

Avinoam J. Patt  
 Responses to the Holocaust  
 Spring 2015  
 MW, 2:55-4:10pm  
[patt@hartford.edu](mailto:patt@hartford.edu)

*JS 210: Responses to the Holocaust*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This seminar explores both Jewish and non-Jewish responses to the Holocaust in an interdisciplinary manner through an examination of social, religious, theological, political, cultural, psychological, and literary responses to the Holocaust both during and after the Second World War. The seminar (1) focuses attention on the diversity of human responses to Nazi persecution, both Jewish and non-Jewish, and (2) facilitates a deeper understanding of the manner in which individuals and communities respond to extreme persecution in war and genocide both contemporaneously and in its aftermath. Students will examine the ways Jews sought to maintain religious observance under Nazi occupation, the moral and ethical dilemmas Jews confronted daily during the war, the manner in which resistance transcended narrowly defined “armed resistance” to encompass cases of spiritual, cultural, psychological, and philosophical resistance to persecution, attempts to document and historicize the war both under occupation and in its aftermath, the meaning of memory and memorialization, the use of literature and cultural creations as forms of resistance, the nature of psychological responses to trauma and persecution, and theological and religious explanations of the meaning of the Holocaust in its aftermath.

Questions that will frame seminar discussions include: to what extent were contemporary Jewish religious responses conditioned by prior Jewish experience and tradition? What moral and ethical dilemmas confronted Jews in the effort to maintain Jewish life under Nazi persecution? How can an interdisciplinary examination of responses to persecution expand our definition of “resistance” both in the Holocaust and in other historical contexts? How have philosophers and theologians engaged with the meaning of the Holocaust and with its implications for Judaism and Jewish identity? In what ways can the study of religion, theology, literature, culture, psychology, and the study of history inform one another?

Students will engage in textual study using a variety of sources, including rabbinic responsa, diaries, sermons, literary texts, journals, films, newspapers, testimonies, and more. Discussions and seminar sessions will address themes of Jewish family life, Jewish ethics, leadership efforts, community preservation, moral deliberation, postwar religious observance, Holocaust memorialization, and Jewish and Christian theology after the Holocaust.

### **Writing Assignments, Class presentations and/or Other Creative or Media Assignments:**

1. Weekly reaction papers  
Weekly reaction papers will be posted to the Blackboard discussion space based on the class readings and discussions; these will be counted towards your participation grade.
2. Midterm document analysis and exercise.
3. 2 Short Book critiques. 4-5 page book reviews on two selected longer texts.
4. Interview project with child of Holocaust survivors and presentation – to be presented in final week of class.
5. Final paper assignment.

### **Expectations about Student Independent Research:**

Students will conduct research for writing a longer 10-12 page paper on a selected area of Jewish responses to the Holocaust. Selection of research project will be conducted in conjunction with professor. Students will be expected to conduct research using both primary and secondary resources. Paper topics, thesis, outline, and research will be evaluated by professor over the course of the semester. Students will be expected to demonstrate both critical thinking and analytical skills in research and writing of paper.

### **Grading Policy:**

1. Weekly reaction papers (20%)
2. Midterm document analysis and exercise. (15%)
3. 2 Short Book critiques. 4-5 page book reviews on two selected longer texts (25%).
4. Film critique (10%)
5. Final paper assignment and presentation – to be presented in final week of class. (20%)
6. Participation (10%) and special event papers.

### **Readings:**

David Engel, *The Holocaust* ISBN 978-1408249949

Zvi Kolitz, *Yossel Rakover Speaks to God* (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1995).

Patt and Berkowitz, *We are Here: New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Wayne State University Press, 2009) 978-0814333501

Edward Lewis Wallant, *The Pawnbroker* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 978-0156714228)

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, (Touchstone, 1995; 978-0684826806)

Art Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus* (978-0141014081)

**\*\*Any readings marked with an asterisk will be posted to blackboard.**

## **REVISED SCHEDULE OF COURSE TOPICS, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**-please complete all assigned readings *before* scheduled classes.**

### **Week 1**

**1/21, first class**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST, PART I**

\*David Engel, *The Holocaust: The Third Reich and the Jews* (excerpts)

### **Week 2**

**1/28, 2/4 AND 2/11**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST, PART II**

\*David Engel, *The Holocaust: The Third Reich and the Jews*

-view testimonies from <http://sfi.usc.edu/explore> and Fortunoff Video Archive at Yale University <http://www.library.yale.edu/testimonies/index.html>

### **Week 3**

**2/16**

### **JEWISH and NON-JEWISH RESPONSES TO THE HOLOCAUST – a conceptual overview**

\*Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to the Holocaust* (introduction)

Garbarini, Patt, et al, *Jewish Reactions to Persecution, 1938-1940*, introduction and excerpts

### **Week 4, 2/18 AND 2/23**

### **JEWISH RESPONSES IN THE WARSAW, LODZ AND VILNA GHETTOS Ringelblum, Huberband, and the Oneg Shabbes Archive – Documenting the Holocaust**

\*Shimon Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland during the Holocaust* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1987) Introduction and Part III, Jewish Religious Life in Nazi-Occupied Europe

\*Sam Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oneg Shabbes Archive*

<http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/files/pt-articles/PT43ringelblum.pdf>

-Selected Documents from Ringelblum *Oneg Shabbes* archive will be distributed in class

### **Kalonymus Kalman Shapira**

\*Kalonymus Kalmin Shapira, *Esh Kodesh* from David Roskies, ed., *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1988)

### **Week 5, 2/25**

### **The Lodz ghetto, Vilna Ghetto, and other cases (continued)**

\*H. Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania*, excerpts

\*Michal Unger, "Religion and Religious Institutions in the Lodz Ghetto," in *Remembering for the Future* (2001), pp. 335-351.

\*Trunk, *Lodz Ghetto*, excerpts

## **MUSIC AND HUMOR IN THE HOLOCAUST**

\*Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps*

\*Steve Lipman, *Laughter in Hell*, excerpts

### **Week 6, 3/2 and 3/4**

#### **The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and other cases of Armed Resistance**

Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt*, excerpts

\*Patt, "Armed Jewish Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto"

The Case of Sobibor (*Escape from Sobibor*)

\*Patt, "Jewish Resistance in the Smaller Ghettos of Eastern Europe," USHMM website

\*Nechama Tec, *Defiance*, excerpts and film

### **Week 7, 3/9 and 3/11**

#### **Literary Responses during and after the Holocaust**

David Roskies and Anita Diamant, *Holocaust Literature*, excerpts

\*\*Roskies, *Literature of Destruction*, excerpts

\*Avraham Sutzkever poetry

## **RELIGIOUS RESPONSES IN LITERATURE: DIARIES, STORIES, JOURNALS, YIZKOR BOOKS**

Zvi Kolitz, "Yossel Rakover Speaks to God" in Zvi Kolitz, *Yosl Rakover Speaks to God: Holocaust Challenges to Religious Faith* (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1995).

Chaim Grade, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseyner"

3/11 – FILM: The Quarrel

**Paper 1 due on March 11 – compare Kolitz and Grade**

### **Week 8, 3/23 and 3/25**

#### **INTRODUCTION TO RABBINIC RESPONSA, HOLOCAUST AND HALAKHA, AND RABBINIC DERASHOT (SERMONS)**

\*Irving J. Rosenbaum, *The Holocaust and Halakha*, (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1976), chapter 1.

\*Robert Kirschner (ed.), *Rabbinic Responsa of the Holocaust Era* (New York, 1985)

#### **RABBI OSHRY IN THE KOVNO GHETTO**

\*Efroyim Oshry, *Responsa from the Holocaust* (New York: Judaica Press, 1983), Introduction and selected Responsa. (Hebrew original, *Mi-Ma'amakim*, 4 vols.)

## **OSHRY EXERCISES**

-Study session on Suicide and Martyrdom (*Kiddush Hashem*)

### **Week 9, 3/30 and 4/1**

### **Jewish Life in the Aftermath**

Patt and Berkowitz, *We are Here: New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, excerpts

Jewish Displaced Persons and the Creation of the State of Israel: Postwar Politics

The Holocaust and the politics of genocide

### **Anti-Semitism after the Holocaust**

The Cases of Jedwabne and Kielce, Poland

\*\*Jan Gross, *Neighbors* and Jan Gross, *Fear*

### **Week 10, 4/6 and 4/8**

#### **Psychological Responses to the Holocaust – the case of David Boder**

**David Boder**, *Voices of the Holocaust*, [http://voices.iit.edu/david\\_boder](http://voices.iit.edu/david_boder)

\*\***Alan Rosen**, *The Wonder of Their Voices: The 1946 Holocaust Interviews of David Boder*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.)

\*\*Eva Fogelman, “The Psychology of Being a Hidden Child”

#### **Psychological depictions of the Survivor in Literature and Film**

\*\***Edward Lewis Wallant**, *The Pawnbroker* and **IB Singer**, *Enemies: A Love Story*

### **The Second Generation – Children of Holocaust Survivors**

Art Spiegelman, *Maus*

### **Week 11, 4/13 and 4/15**

#### **Memoirs and Post-Holocaust Literature**

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* - excerpts

Elie Wiesel, *Night*, excerpts

Roskies and Diamant, excerpts

#### **Paper 2 due, compare Levi and Wallant**

### **Week 12, 4/20 and 4/22**

#### **THEOLOGY and ETHICS AFTER THE HOLOCAUST**

Richard Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, pages to be assigned

**Postwar Theology: Fackenheim, Blumenthal, Levinas, Greenberg, Melissa Raphael and others**

### **Week 13, 4/27**

#### **Meaning and Memorialization**

##### **YIZKOR BOOKS**

\*Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin (eds.), *From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1998). Introduction and selected excerpts.

##### **Museums and Memorials**

\*\*James Young, *The Texture of Memory*

**\*\*Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum***

## **Week 14, 4/29**

### **PRESENTATIONS OF STUDENT RESEARCH**

#### **Spring 2015 special events**

1. **Tuesday, February 3, 7 p.m.** Mali II Auditorium, Charles Dana Hall  
*Archaeology and the Holocaust: New Discoveries from the University of Hartford's Projects in Rhodes, Greece, Richard Freund*
2. **Thursday, February 12, 7:30 p.m.,** Solomon Schechter Day School, 26 Buena Vista Road, West Hartford, The Regina Miller Jewish Education Lecture  
**Andrea Kasper**, Head of School, Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Hartford  
*"The Jewish Imperative: Creativity"*
3. **Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup>– 12:15 – 1:45 p.m.** Auerbach Auditorium – Hillyer Hall  
Lunch (Brown Bag) and Viewing in Honor of Black History Month  
Film: *Brother Outsider: the Life of Bayard Rustin*
4. **Thursday, February 19, 7 p.m.** Auerbach Auditorium – Hillyer Hall  
**The Life and Legacy of Bayard Rustin**  
**Panel Discussion, Walter Naegle** Executor and archivist of the Bayard Rustin Estate. **Warren Goldstein** History Department, University of Hartford **Paula Austin** Jackie McClean Fellow, University of Hartford
5. **Tuesday, February 24, 7 p.m., Auerbach Auditorium,**  
**The JDC at 100: A Century of Impact, Ted Comet** Joint Distribution Committee, New York City; Film screening of rare archival footage
6. **March 2, 2015 7 p.m. Gillman Theater, Mandell JCC**  
The Mandell JCC Jewish Book Festival  
*The New Diaspora: The Changing Landscape of American Jewish Fiction*  
2014 Wallant Award Ceremony with **David Bezmozgis, *The Betrayers* (2014)**  
**Tickets are necessary For reservations and additional information about this event, please visit [www.mandelljcc.org](http://www.mandelljcc.org).**
7. **Tuesday, March 17, Mandell JCC Jewish Film Festival, [www.hjff.org](http://www.hjff.org)**  
Tribute: Observations on Survival and Spirit, *RUN BOY RUN*  
7:00 PM, Reel Talk and Reception Follow Film – "Behind the Sacred Screen and Stage" with *Mona Golabek and Dark Tresnjak*
8. **Tuesday, March 24, 2015, 7 p.m. "Why Jewish Genes Matter"**  
**Shari Ungerleider**, Project Coordinator, Jewish Genetic Disease Consortium  
*The Jewish Genetic Disease Consortium (JGDC) increases awareness about Jewish genetic diseases (JGDs) and encourages timely and appropriate genetic screening for all persons of Jewish heritage.*
9. **Monday, March 30, 7 p.m.,** Wilde Auditorium, Harry Jack Gray Center, University of Hartford, Lillian Margulies Singer Jewish Humor Lecture "*When Jews Were Funny*" will be followed a performance of the improv group "*Stop Laughing Mom*"
10. **Thursday, April 16, 2015, 7 p.m.,** University of Hartford, Wilde Auditorium, Harry Jack Gray Center  
**Jeremy Eichler**, Music Critic, *Boston Globe*, "*The Music of the Jewish Refugees*"  
**Rachel Abrams**, *Hartford Opera Theater* vocal performance
11. **Friday, May 1, 2015, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.,** The Hartford Seminary, 77 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT, The Middle East Teachers' Workshop

12. **Monday, May 4, 7 p.m.** Wilde Auditorium, Harry Jack Gray Center, University of Hartford, The Greenberg Center's Annual Awards Evening