

History 3416G The Holocaust Winter 2027

Instructor: **Eli Nathans**

Email: **enathans@uwo.ca**

Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall 2217**

Office Hours: **Wednesdays from 1:30 to 3:30**

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

This course examines the largely successful effort of Nazi Germany to murder the Jews of Europe, as well as other large-scale programs of murder it conducted against the cultural and political leaders of Poland and Poles who resisted Nazi domination in any way; Soviet prisoners of war; Roma and Sinti; and mentally handicapped individuals, especially but not only in Germany. We examine the larger causes of these crimes, the beliefs, political goals, and circumstances that made such crimes seem both possible and – to Nazi leaders and a not insignificant number of their followers – desirable. We examine how these crimes were carried out, by whom, and at whose direction. We examine the assistance provided by certain of Germany's allies and neutral states, and sometimes the people of conquered countries. We also examine resistance to Hitler's orders, within Germany, among Jews, and in the countries Germany occupied, and the responses of the states fighting Germany.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above, any module.

Antirequisite(s) at Main Campus: The former History 3427E. **Antirequisite(s) at Huron:** [Jewish Studies 3416F/G](#), the former History 3427E.

Course Syllabus

As the course description indicates, this course will examine very disturbing subjects. The texts we read and the documentary excerpts that we view may cause great distress. To take this class you must be prepared for such emotions. In popular culture there is often an attempt to find a happy ending, a silver lining, even in the most terrible historical episodes. This class focuses on the evidence and its interpretation. There are very few silver linings.

Because the literature on the Holocaust is vast, composing the syllabus for this course involved making choices about the subjects to be covered. One of the choices concerns the countries on which we will principally focus. We examine closely the development of policy in Germany, including the roles of Hitler, the SS, and the German

army. A significant amount of attention is devoted to Poland and to the conquered territories of the Soviet Union, the regions where most of the killing took place. Less attention is paid to other countries whose governments or populations were pressured to join, or joined voluntarily, in policies of persecution and murder. In examining the responses to these events of Germany's enemies, we focus especially on Canada, in part because a fine book was written on this subject and because this course is offered at a Canadian university. A more complete treatment of the subject would examine in more detail the responses of the other countries that fought Germany, and also of the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox churches. We devote only a modest amount of time to examining the prosecution, or failure to prosecute, those responsible for the crimes we examine, and to the ways in which the Holocaust has come to be remembered and discussed in the popular media, in educational institutions, and in other public forums. A class lasting one semester cannot cover all aspects of this subject.

Although the events examined in this class took place over two generations ago, historians continue to deepen our understanding of the subject. The generational change in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in probing works of history that were extremely difficult to research or publish earlier. In this class we read several examples, including Christian Streit's article on the German army's treatment of Soviet POWs, based on an earlier book published in German, as well as Juergen Forster's and Rolf Dieter Mueller's examinations of the German army's planning for the invasion of the Soviet Union and treatment of POWs and the civilian population in the first months of the war. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire between 1989 and 1991 also led to numerous new studies, both because of new access to sources and because historians from the countries of the former Eastern bloc were permitted to ask previously forbidden questions. For a range of reasons the leaders of the Soviet Union sought to prevent investigation into the specifically antisemitic character of Nazi policies, and also many aspects of the conduct of the inhabitants of those parts of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe conquered by Germany. These barriers to exploring archives and memories of this period are no longer as rigid. Jan Grabowski's study of the experience of Jews in one rural district of Poland between 1942 and 1944 is a product of this change, as is Omer Bartov's study of the Holocaust in the town of Buczacz (now Buchach), now in western Ukraine. Among the aspects of the history of the period that has attracted significant attention in the past several decades is the experience of women. We read excerpts from one exemplary study with this focus, Marion Kaplan's *Between Dignity and Despair*. It sometimes requires time and a great deal of reflection for the most thoughtful histories of such a period to be written. Saul Friedlaender's *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Extermination*, is such a work; numerous excerpts from it are assigned.

Since the 1980s the attention paid to the Holocaust in Europe and North America has been challenged by individuals and groups who see this focus as a species of Eurocentrism, or a means to legitimize the state of Israel, or to distract from the crimes Europeans, especially the British and French, committed in their colonial empires, or simply a privileging of a particular set of crimes that cannot be objectively justified. We will consider some of these claims at the end of the course.

Finally, a word about nomenclature. The term Holocaust is derived from the Greek *holokauston*, meaning a burnt offering to the gods. Part of this original meaning clearly is completely out of place, false. Those murdered were in no sense a sacrifice to the gods. The term has been applied to the mass killing of Jews and members of other groups by Nazi Germany presumably because the image of burning bodies, dead and sometimes alive, both reflects the historical reality and also conveys some of the horror that these historical events should – usage of the term suggests – make us feel. The word Shoah, the Hebrew term meaning calamity, is to my knowledge used to refer exclusively to the killing of European Jews. It, like the term genocide, is more abstract. The term Holocaust has increasingly been understood, as used here, to refer to the entire complex of Nazi programs of mass killing. Studying these crimes together helps us understand the reasons for each.

Learning outcomes

Students who pass this class will be able to:

Explain the reasons for the intensification of antisemitic feeling in Germany and other European countries from the middle of the nineteenth century, and in particular after the Russian Revolution and the First World War;

Explain how and in what stages the Nazi regime persecuted and then murdered Jews, and the reasons for its other programs of murder;

Explain the responses to these murders of the peoples of different countries in occupied Europe, and also of foreign observers and governments;

Explain Jewish responses to the existential threat posed by Nazi rule;

Construct analytic, logical, and clear historical arguments in essays on a range of assigned subjects;

Actively engage in analytic discussions of the assigned materials.

Methods of Evaluation

Contributions to class discussions. Students are expected to participate periodically in class discussions. In calling on students, the instructor will give priority to students who have not commented previously in a class, or in recent classes. Students will be able to earn full credit in this part of the class if they respond to a question posed by the instructor on an average of once every two weeks, or at least six times in the course of the semester, and the answers they give reflect a careful reading of the assigned sources. Quality, not quantity or length, is the key.

5%

In-class written responses to questions on the assigned readings or, in some classes, regarding excerpts from documentaries shown in class. All classes - except for the first class - will have at least one such written assignment. If there are two response papers in a single class, the average of the two marks will determine the response paper grade for that class. In calculating the grade for this part of the course, the lowest mark for the term for one class will not be counted. The in-class written assignments may be made up after the class takes place only on the basis of a request for an accommodation submitted through the Student Absence Portal.

Students who know they must miss a class in advance may email the instructor to write the response paper before the class without seeking a request for an accommodation. The questions posed in response papers assigned before or after the class may differ from the questions posed in the class.

35%

Three essays, each approximately six pages (1800 words) in length. Essays are due on the dates found in the final syllabus, available on the course OWL Brightspace website. Essays must be submitted to the Assignments section of the course OWL website by 9:00pm on the due date, which is always the day before the class discusses the material assigned for the essay. If for some reason submission cannot be made to the OWL website, please send the essay as an attachment to an email to enathans@uwo.ca. No research is required for the essays beyond the assigned text and related materials that are part of the course assignments. **Students who fail to submit an essay before the start of class on the day the subject is discussed will be assigned a different question based on a different source. Essays submitted after the 9:00 pm deadline but before 12:05 am of the morning of the class will not be penalized; essays submitted after 12:05 am but before the start of class will be marked down by one point. The grade on alternative essay questions and sources will be marked down by ten points on a hundred point scale to reflect the failure to meet the original deadline for submission. Note that the alternative essays may be based on texts not part of the assigned reading for the course. An accommodation request received through the Student Absence Portal will, if granted, lead to a waiving of the ten point penalty, but this will not change the requirement to write a different essay on a different subject if the deadline of submission by the start of the class linked to the essay is missed. Please note that all response papers written based on accommodations and all make-up essays must be submitted by midnight on Friday, April 9th, the last day of classes in the term. Any work submitted after the last day of classes must be approved by the student's Academic Advising Office.**

All essays must cite to the assigned sources, using the footnote form prescribed by the Chicago Manual of Style. You may refer to books or articles other than the assigned sources, but citation to an anonymous source, like AI or Wikipedia, is not acceptable. Essays submitted without accurate footnotes based primarily on the assigned sources, with citations to one or two pages from each source, not entire chapters or large page ranges, will receive failing grades. All of the assigned sources listed in the syllabus for each essay must be used in the essays.

20% for each essay

There will be no mid-term or final examination in this class.

Essay Questions and Due Dates (note that essays are due at 9:00 pm on the dates given below).

Due Monday, February 1st: This essay assignment is based on Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. by Stuart Woolf (Collier Books, 1993).

On page 87 of the book Levi writes that he does not accept what he calls “the most obvious and facile deduction” suggested by the conduct of prisoners and those in positions of authority at Auschwitz, that “man is fundamentally brutal, egoistic and stupid in his conduct once every civilized institution is taken away” He suggests that there are other “fundamental values” that can be learned from an examination of behavior in the camp. What are the fundamental values that Levi writes that he learned from his experience as a prisoner in Auschwitz?

One way to approach answering the question posed is to examine why Levi condemns the behavior of most of those with power over others, including members of the SS and Kapos and other people in privileged positions, and also Jewish prisoners who give up what Levi considers qualities essential to being human to survive, a group described especially in chapter nine (pp. 92-100). One might also consider Levi’s attitude regarding those prisoners whom he and others term “Musselmen” (pp. 42-43, 88-90), and why it is that he considers some prisoners worthy of admiration, above all Alberto (pp. 57, 145-8), but also Flesch (p. 24), Schlome (pp. 30-31), and Steinlauf (40-41), among others. One might also consider why Lorenzo played such a critical role for Levi (pp. 119-22).

Note that the original title of the book was *If this a man*. Apparently the publisher preferred *Survival in Auschwitz* for the American version, but the original title is closer to Levi’s meaning; he is not concerned only, or perhaps even primarily, with the qualities that enabled prisoners to survive physically, although that certainly was one of his concerns.

Please base your analysis on examples from the assigned text; there is no reason to do any further reading. Please use the footnote form prescribed by the *Chicago Manual of Style*, summarized in the *Guide to Researching and Writing a History Essay* on the course website, when citing from Levi’s book.

Students who took History 2147A in the fall of 2025 will be asked to write an essay on a different book.

Due Monday, February 22nd: This essay should be based on Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews. Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Indiana University Press, 2013), Tomasz Frydel’s *Village Society and the Holocaust in the General Government: The Case of Kreis Debica* (University of Toronto dissertation, 2021), 1-4, 102-112, 290-313, 331-334, 342-352, and the assigned excerpts from Zygmunt Klukowski’s *Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939-44*, and chapter 5 of Martin Gilbert’s *The Righteous*.

Based on Jan Grabowski's book and the assigned selections from Tomasz Frydel's University of Toronto dissertation, Zygmunt Klukowski's *Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939-44*, and chapter 5 of Martin Gilbert's *The Righteous*, how can one explain the conduct of non-Jewish Poles towards Jews seeking to escape murder at the hands of the German occupiers in rural Poland between the start of 1942 and January of 1945? You may also, if you wish, refer to other assigned documents and class materials that shed light on the relationship between Christian Poles and Polish Jews.

Due Monday, March 15th: Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many. Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1945* (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 1-189. In responding to the question please also consider the assigned selection from Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 134-82.

Based on the assigned texts noted above, how can one explain the policies of Canada and Britain regarding the immigration of Jewish refugees from Germany and then Europe between 1933 and 1945? In the case of Canada, the question refers to immigration to Canada, with respect to Britain, it refers to immigration to both Britain and Palestine, which Britain at the time governed.

Alternative essay topic for Monday, March 15th: Students who have access to Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, any edition, may instead write on the following question, based on the entirety of that book: "Based on Bernard Wasserstein's account, how can one explain the policies adopted by the British government in response to the desperate efforts of Jews to flee Germany and, from 1938, the various countries conquered by Germany?"

Course Materials

Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many. Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1945* (New Jewish Press, 2023). **None is Too Many can be read on-line through Western Libraries.** **The book is being sold by the Western Bookstore for plus tax. Students may purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this book.**

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, abridged by Oran Kenan (Harper Perennial, 2009). **The book is being sold by the Western Bookstore for plus tax. Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this book.**

Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews. Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Indiana University Press, 2013). **Hunt for the Jews can be read on-line through Western Libraries.** **The book is being sold by the Western Bookstore for plus tax. Students may purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this book.**

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. by Stuart Woolf (Simon & Schuster, 1996). Western Libraries has a few hard copies, but most

students will have to purchase the book, from the Western bookstore or a different seller. **The book is being sold by the Western Bookstore for plus tax. Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this book.**

Information about book prices and availability can also be found at the Western Bookstore's website for the class, at [textbook prices](#).

I have also given students the chance to write an essay based on Bernard Wasserstein's *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*. The book has been published in several editions by different presses, in 1979, 1988, and 1999. Any of these versions are fine. Unfortunately, because it is out of print, I was unable to order it for the class. Students interested in writing an essay based on it will either have to borrow one of the copies found in the Western library system, or find it in a different library, or order a used copy on-line. I have six copies that I will lend to the first six students who request to write an essay based on this book.

In addition to the assigned books, which will be available in the Western bookstore, the course will assign selections from numerous other secondary and, to a more limited extent, primary, sources, found in the Resources section of the course website.

Course Schedule and Readings

Tuesday, January 5

Introduction. European history and European Jews in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; European antisemitism.

Peter Kenez, *The Coming of the Holocaust. From Antisemitism to Genocide* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1-68. **Please note that Kenez's book can be accessed on-line through Western libraries.**

Kenez writes on page 5 that there were in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, speaking very broadly, three forms of Jewish existence in European societies: a West European form, which included countries like France, Britain, and Germany; an East European form, typified by Russia; and what he calls the "special case of the defunct Habsburg Empire." Part one of this book, assigned for this class, depicts these forms of the relationship between Jews and the largely Christian societies in which they lived on the basis of an analysis of the history of four countries: France, Russia and Poland, and Hungary, a key part of the Habsburg Empire before its demise in 1918.

Kenez claims that the history of each country led its Jewish population to have distinctive characteristics, and also produced different forms of antisemitism. Among the factors that varied were how much of each society was antisemitic, the intensity of

antisemitic feeling, and the consequences for the relationship between Jews and Christians that followed, how antisemitism was practiced. How does he characterize and explain the different forms assumed by antisemitism in each country?

Assigned reading by Peter Pulzer:

Peter Pulzer, "The Return of Old Hatreds," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, Vol. 3, *Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, Michael Meyer, Michael Brenner, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 204-209, 231-234, 237-245.

Peter Pulzer, "The First World War," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, Vol. 3, *Integration in Dispute 1871-1918*, Michael Meyer, Michael Brenner, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 360-363, 370-384.

Pulzer describes the development of antisemitism in Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To what extent does his description fit the model of West European antisemitism found in Kenez's account, on the basis of the historical experience of France, and to what extent does it differ? How does Pulzer explain the intensification of antisemitism in Germany before and especially during the latter part of the First World War?

Documentary: *Image Before my Eyes*, excerpts

Tuesday, January 12

Nazi Plans for German Jews; The pre-war years of Nazi rule

Nazi Party Platform, 1920

What were the key national and key socialist planks of the Nazi Party program?

Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston, 1943), 37-65, 176-86.

Which goals and methods of the Socialists that he observed in Vienna does Hitler claim repelled him? Which of their goals did he think legitimate, worth supporting? What tactics did they use that Hitler argues had to be copied by the nationalist right, and why? How does he explain his growing hatred for Jews? What connections are there between the hatred for Socialists and the hatred for Jews? What are the most important principals of propaganda, according to Hitler? How were these principles used effectively against Germany in the First World War?

Avraham Barkai, "Exclusion and Persecution: 1933-1938," from *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4, *Renewal and Destruction 1918-1945*, ed. Michael Meyer (Columbia University Press, 1998), 197-230.

What were the key steps taken against Jewish Germans by the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1938? How did the regime's policies change over time?

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, abridged by Orna Kenan (New York: Harper, 2009), ix-xvi, 1-23, 29-31, 61-75, 86-99.

The forward to Friedländer's book, by Orna Kenan, describes the debates between historians to which Friedländer was responding in his book. How does Friedländer's selection of evidence, as described in the preface, reflect the nature of the claims that he wishes to make?

According to Friedländer, what role did Hitler play in determining exactly what antisemitic measures the Nazi regime adopted? What considerations of domestic and foreign policy influenced him, in the period between 1933 and 1938, with respect to both the timing and form of particular measures? What methods did the regime use to isolate Jews from German society? How does Friedländer characterize the response of the German churches, and, with respect to the Catholic Church, the responses of both the German bishops and the Vatican? On what evidence does Friedländer rely to support his argument that the criminality of the Nazi regime should have been evident to all Germans from the very first months of Hitler's rule?

Hermann Graml, *Anti-Semitism in the Third Reich*, trans. by Tim Kirk (Blackwell, 1992), 5-23.

What role did Hitler play in instigating the pogrom of November 9th? Why was the regime so carefully to hide his role, and more generally the role of both the state and the Nazi Party? To what extent does Graml's depiction support or contradict the depiction in Friedländer's book?

Ingo Mueller, *Hitler's Justice. The Courts of the Third Reich*, trans. by Deborah Lucas Schneider (Harvard University Press, 1992), 90-111.

In what ways did the regular court system contribute to the persecution of German Jews in the prewar period?

Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair. Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 50-54, 94-118.

How did Jewish children and teenagers experience antisemitism in Nazi Germany? How did they respond? In what respects did their lives change?

Tuesday, January 19

Nazi policies in Poland, 1939-1941. Murders of Poles and Jews and the formation of Jewish ghettos. Eastern Poland and the Baltic states under Soviet rule, 1939-1941. Jews become scapegoats for Stalinism. Killing of the mentally handicapped in Germany.

Alexander Rossino, *Hitler Strikes Poland. Blitzkrieg, Ideology, and Atrocity* (University of Kansas Press, 2003), 1-28, 64-5, 72-5.

What orders did Hitler give to the military and the SS in preparation for the attack on Poland in September 1939? What were the views of the leadership of the German army regarding the decision to attack Poland? How did the SS go about preparing for the plan of large-scale killings? To what extent did SS leaders attempt to conceal the existence of, and responsibility for, the orders to murder members of the Polish elite? What was the role of the army to be in the killings? To what extent was the preparation for the commission of crimes in Poland similar to, or different from, the giving of orders for, and the carrying out of, Kristallnacht, as described by Graml?

For what reasons did the SS and German army units kill Poles and Jews during the invasion of Poland and in the weeks that followed, according to Rossino's account?

Martin Winstone, *The Dark Heart of Hitler's Europe. Nazi Rule in Poland under the General Government* (I.B. Taurus,, 2015), xii-xiii, 57-85.

What do Hans Frank's comments in May 1940, at page 63, suggest about the reasons for the somewhat more restrained approach - compared to the policies in the Polish territories incorporated into Germany - that Frank initially adopted towards the murder of the Polish elite in the General Government? What were Frank's principal goals and policies with respect to the Jewish inhabitants of the General Government, and to what extent did they reflect Hitler's orders or general preferences? What conflicts were there on the subject of the treatment of Jews within the German government, including the army and the SS, between September 1939 and May 1942?

Shmuel Krakowski, *The Fate of Jewish Prisoners of War in the September 1939 Campaign* (Shoah Research Center, Yad Vashem, undated), 1-25, 33-4.

What did the treatment of Polish Jewish soldiers captured by the German army reveal about antisemitic attitudes in the German army in the fall of 1939 and orders issued regarding the treatment of Polish POWs? What were the attitudes of Polish prisoners who were not Jewish to these policies?

Jan Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation, The Generalgouvernement, 1939-1944* (Princeton University Press, 1979), 73-86.

What measures did the German administration in the General Government take to make of Polish society "a reservoir of unskilled labor" (p. 76) adapted to Germany's needs?

Jan Gross, *Revolution from Abroad. The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton University Press, 1988), 31-37, 178-82, 187-95, 216-19.

What policies did the Red Army and then the Soviet administration adopt in the eastern half of Poland, following its occupation by the Soviet Union starting on September 17th, 1939? Why did these policies reinforce or - to the extent it did not already exist, create - Polish hatred for Soviet rule, and deepen divisions among the principal ethnic groups?

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, 143-65, 190-99, 205-15, 215-28.

What did the actions taken by the various agencies of the German government between the conquest of Poland and the spring of 1941 suggest about the long-term plans of the regime with respect to Jews? For what reason were Polish Jews compelled to live in ghettos, generally located in the poorest sections of cities, overcrowded, and separated from surroundings by walls with varying degrees of effectiveness in sealing off the inmates? (pp. 156-63) Why were Jews living in the General Government ordered to wear an armband with a Jewish star on December 1, 1939? (pp. 159-60), long before this rule was introduced in Germany? How did the European states conquered by Germany in May and June of 1940 - Friedländer focuses on France and the Netherlands - respond to German pressures for antisemitic measures? (pp. 191-199)

What policies did German administrators adopt with respect to the ghettos established in conquered Polish territory? What were the consequences for the Jewish inhabitants? (pp. 190-1, 205-15)

What antisemitic policies were adopted by governments allied with and subordinated to Nazi Germany (Romania, Vichy France) and those ruled directly by German officials (the Netherlands) between late 1940 and the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941? (pp. 215-24) What were the responses of the Catholic Church and its leading members? (pp. 224-6) What individual initiatives does Friedländer describe? (pp. 226-8)

Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: Euthanasia in Germany 1900-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 130-43, 160-80.

What was the response of German society to Hitler's secret program of murder of inmates of institutions for the mentally handicapped?

Film Unfinished - excerpts

Tuesday, January 26

The invasion of the Soviet Union and campaigns of mass murder, against Soviet POWs and Jews, from June to December 1941.

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, 200-5.

How does Friedländer explain Hitler's decision to invade the Soviet Union?

Juergen Forster, "Operation Barbarossa as a War of Conquest and Annihilation," from *Germany and the Second World War*, Vol. 4, *The Attack on the Soviet Union* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 481-5; Rolf-Dieter Mueller, "The Failure of the Economic 'Blitzkrieg Strategy,'" from *Germany and the Second World War*, Vol. 4, *The Attack on the Soviet Union* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 1140-9, 1160-61, 1172-7.

What role did the German army play in planning and implementing Nazi policies of mass starvation and other forms of killing in the period between the start of the invasion of the Soviet Union and the end of 1941?

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, 229-243.

What antisemitic policies did Germany practice in the months following the invasion of the Soviet Union? Compare the actions of the German army and the SS units that accompanied it with respect to POWs and the inhabitants of the territories conquered in the campaign against Poland in the fall of 1939 and the conduct of the army and the SS after the invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. What was similar and what different? To the extent there were differences, how can they be explained? What role in the killing of Jews was played by the native populations of the conquered territories of the Soviet Union?

Christian Streit, "Soviet Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Wehrmacht," from *War of Extermination. The German Military in World War II, 1941-1944*, eds. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (Berghahn Books, 2000), 80-91.

Hannes Heer, "How Amoral Became Normality: Reflections on the Mentality of German Soldiers on the Eastern Front," from *War of Extermination. The German Military in World War II, 1941-1944*, eds. Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (Berghahn Books, 2000), 329-344.

How can one account for the brutality displayed by many, but not all, German soldiers and policemen in Poland, Ukraine, and other conquered territories, especially in the East?

Omer Bartov, *Anatomy of a Genocide. The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz* (Simon & Schuster, 2018), 179-209, 216-223.

How did German officials in Buczacz carry out the antisemitic policies of the Nazi regime?

Anatoly Podolsky, "The Tragic Fate of Ukrainian Jewish Women under Nazi Occupation, 1941-1944," in *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust*, ed. by Sonja Hedgepeth and Rochelle Saidel (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012), 94-107.

Documentary: Amateur Photographer

Tuesday, February 2

Primo Levi essay due at 9:00 pm on
Monday, February 1st

Hitler's decision of December 1941 to murder all the Jews of Europe. The creation of camps devoted exclusively to murder on an industrial scale. Nazi policies towards Sinti and Roma.

Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, 265-67, 276-80, 479-83. **Please note that this is a pdf from the unabridged version of Friedländer's book, which contains significantly more detail on the subject of Hitler's role in ordering the killing of all European Jews.**

What were Hitler's reasons for ordering the killing of all European Jews in mid-December 1941, according to Friedländer's account? What evidence does he provide? To what extent did Hitler adopt the same approach here as in his order for the Kristallnacht pogrom in November 1938?

Minutes of the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, from Lucy Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader* (Behrman House), 72-82.

What can we learn from the Wannsee Conference minutes about Nazi planning for the killing of the Jews of Europe? What was the purpose of the meeting, and what did it accomplish?

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, 356-361, 384-85.

Peter Longerich, *Holocaust*, 410-18. Operation 1005.

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. by Stuart Woolf (Simon & Schuster, 1996). **Please read the entire book.**

Essay question for the Primo Levi essay:

Please respond to the following question based on Levi's entire book. On page 87 of his book Levi writes that he does not accept what he calls "the most obvious and facile deduction" suggested by the conduct of prisoners and those in positions of authority at Auschwitz, that "man is fundamentally brutal, egoistic and stupid in his conduct once every civilized institution is taken away" He suggests that there are other "fundamental values" that can be learned from an examination of behavior in this labor and extermination camp. What are the fundamental values that Levi writes that he learned from his experience as a prisoner in Auschwitz? Please base your analysis on examples from the assigned text; there is no reason to do any further reading.

One way to approach answering the question posed is to examine why Levi condemns the behavior of most of those with power over others, including members of the SS and Kapos and other people in privileged positions, and also Jewish prisoners who give up

what Levi considers qualities essential to being human to survive, a group described especially in chapter nine (pp. 92-100). One might also consider Levi's attitude regarding those prisoners whom he and others term "Musselmen" (pp. 42-43, 88-90), and why it is that he considers some prisoners worthy of admiration, above all Alberto (pp. 57, 145-8), but also Flesch (p. 24), Schlome (pp. 30-31), and Steinlauf (40-41), among others. One might also consider why Lorenzo played such a critical role for Levi (pp. 119-22).

Note that the original title of the book was *If this a man*. Apparently the publisher preferred *Survival in Auschwitz* for the American version, but the original title is closer to Levi's meaning; he is not concerned only, or perhaps even primarily, with the qualities that enabled prisoners to survive physically, although that certainly was one of his concerns.

Please base your analysis on examples from the assigned text; there is no reason to do any further reading. Please use the footnote form prescribed by the *Chicago Manual of Style*, summarized in the *Guide to Researching and Writing a History Essay* on the course website, when citing from Levi's book.

The essay is due on the day before the class, at 9:00 pm. Please submit the essay to the Assignments section of the course OWL Brightspace website. Students need not submit a paper copy of the essay.

Michael Zimmerman, "The National Socialist 'Solution of the Gypsy Question'," from *National Socialist Extermination Policies. Contemporary German Perspectives and Controversies*, ed. by Ulrich Herbert (New York: Berghahn, 2000), 186-209.

If one compares Zimmerman's account of the reasons for, and evolution of, Nazi policies regarding the Roma and Sinti with the reasons for and evolution of Nazi policies regarding Jews, what are the principal similarities and differences?

Excerpts from the documentary Shoah

Tuesday, February 9

Jewish responses: attempts to survive, creating a record, resistance and revenge.

Samuel Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelbaum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Indiana University Press, 2007), 209-24, 285-99.

In what respects were the motives that led Ringelbaum and his associates to create and preserve an archive of Jewish life in the Warsaw Ghetto similar to, or different from, Primo Levi's motives in writing his memoir of Auschwitz, as best one can determine from the assigned sources?

Nechama Tec, *Dry Tears. The Story of a Lost Childhood* (Oxford University Press, 1984), 60-65, 141-44, 194-203.

How did non-Polish Jews respond to the murder of Jews by Germans, according to Tec?

Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust. The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 457-67, 479-93.

Why did it take many months after the discovery that the Germans were killing all of the Jews of Europe, not just Jews living in the territory of the Soviet Union whom they suspected of being Communists sympathizers, for some Jews in ghettos to organize an armed resistance?

What challenges did Jews who fled to the forests to join partisan groups face?

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, 301-302, 365-73.

How does Friedlander answer the questions posed above with respect to the reading assigned from Yahil's book?

PBS 2002 documentary *Resistance: Untold Stories of Jewish Partisans*

Week of February 15

No class - winter term reading week

Tuesday, February 23

Essay due in the Assignments section of the course website at 9:00 pm on Monday, February 22nd.

Collaboration in the project of persecution and mass murder: Poland. Essay due on Jan Grabowski's *Hunt for the Jews*, the assigned selection from Tomasz Frydel's *Village Society and the Holocaust in the General Government*, Zygmunt Klukowski's *Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939-44*, and chapter 5 of Martin Gilbert's *The Righteous*.

Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews* (Indiana University Press, 2013).

Tomasz Frydel, *Village Society and the Holocaust in the General Government: The Case of Kreis Debica* (University of Toronto dissertation: 2021), 1-4, 102-112, 290-313, 331-334, 342-352.

Zygmunt Klukowski, *Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939-44*, trans. by George Klukowski (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 184-201. Dr. Klukowski was a physician in a town that is now in the southeast of Poland.

Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous. The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (New York: Henry Holt, 2003), chapter 5, 101-27.

Based on Jan Grabowski's account in *Hunt for the Jews*, and the assigned selections from Tomas Frydel's *Village Society and the Holocaust in the General Government*, Zygmunt Klukowski's *Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939-44*, and chapter 5 of Martin Gilbert's *The Righteous*, how can one explain the conduct of non-Jewish Poles towards Jews seeking to escape murder at the hands of the German occupiers in rural Poland between the start of 1942 and January 1945?

The essay is due on the day before the class, at 9:00 pm. Please submit the essay to the assignment section of the course OWL Brightspace website.

Diamonds in the Snow - selections from the documentary

Tuesday, March 2

Collaboration and resistance in other countries conquered by Germany or ruled by German allies. Attempts at protest and rescue.

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, 191-9, 215-28, 243-9, 305-311, 324-31, 339-41, 395-403, 417-19.

France, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary.

Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, 510-17, 559-73. **Note that this assignment is a pdf from the unabridged version of Friedländer's book.**

Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust*, 573-621.

Tuesday, March 9

What Germans knew of the Holocaust. German responses.

Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret. Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's 'Final Solution'* (Little, Brown: 1980), 17-35, 229-35.

David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution. Public Opinion under Nazism* (Blackwell, 1992), 101-15.

Sönke Neitzel, *Tapping Hitler's Generals. Transcripts of Secret Conversations, 1942-1945* (Frontline Books, 2007), 7-11, 167-71, 228-31.

Guenter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (Da Capo Press, 2000; original 1964), 284-93.

John Michalczyk, *Confront: Resistance in Nazi Germany* (Peter Lang, 2004), 196-205. Please note that this account of the White Rose resistance group was written by Georg (Juergen) Wittenstein, who participated in some of the activities of the group but was spared execution in 1943.

Fliers of the White Rose group, from *Nazism 1919-1945. A Documentary Reader*, ed. by J. Noakes and G. Pridham, vol. 4, *The German Home Front in World War II* (Exeter: 1984), 456-9.

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, 339-341.

Susanna Schrafstetter, "Submergence into Illegality. Hidden Jews in Munich 1941-1945," from *The Germans and the Holocaust. Popular Responses to the Persecution and Murder of the Jews*, ed. by S. Schrafstetter and A. Steinweis (New York: Berghahn, 2016), 107-29.

Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous. The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (New York: Henry Holt, 2003), 181-97, 387-95.

Tuesday, March 16 Essay due in the assignments section of the course website at 9:00 pm on Monday, March 15th.

Responses to the Nazi persecution of Jews and the Holocaust in Britain, the Soviet Union, Canada, and the United States.

Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Clarendon Press, 1979), 134-82 (Chapter Four: "The 'Final Solution'").

Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, Vol. 3 (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 563-92, 603-24.

According to Polonsky, how did the war "transform the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union"? (p. 587) Why did the situation of the Jews in Poland and in the Soviet Union deteriorate so rapidly at the end of the war and in the immediate postwar period?

Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1945*, 341-44, 389-93.

Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many. Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1945* (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 1-189

Please submit an essay based on the following question to the Assignments section of the class OWL website based on the assigned reading from Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many. Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1945* (University of Toronto Press, 2012), 1-189; and Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 134-82.

Based on the assigned texts noted above, how can one explain the policies of Canada and Britain regarding the immigration of Jewish refugees from Germany and then Europe between 1933 and 1945? In the case of Canada, the question refers to immigration to Canada, with respect to Britain, it refers to immigration to both Britain and Palestine, which Britain at the time governed.

Alternative essay topic, also due on Monday, March 15th: Students who obtain a copy of Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, any edition, may instead write on the following question, based on the entirety of that book: “Based on Bernard Wasserstein’s account, how can one explain the policies adopted by the British government in response to the desperate efforts of Jews to flee Germany and, from 1938, the various countries conquered by Germany?”

Please note: students who write an essay based on Wasserstein’s book are still expected to read Arella and Troper’s book on the Canadian response to the Holocaust.

The essay is due on the day before the class, at 9:00 pm. Please submit the essay to the Assignments section of the course OWL Brightspace website.

Documentary: selection from Ken Burns, *The U.S. and the Holocaust*.

Tuesday, March 23

Jewish survivors. Postwar trials. Compensating (and failing to compensate) victims.

Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted. European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1985), 331-9.

Hilary Earl, *The SS-Einsatzgruppen Trial, 1945-1958. Atrocity, Law, and History* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 46-58, 71-79, 90-95, 296-301.

Omer Bartov, “Guilt and Accountability in the Postwar Courtroom. The Holocaust in Czortkow and Buczac, East Galicia, as seen in West German Legal Discourse,” *Historical Reflections* 39:2 (2013): 96-123.

Marilyn Henry, “Fifty Years of Holocaust Compensation,” *The American Jewish Yearbook* 102 (2002): 3-21, 26-35, 39-45, 52-57.

Ilaria Pavan, “Indifference and Forgetting. Italy and its Jewish Community, 1938-1970,” in *Robbery and Restitution. The Conflict over Jewish Property in Europe*, ed. by Martin Dean, Constantin Goschler, and Philipp Ther (Berghahn Books, 2007), 171-180.

Regula Audi, “Why Switzerland? Remarks on a Neutral’s Role in the Nazi Program of Robbery and Allied Postwar Restitution Policy,” in *Robbery and Restitution. The*

Conflict over Jewish Property in Europe, ed. by Martin Dean, Constantin Goschler, and Philipp Ther (Berghahn Books, 2007), 181-201.

Documentary: Nazis at Nuremberg, The Lost Testimony (selections)

Tuesday, March 30

The historiography of the Holocaust. Holocaust denial.

John Paul Himka, *Ukrainian Nationalists and the Holocaust. OUN and UPA's Participation in the Destruction of Ukrainian Jewry, 1941-1944* (ibidem Verlag: 2021), 21-67.

Judgment of the court in *David Irving v Penguin Books and Deborah Lipstadt*, April 11, 2000, accessed on October 6, 2020 at <https://www.hdot.org/trial-materials/judgment-and-appeal/>). Please note that only a part of this judgment is assigned; the selections are found on the course website.

Victor Klemperer, "I believe in Him," "The Star," "The Jewish War," *The Language of the Third Reich. LTI _Lingua Tertii Imperii, A Philologist's Notebook*, trans. by Martin Brady (Athlone Press, 2000), 103-9, 117-18, 166-71, 172-73.

Chancellor Angela Merkel speech at Auschwitz, December 6, 2019, accessed on October 6, 2020 at <https://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/bkin-en/news/speech-by-federal-chancellor-dr-angela-merkel-marking-the-10th-anniversary-of-the-auschwitz-birkenau-foundation-auschwitz-6-december-2019-1704954>

Documentary: David Irving

Tuesday, April 6

Lessons from the Holocaust.

Additional Statements

Communication policies: I am happy to speak with students during my weekly office hours. If this is not convenient, I will arrange alternative times to meet. I am in my office most days of the week. Please write me at enathans@uwo.ca to schedule a time to talk. I am also happy to talk by phone or via Zoom.

Classroom behavior: Please turn off cell phones and refrain from using any recording devices during the class. Please remove earbuds during the class.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI): I expect all essays for this class to be based on the assigned editions of texts. Each essay must be primarily the student's own work, as is the case now with respect to the use of more conventional secondary sources. It may in fact be advisable to avoid AI as a source primarily because it may impede independent reflection. Note that AI often makes very general claims, and is likely not to reflect the particular documents on which this course focuses. All essays must have footnotes to the sources of information and quotations from sources, and must refer in the footnotes to limited pages numbers. Citing an entire book or book chapter, or article, or ranges of ten or more pages, is unacceptable and will result in a failing grade.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.