consequently, with regard to the reading of assignments, attendance in class, viewing of films, and participation in discussion: **your choice and, consequently, your responsibility.**

2. Papers

a. *Statement of why you are taking this class.* Due 28 August. (5 points)

b. *Film/lecture series journal.* (10 papers @ 5 points per = **50 points + 5 points if all papers are submitted as scheduled**)

This assignment consists of weekly **typed, proofread, brief** (1-2 pages), 2-part thought/response papers. Of fourteen possible assignments, you are responsible for turning in ten (i.e., you may skip 4 assigned journal entries—*suggestion*: do not exhaust your skip quota too soon, events later in your semester may get in the way of your completing all ten entries). At least one assignment must be a response to a **VUHLS** event (**other than** the film screenings of either *In Darkness* or *Sometimes in April*).

Part One: Immediately after viewing a film/attending a series event and, if applicable, ensuing conversation with classmates write down your reaction to the film; this may be a reaction to the film as a whole or to any part. You may include a value judgment (e.g., "lousy flick"—please avoid thumbs and stars), but your response is not to be limited to this; rather, provide a preliminary reflection on what worldview, event, problem, or theme the film is addressing and how it is addressing it. **Alternatively**, describe and reflect upon the decisions for action or inaction made by the characters (and/or filmmakers) of the film: are they justified? Were there alternative choices? What were the consequences of acting differently? What is the relationship between the motivations/intentions of the decisions and their consequences?

Part Two: **Reconsider** your reaction in relationship to **at least one of the readings for the next week following the film/event**. Utilize the suggested themes **for the next week following the film/event** as a guide (e.g., for the film screened 20 August [*Jud Süß*], draw upon readings and themes for the week of 27 August.) There are a number of ways to compose part two: you may focus on one scene or technique as exemplary or make comparisons between films or comment on documentary versus docudrama versus fiction. Whatever tack you take support your argument, claim, affect with specific details from both film and readings. **Due in class on Tuesday of the following week** (e.g., the paper for the 20 August screening of *Jud Süß* is due 27 August).

NB: if there is more than one film/presentation during a week, you need only write about one of the events (**no** journal entry accepted for *Image before My Eyes* or *Shoah*).

NBB: Late papers will be penalized **one point** unless you provide the instructor a satisfactory explanation **prior to** scheduled time of submission.

NBBB: No extra credit for submitting more than **ten** response papers.

NBBBB: If you consult IMDB.com or other film resources you must indicate this—**even if you do not directly cite from any of them.**

NBBBBB: Provide page reference for **all** quotes from readings. If you employ an edition or work **other than** the texts on reserve or on **OAK** provide additional bibliographic information.

NBBBBBB: MTS students who are seeking to fulfill the “Interreligious Encounter” requirement with this course are **required** to submit responses for the weeks of **27 August, 22 October, 29 October, and 19 November.**

3. Exams.

- a. *Mid-term* on 8 October. Includes identifications of terms on OAK as well as brief essays. As part of the exam, the film *Night and Fog* will be screened in class during the last half-hour (32 minutes, to be exact) of 3 October class; your written response to questions about the film must be submitted at beginning of class 8 October. **(15 points)**
- b. *Take-home* final due at 9:00 am Wednesday 11 December. Includes contribution to the colloquium that concludes Simon Wiesenthal’s *The Sunflower*. **(25 points)**

4. Extra Credit.

Obviously the required reading for any one topic does not exhaust that topic; if you desire extra credit, you must consult with me no later than 1 November. Possibilities include: oral presentation to supplement class discussion (contingent both on chosen topic and class schedule); artistic (cartoon, painting, poetry, video) response to the material under discussion; etc. Extra entries in your Film/Series Journal do **not** qualify.

5. OAK

In order to better facilitate communication among one another and to provide a venue for sharing news items, opinions, queries, and calls for study groups with everyone, as well as syllabi, reserve readings, files, discussions, and chats the course has, courtesy of ACIS, a website. To access the class electronically, direct your browser to **OAK/** link on the Divinity portal or the Vanderbilt homepage.

6. The Honor Code and Cooperation among Students.

All written assignments for this course are to be performed under the aegis of the Honor Code as outlined in the *Student Handbook* (www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/chapter-2-the-honor-system). Students may,

indeed should, discuss with one another the readings, films, lectures, and the weekly topics addressed by this course, but once the writing begins, whether first draft or final version, each student is responsible for developing his or her own ideas and must pledge his or her honor neither to have given nor to have received aid. [Please note 2.**b.NBBBB/NBBBB** above.]

7. Inclusive Language.

Whether in assignments for this course or in everyday life common decency demands that we use language that respects the identities and differences of all people regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, orientation, ability, etc. Hence, for example, gendered terms like "man" and "he" are not to be employed as if they were generic or universal.

Required texts available @ Barnes and Noble.

M. Berenbaum, *The World Must Know*

J. Gross, *Neighbors*

J. Hatzfeld, *Machete Season*

A. Spiegelman, *MetaMaus*

S. Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower*, 2d edition

Recommended: C. Lanzmann, *Shoah*

Document Anthologies

ACORN-online: A. Rabinbach & S. Gilman (eds.), *Third Reich Sourcebook (TRS)*

DIV-reserve: S. Hochstadt (ed.), *Sources of the Holocaust (Sources)*

Aside from the required texts all of the required (and many of the recommended) readings will be available on **OAK** in the Assignments folder. Some will also be available on 2-hour reserve in *the Divinity School Library* circulation desk in basement of Heard. Numerous other works are also available in both Heard Library and the Judaica Collection of the Divinity School Library.

NB: Due to copyright and/or technical issues all "Documents," Mosse/"Race and Sexuality," Zimbardo/"Psychology of Evil," and Levi/"Grey Zone" are also in separate folders at the Div library desk.

1. Tuesday 20 August: In-class screening of *Image before My Eyes* (1981, USA, Joshua Waletzky)
Recommended: Eliach, “Cultural Life”

2. Thursday 22 August: Introduction
Bernstein, “Backshadowing and Apocalyptic History”

Tuesday 20 August: Screening of *Jud Süss* (1940, Germany, Veit Harlan)

Paper: why are you taking this class? (Due 27 August)

3. Tuesday/Thursday 27-29 August: The Jew as other [**Themes: the other, otherness, race**]

Hitler, "Nation and Race"

Graml, “Modern Anti-Semitism in Germany”

Mosse, "Race and Sexuality: The Role of the Outsider" **Documents:** Program of the German Worker’s Party (*TRS* #5); Stuckart and Globke: Civil Rights and the Natural Inequality of Man (#85); Secret Report of the SD, The Popularity of *Jew Süss* (*TRS* #284)

Tuesday 27 August: Screening of *Triumph of the Will* (1934, Germany, Leni Riefenstahl)

4. Tuesday/Tuesday 3/10 September: Toward the final solution [**Themes: leadership, "the great man", democracy**]

Berenbaum, "The Nazi Assault" (in *The World Must Know*)

Katz, “Was the Holocaust Predictable”

Steinweis, “Hitler and Himmler”

Frankenfeld, “I am never dishonest”

Documents: Faulhaber, “What is the Stance of Christianity to the German Race?” (*TRS* #186); Declaration of the German Christians (*TRS* #187); Statement of the Confessing Church (#189); “Report from Underground SDP” (#12 in *Sources*); “Gestapo Report ... *Kristallnacht*” (#24 in *Sources*); “Instruction from Foreign Office” (#25 in *Sources*); “Declaration of the Boycott by the Nazi Party Leadership”; “Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service”; “The Nuremberg Laws”; “Protocols of the Wannsee Conference” [also available in *Sources* and *TRS*] “

Recommended: Heschel, “Transforming Jesus from Jew to Aryan: Theological Politics in Nazi Germany”

Tuesday 3 September: Screening of *The Wannsee Conference* (1987, West Germany, Heinz Schirk) and *Twilight Zone: "Cradle of Darkness"* (2002, United States, Jean de Segonzac; www.youtube.com/watch?v=P50oCtdSds8)

THURSDAY 5 SEPTEMBER: ROSH HASHANA NO CLASS

5. Thursday 12 September: Language and/of euthanasia [**Themes: language, truth, secrecy**]

H. Friedlander, "The Manipulation of Language"

Wirth, *The Strop Report*. Introduction

Burleigh, Michael, "Selling murder"

Documents: "Hitler's Decree Authorizing 'Mercy Killings'"; "from *Permission to Exterminate...*" (#8 in *Sources*); "Postwar Testimony... gassing" (#30 in *Sources*) Bishop Galen's Sermon on Euthanasia (*TRS* #158)

Recommended: Friedlander, "Step by Step"; Koonz, "Genocide and eugenics: the language of power"

Tuesday 10 September: Screening of *The Pianist* (2003, France/Germany/UK/Poland, Roman Polanski)

6. Tuesday/Thursday 17/19 September: The Final Solution [**Themes: hope, despair, delusion**]

Berenbaum, "The Holocaust" (in *The World Must Know*)

Fritzsche, "German Documents and Diaries"

Browning, "Problem Solvers"

Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* (under either "Excerpt" or "Ringelblum")

Metzger, "Jewish Solidarity in the Holocaust"

Documents: "Plan for 'solution...'" (#37 in *Sources*); "Diary of Oskar Singer" (#60 in *Sources*); Rumkowski: 'Work Protects Us from Annihilation' and 'Give Me Your Children'; "Excerpts from The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow" Hitler, 1939 Speech to the Great German Reichstag (*TRS* #350); Four Decrees Issued in Occupied Poland (*TRS* #352); Heydrich, Policy and Operations Concerning Jews in the Occupied Territories (*TRS* #363)

Tuesday 17 September: Screening of *Fateless* (2005, Hungary, Lajos Koltai)

7. Tuesday/Thursday 24/26 September: The Camps and the Holocaust Self [**Themes: survivor; victim; complicity; self**]

Langer, "Redefining Heroic Behavior"

Levi, "Drowned and the Saved"

Levi, "The Grey Zone"

Berenbaum, "The Last Chapter" (in *The World Must Know*)

Des Pres, "The Excremental Assault"

Documents: "Postwar Deposition ... gas chambers" (#67 in *Sources*); Perl, "A Doctor in Auschwitz"

Recommended: Langer, "The dilemma of choice in the death camps";

Tuesday 24 September: Screening of *Nichts als der Wahrheit/After the Truth* (2008, Germany, Roland Suso Richter) or *A Visitor from the Living* (1999, France, Claude Lanzmann)

8. Tuesday/Thursday 1/3 October: Perpetrators and Bystanders [Themes: Innocence/Guilt, Collaboration]

Browning, "One Day in Jozefow"

Westermann, "Killers"

Pfannenstiel, "The camp has clean sanitary facilities"

Gellately, "Monstrous uneasiness"

Hochberg, "U.S. Dept. of State and the Holocaust (1933-45)"

Welzer, "On Killing and Morality"

Gross, *Neighbors*

Documents: "Report on Police Battalion" (#40 in *Sources*); "Extracts from a Speech of Heinrich Himmler... "; "Excerpts from the *Stroop Report*"; Guideline for the Treatment of Political Commissars (*TRS #388*)

Recommended: Barnouw, "The Secularity of Evil"; Milgram, "Perils of Obedience"; Zimbardo, "The Psychology of Evil"

Resnais/Cayrol, Screenplay of *Night and Fog*

Tuesday 1 October [NB: HLS event @ 7:00p.m. {see schedule} no screening in CL109]: *Poklosie* (2012, Poland, Wladyslaw Pasikowski)

Thursday 3 October: Screening of *Night and Fog/Nuit et Brouillard* (1956, France, Alain Resnais) **in class**

Tuesday 8 October: Mid-Term; discussion of *Neighbors*

Tuesday 8 October: Screening of *Aimée and Jaguar* (1998, Germany, Max Färberböck)

THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER: NO CLASS. FALL BREAK

9. Tuesday/Thursday 15/17 October: Whose Holocaust? [Theme: Sexuality, Gender, Asociality]

Grenville, "Neglected Holocaust Victims"

Ringelheim, "Women and the Holocaust"

Grau, "The Final Solution of the Homosexual Question"

Weitzman and Ofer, "Introduction to Women and the Holocaust" and responses

Documents: "Himmler Speech on homosexuality" (#15 in Sources); "Instructions Regarding Unnatural Sexual Offenses...", "Extracts from Discussions among Nazi Jurists Concerning the Prosecution of lesbian relations", Himmler's Secret Directive on the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion" "Himmler's Guidelines for the Resettlement of Gypsies";

Tuesday 15 October: Screening of *Weapons of the Spirit* (1987, France, Pierre Sauvage)

10. Tuesday/Thursday 22/24 October Rescue, resistance, aid [Themes: Conscience, Responsibility, Ambivalence]

Pierre Sauvage, "Ten Questions on Righteous Behavior"

Hallie, "Writing about Ethical Ambivalence during the Holocaust"

Tec, "Helping Behavior and Rescue during the Holocaust"

Documents: "Memoir ... revolt in Treblinka" (#70 in Sources); "The Manifesto of the Command of the Jewish United Partisans Organization, in the Vilna Ghetto"; "Call for Resistance by the Jewish Military Organization in the Warsaw Ghetto"; Scholl, Graf, and Probst, The White Rose Second Leaflet (TRS #403)

Tuesday 22 October [NB: 7:00 p.m. in Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center; not in CL 109]: *Sometimes in April* (2005, France/United States/Rwanda, Raoul Peck)

11. Tuesday/Thursday 29/31 October Enough Already? [Themes: intervention, prevention, sovereignty, human rights]

Hatzfeld, *Machete Season*

Melson, "Modern Genocide in Rwanda"

Fierke, "Legal Interventions" and "Military Interventions"

Recommended Kiernan, "Myth, nationalism and genocide"

Tuesday 29 October [NB: HLS event @ 7:00p.m. {see schedule} no screening in CL109]: *Out of the Ashes* (2002, United States, Joseph Sargent)

12. Tuesday 5 November: Aftermath [themes: memory, trauma, shame/guilt]

Levi, "The Memory of the Offense", "Shame"

Kochavi, "Liberation and Dispersal"

Greenspan, "Survivors' Accounts"

Hancock, "Responses to the Holocaust"

Documents: "West German law of compensation" (#77 in *Sources*)

13. Thursday 7 November: What Holocaust? [**Themes: proof, history, (c)omission**]

Lipstadt, "Appendix: Twisting the Truth"

Vidal-Naquet, "A Paper Eichmann?"

Tuesday 5 November: Screening of *The Great Dictator*

14. Tuesday/Thursday 12/14 November: Representation and Accessibility [**Themes: what can or cannot be art, the possibility and/or impossibility of representation, allegory**]

Spiegelman, *Maus*

Celan, "Todesfuge/Death Fugue", "Engführung/The Straightening

Document: "Charlie Chaplin: The Jewish Chimp in America" (*TRS #280*)

Tuesday 12 November: Screening of *God on Trial* (2008, United States, Andy De Emmony)

OPTIONAL: Saturday 16 November: Screening of *Shoah* (1985, France, Claude Lanzmann) 8 a.m-7 p.m. (**Divinity School Art Room, G-20**)

15. Tuesday/Thursday 19/21 November: Religious responses--During and After [**Themes: theology (god-talk), ritual, loss of faith, mourning**]

Fackenheim, "The 614th Commandment"

Rubenstein, "The Dean and the Chosen People"

Adler, "*Pour Out Your Heart Like Water: Toward a Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust*"

Wiesel, "The Death of My Father"

Tchorsh, "Whether all Jews are obliged to recite Kaddish for the Holocaust victims"

Greenberg, "Confronting Jewish Destiny: Purim" [to be uploaded to OAK

Recommended: Cohen, "In Our Terrible age"; Littell, "Meaning of the Holocaust";

Tuesday 19 November: Screening of *The Quarrel* (1992, United States, Eli Cohen)

THANKSGIVING BREAK

16. Tuesday 3 December: Narratives of Religious/Ethnic/National Identity [**Themes: instrumentalization, national memory, tradition**]

Novick, "Holocaust as an American Jewish Experience";

Arad, "Holocaust as an Israeli Experience"

Elon, "The Politics of Memory"

Neusner, "The American Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption"
[something from the Neighbors respond]
Recommended: Burg, "The Eichmann Trial"

Thursday 5 December: Concluding considerations [**Themes: lessons, plus ça change**]

The Fine Print: The above schedule, policies, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances: e.g., guest speakers.