

Avinoam J. Patt
Honors Seminar: Responses to the Holocaust
Fall 2013
MW, 2:55-4:10pm
patt@hartford.edu

HON 383: 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. Interview Project (20%)
5. Final paper assignment and presentation – to be presented in final week of class. (20%)

Readings:

Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews: 1933-1945* (abridged edition, March 2009, 978-0061350276)

Roskies and Diamant, *Holocaust Literature* (January 2013, 978-1611683585)

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.**

SCHEDULE OF COURSE TOPICS, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

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

Week 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST, PART I

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

Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945: The Years of Extermination*, p. 1-140.

9/4, first class

9/9

Week 2

INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST, PART II

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

Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945: The Years of Extermination*, p. 141-end of book.

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

9/11

9/16 and 9/18

Week 3

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

9/23

**attend exhibition opening, *Genocide: Israel Charny and the Scourge of the Twentieth Century* (Museum of Jewish Civilization)

9/25

Week 4

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)

9/30

10/2

Week 5**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

10/7

10/9 ** special guest lecture by Dan Leshem, Associate Director of Research, Shoah Foundation

Week 6**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

10/14

-special film screening for class (*Deadly Deception at Sobibor*)

7pm, Wilde Auditorium: this program is required for students (unless it conflicts with another class)

10/16

Week 7**Literary Responses during and after the Holocaust**

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

**Roskies, *Literature of Destruction*, excerpts

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 Rassyerner”

10/21

10/23

Paper 1 due – compare Kolitz and Grade

Week 8

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*)

10/28 – Holocaust educators workshop; special evening lecture

7pm, Wilde auditorium, Martin Dean, USHMM, *Encyclopedia of Ghettos*

10/30

Week 9

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*

11/4

11/6

Week 10

Psychological Responses to the Holocaust – the case of David Boder

David Boder, *Voices of the Holocaust*, 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*

11/11

11/13

Week 11

Memoirs and Post-Holocaust Literature

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* - excerpts

Elie Wiesel, *Night*, excerpts

Roskies and Diamant, excerpts

11/18

11/20

Paper 2 due, compare Levi and Wallant

Week 12

THEOLOGY and ETHICS AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

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

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

11/25

(no class 11/27)

12/2

Week 13

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*

12/4

Week 14

PRESENTATIONS OF STUDENT RESEARCH

12/9 and 12/11

Maurice Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies, Fall 2013, Schedule of Events

1. Award Ceremony, Exhibit Closing and Jewish New Year Celebration - Tuesday, September 3, 7pm

KF Room and Museum of Jewish Civilization, Mortensen Library
Closing of Chaim Gross Exhibition with "A Conversation between Joel Grae and Chaim Gross"
Welcoming New and Returning Students Reception.

2. TASTE OF THE GREENBERG CENTER

Monday, September 9, 9:15-10:30 a.m.

Modern Jewish Literature
The Fools of Chelm and the Origins of Jewish Literature
Instructor: Avinoam Patt

Tuesday, September 10, 5-7:20 p.m.

Bible and Archaeology
What do we know about the Bible from Archaeology?
Instructor: Richard Freund

Thursday, September 12, 7:30-10:00 p.m.

Contemporary Studies in Jewish Civilization
Great Powers in the Near East
Instructor: Hazza Abo-Rabia

3. Lecture and Exhibit Opening - Monday, September 23, 7 p.m.

KF Room and Museum of Jewish Civilization, Mortensen Library
Opening of *Genocide: Israel Charny and the Scourge of the Twentieth Century*

4. Film Screening - Monday, October 14, 7 p.m.

Wilde Auditorium
Sneak preview of *Deadly Deception at Sobibor*, in Honor of the 70th anniversary of the Sobibor Revolt on October 14, 1943. Seating is limited. Please call box office (860) 768-4228 for tickets.

5. Lecture – Wednesday, October 16, 7pm

Wilde Auditorium
Herb Keinson, Jerusalem Post, *Why Israel Can't Get a Fair Shake in the Media*

6. Workshop - Monday, October 28, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

1877 Club, Harry Jack Gray Center, University of Hartford
Holocaust and Genocide Education Workshop, "Learn from the Past: Teach for the Future"
Registration required by Friday, October 18: 860.768.4964 or mgejs@hartford.edu

7. Lecture – Monday, October 28, 7:00 p.m.

Wilde Auditorium
"The Nazi Universe of Persecution: Recent Findings of the USHMM Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos"
Dr. Martin Dean, Applied Research Scholar and Editor, USHMM *Encyclopedia of Ghettos*

8. Symposium on Archaeology and the Holocaust - Saturday, November 9, 7 p.m.

Wilde Auditorium
70 Years after the Sobibor Revolt: Special Kristallnacht Program
Yoram Haimi, Israel Antiquities Authority, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

9. Lecture - Monday, November 11, 7 p.m.

Kristallnacht Program, UConn Greater Hartford Campus
"Holocaust Denial: A New Form of Anti-Semitism"
Dr. Deborah Lipstadt
Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish History and Holocaust Studies, Emory University

10. Film Lecture and Yiddish Culture program - Monday, December 2 (5th day of Chanukah)

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