

Dr. Zsuzsanna Ozsvath

Fall 2014

The Holocaust

The Holocaust, the annihilation of six million Jews under the Nazis, looms large in our twenty-first-century consciousness. It involves both a monumental assault against millions of defenseless people and a brutally imposed process of dying, which reduced the victims into matter while they were still alive. It also involves the destruction of the age-old East-European Jewish culture. Although the mass killings stopped after the Third Reich was defeated, this destruction process has not ceased to put pressure on our contemporary world and cast a shadow on the modern Western consciousness. Challenging our fundamental assumptions and values, it raises questions of enormous significance: “How was it possible for a state to systematize, mechanize, and socially organize the Holocaust”? “How could the Nazis in 12 short years unhinge the basic structure of Western civilization?” And “How could European societies, including their moral and academic institutions, fail to protest against and defeat Nazi ideology”?

Our course will search for answers to these questions and raise many others. It will locate and study the roots of the “final solution” by analyzing the shapes and forms of some of the early persecutions of the Jews. Using a wide-ranging interdisciplinary approach, including films and works of art, it will ponder the circumstances and causes of the Holocaust and consider the psychological, social, moral, theological, and aesthetic dilemmas it has continued to raise.

The course will provide an excellent background for teachers in this field. Those interested in obtaining a certificate in Holocaust Studies and develop a curriculum and courses on the Holocaust will be able to arrange special tutorial sessions for this purpose with the instructor. Also, they will be encouraged to contact and get acquainted with the work of the Dallas Memorial Center for Holocaust Studies.

Required Texts May Include:

O. Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*

S. Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*

J. T. Gross, *Neighbors*

V. Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*

F. Müller, *Eyewitness to Auschwitz*

M. Radnoti, *Foamy Sky*

A. Schwarz-Bart, *The Last of the Just*

In addition, we'll read texts by Yehuda Bauer, Poliakov, Jacob Katz, David Crowe, Wendy Lower, Paul Celan, Nelli Sachs, and Dan Pagis, David Patterson.

Schedule of Classes:

August 28: Introduction

September 4: Friedlaender, *The Years of Extermination*, pp. 4-260.

11: *The Years of Extermination*, pp. 261-395.

18: *The Years of Extermination*, pp. 399-538.

25: Religious Holiday

October 2: Herwig, "The Brown Revolution," pp. 267-308; V. Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*

9: Friedlaender, *The Years of Extermination*, pp. 539-663.

16: Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*, pp.81-100; Can we turn the Holocaust into literature? Rosenfeld, *A Double Dying*, 3-34.

23: Müller, *Eyewitness to Auschwitz*

30: Gross, *Neighbors*

November 6: Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*

13: Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*

20: Schwartz-Bart, *The Last of the Just*

27: Thanksgiving

December 4: Discussion