

Stockton University, School of General Studies

GIS 3601 Seminar on the Holocaust

Fall 2016

Monday and Wednesday, 3:35-5:25, C-102

Dr. Raz Segal

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Central Concepts in Holocaust Scholarship: Critical Examination

Course Description

In this advanced undergraduate seminar, we will address a central question in scholarship on the Holocaust: How did the processes and events that today we call the Holocaust unfolded? We will do so by considering closely the concepts that stand at the center of research on the Holocaust—one concept each week, as detailed in the schedule below. We will read some of the most recent studies in the field (and from a number of disciplinary perspectives: history, sociology, and political science), a few primary sources, and watch two films. We will focus on the new questions that will emerge in the discussions every week about these concepts. Ultimately, the question of *how* the Holocaust happened sheds new light on *why* this case of genocide happened and, indeed, how the key concepts of Holocaust and genocide frame in different ways how we study, understand, and remember the persecution and destruction of Jews and Jewish communities throughout Europe during World War II.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the central concepts in Holocaust research, the ways scholars use them, and their limits.
2. Identify significant links between the Holocaust and other events and processes of genocide and mass violence before, during, and after World War II.

3. Think critically about the various historical, sociological, and philosophical analyses presented throughout the course by clearly articulating various points of view and weighing their relative merits and limitations.
4. Consider the various connections between the Holocaust and the contemporary world in terms of both individual behavior and the social, political, military, and cultural processes and circumstances.

Course Requirements

-Attendance and participation: All students must come to class prepared to engage in discussions based on the reading assignments. To facilitate this, each student must submit via email one response question on the reading every week --- by 10pm of the day before class. Questions should address issues such as the choice of language in the construction of arguments, sources and their usage, or the theoretical framework. Please make sure to bring the readings and questions to class, as each session will begin with everyone presenting their questions --- 2-3 minutes for each student.

-Exams: There will be two take-home exams, which are meant not only to make sure that students read the articles and chapters for each week but mainly that they are able to think about the questions and issues they raise critically—for example, by drawing comparisons and identifying links. Exams will involve enough choice that students who have read diligently and attended classes should not have any problem doing well on them.

-Final group presentations: students will work in groups of four or five during the semester in order to prepare presentations for the last week of classes. Each presentation will need to discuss three ways in which research on two of the concepts relates to the world around us. Detailed instructions and schedule for meetings during the semester will be provided in class.

-Writing: please check your work before submitting it. Make sure that your spelling and grammar is correct, and reread to see that what you have written—whether only a few sentences or a whole paper—would make sense to others; remember, for example, that what seems obvious to you is not obvious to someone else reading your words. I encourage **everyone** to visit the writing center at the lower J Wing at least once during the semester. **Visiting the writing center twice will add 5 points to your final grade.**

-Final grades:

- 1 point for each response question X 22 = 22 + 8 for overall attendance and participation = 30 points
- 25 points for each exam X 2 = 50 points
- Final presentations = 20 points

93-100=A; 90-92=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 80-82=B-; 77-79=C+; 73-76=C;
70-72=C-; 60-69=D; below 60=F

Course Regulations

-You are allowed **two** unexcused absences; all further absences, except in cases of emergency or religious holidays, will result in a lower grade. Students should notify me beforehand of any absences. **Please arrive on time to class**; arriving late or leaving early more than **three times**—unless cleared with me beforehand—will result in a lower grade.

-Computers and phones are not allowed in class. The only exceptions are certain students who require laptops and circumstances in which students will need to listen for their phones; please make sure to notify me of such cases before class.

-Course announcements: please make sure to check your Stockton email accounts on a regular basis, as important announcements about the course (for example, assignments or cancellation of classes due to extreme weather conditions) will be made via email.

-Office hours: please come to see me with any questions, concerns, misunderstandings, or comments about the course. If my office hours do not work for you, I am happy to schedule alternative times to meet with students.

-Essential Learning Outcomes (ELO)

Stockton University has launched a wide-ranging effort to articulate 10 essential learning outcomes that combine Stockton's flexible and distinctive liberal arts education with real-world, practical skills. For detailed information, see:
http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/office_of_academic_affairs/content/docs/ELO%20Web%20page%20docs/2015_ELOutcomes_NewBrand.pdf

The response questions throughout the course offer students an opportunity to develop critical thinking. Discussions in class will help students gain additional ELO skills: ethical reasoning and global awareness. Exams will enhance information literacy and research skills. And group presentations will strengthen students' communication skills and facilitate teamwork and collaboration.

-Accessibility Statement

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, students with a documented disability and need accommodations, are encouraged to register with the Learning Access Program (LAP). Registration for support services is strictly voluntary and on a confidential basis. Support services provided by LAP are meant to help students devise strategies for meeting the University's educational demands and to foster independence, responsibility, and self-advocacy. The Learning Access Program can be found on campus in room J-204 or online at www.stockton.edu/LAP. Please call [609-652-4988](tel:609-652-4988) or send an email to LAP@stockton.edu for more information. **Once you have received an accommodation letter from LAP, please contact your instructor to privately discuss your needs as soon as practical to ensure that reasonable accommodations are implemented.**

-A Note on Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course and will be handled according to the strict procedures and protocols of the university:

<http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=209&pageID=17>

Course Schedule

7 September: Introduction

Antisemitism

12 September: David Engel, "Away from a Definition of Antisemitism: An Essay in the Semantics of Historical Description," in Jeremy Cohen and Moshe Rosman (eds.), *Rethinking European Jewish History* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2009), 30-53

14 September: Alon Confino, "Why Did the Nazis Burn the Hebrew Bible? Nazi Germany, Representations of the Past, and the Holocaust," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 84 (2) (2012), 369-400

Nation states

September 19: Tara Zahra, "The 'Minority Problem' and National Classification in the French and Czechoslovak Borderlands," *Contemporary European History*, vol. 17 (2) (2008), 137-165

September 21: Donald Bloxham, "The Holocaust and European History," in Dan Stone (ed.), *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology* (New York: Berghahn, 2012), 233-254

Fascism

September 26: Michael Mann, *Fascists* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chapter 2, 31-92

September 28: Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History* (New York: Norton, 2002), chapter 3, 63-81

Ghettos

October 3 : Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939 – March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), chapter 4, 111-168

October 5: Dan Michman, *The Emergence of Jewish Ghettos during the Holocaust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chapter 7, pp. 61-89

"final solution"

October 10: Doris L. Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), chapter 5, 129-166

October 12: Gerhard Wolf, "The Wannsee Conference in 1942 and the National Socialist Living Space Dystopia," *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 17 (2) (2015), 153-175

First take-home exam to be sent via email

Pogroms

Submission of first take-home exam

October 17: Wendy Lower, "Pogroms, Mob Violence and Genocide in Western Ukraine, Summer 1941: Varied Histories, Explanations and Comparisons," *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 13 (3) (2011), 217-246

October 19: Diana Dumitru and Carter Johnson, "Constructing Interethnic Conflict and Cooperation: Why Some People Harmed Jews and Others Helped Them during the Holocaust in Romania," *World Politics*, vol. 63 (1) (2011), 1-42

Collaboration

October 24: Vladimir Solonari, "An Important New Document on the Romanian Policy of Ethnic Cleansing during World War II," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 21 (2) (2007), 268-297

October 26: Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 187-190

Primary source: correspondence between the prime minister of Hungary, László Bárdossy, and the governor of the Carpathian region, Miklós Kozma

Rescue and Rescuers

October 31: Film: *Au revoir les enfants* (English: *Goodbye, Children*; director: Louis Malle; 105 minutes, French with English subtitles, 1987)

November 2: Discussion of the film

Bystanders

November 7: Kazimierz Sakowicz, *Ponary Dairy, 1941-1943: A Bystander's Account of a Mass Murder*, ed. Yitzhak Arad (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

November 9: Testimony of Eva Slomovits, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUXbHsJZokw>

Victims

November 14: Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History* (New York: Norton, 2002), chapter 5, 103-132

November 16: Amos Goldberg, "If this is a Man: The Image of Man in Autobiographical and Historical Writing during and after the Holocaust," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 33 (2005), 381-429

Killers

November 21: Regina Mühlhäuser, "Between Racial Awareness and Fantasies of Potency: Nazi Sexual Politics in the Occupied Territories of the Soviet Union, 1942-1945," in Dagmar Herzog (ed.), *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 197-220

November 23: Film: *Dann bin Ich ja ein Morder* (English: *If that's so, then I'm a murderer*; director: Walter Manoscheck; 68 minutes, German, Hebrew, and Romanian, with English subtitles, 2012)

Second take-home exam to be sent via email

November 28:

Submission of second take-home exam

Discussion of the film

Death marches

November 30: Daniel Blatman, *The Death Marches: The Last Phase of Nazi*

Genocide (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), Introduction,

Conclusion, chapter 7, and chapter 11, pp. 1-16, 247-271, 367-434

December 5+7: Group presentations