

SPRING 2013
HISTORY 280W:
THE HISTORIAN'S CRAFT (THE HOLOCAUST)

Dr. Adam R. Seipp
216A Glasscock
aseipp@tamu.edu
845-5996

Course Meeting Time and Location:

Tuesday and Thursday, 11:10-12:25
Glasscock 008

Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

Course Description:

Between 1939 and 1945, the German regime, along with allies and collaborators across Europe murdered approximately 5.7 million Jews, along with millions of others. This campaign of racial killing, perpetrated in the heart of Europe by a modern state and carried out by millions of individuals, has profoundly shaped the political, intellectual, cultural, and legal history of the past seven decades.

This course will examine the causes, course, and consequences of the Holocaust while introducing students to the study and practice of history. Students read and discuss material related to the Holocaust, while at the same time learning about different approaches that historians take toward the human past. We will also discuss career options for students of history and visit a number of sites around Texas A&M where the skills learned in the history classroom are put to use every day.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Through this course, students will be able to:

- 1) evaluate and synthesize primary and secondary historical writings.
- 2) express their own ideas effectively in written and oral form.
- 3) identify historical and social contexts that created diversity in past and present human cultures.
- 4) apply knowledge about the human condition - in the past and present - to their personal lives and studies.

Required Texts:

All of the books listed below are available at the MSC Bookstore, online, and at the Reserve Desk on the 4th Floor of the Evans Library Annex.

Bergen, Doris, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*
 Browning, Christopher, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave Labor Camp*
 Howell, Martha C. and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods*
 Tec, Nechama, *Defiance*

Other assigned readings are available through electronic reserves (ereserves.tamu.edu). Students will also need to view the film *Defiance* (2009). It is available through Evans Library, as well as any number of other venues. A screening has been scheduled for the class on Sunday, April 14 from 7:00 – 9:30 PM in Evans Annex room 417c. The film can also be viewed through mediamatrix for those registered for this class (<https://mediamatrix.tamu.edu/>)

Graded Assignments:

This is a writing intensive course. Students will be expected to complete two short (approximately 500 words) papers and one long seminar paper (approximately 2,500 words). The final paper will incorporate both primary and secondary sources. It is not possible to pass this course without passing the writing component.

The seminar paper will be written using the oral history interviews collected by the Shoah Foundation and available online through the TAMU libraries. More information will be provided shortly after the beginning of the semester. The other two papers will be brief responses to questions posed about documents related to the liberation of the concentration camps by American forces in 1945 and the extraordinary story of the Bielski partisans, a Jewish community that emerged in the forests of Eastern Europe during the German occupation. Their story is told in the book and Hollywood film *Defiance*.

Each student will submit a draft of their seminar paper. I will return drafts with comments, which should then be incorporated into the final version. Completion of a draft totaling not less than 1,500 words, and which makes a good-faith effort to address the assignment by using primary and secondary sources, is required. Drafts meeting these requirements will receive full credit. Failing to meet this requirement will result in a grade of 0.

Course grades will be assigned on the following basis:

50%: Seminar Paper
 15%: Liberation Paper
 15%: Defiance Paper
 10%: Final Paper Draft
 10%: Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken during each class session. Attendance will be administered according to the terms of Student Rule 7 (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>). Students who miss more than three class sessions without a university-approved excuse will be penalized 20% of their participation grade (2% of their overall grade) for each subsequent unexcused absence.

All graded assignments will be submitted through www.turnitin.com. I will NOT accept emailed submissions or hard copies. The Defiance and Liberation papers are due no later than 11:10 AM on the due date indicated in the schedule below. The seminar paper draft is due on March 28 by 5:00 PM. The final paper is due by 5:00 PM on April 30. Please note that turnitin.com does not allow the submission of late papers. Except in cases in which a student has a university-approved absence on the day the assignment is due, late papers will not be accepted.

Students will need to register in advance on turnitin.com. Please use the following information to complete your enrollment:

Class ID: 5906997
Enrollment password: hist280holo

Schedule and Readings:

01/15: Course introduction and procedures

01/17: The Past, and Why We Study It

Reading:

Prevenier and Howell, *From Reliable Sources*; 1-16, 119-150

01/22: Thinking About Sources

Reading:

Prevenier and Howell; 17-68
"Oberriedenberg Document" (e-reserves)
Begin reading Bergen, *War and Genocide*

01/24: Introducing the Holocaust

Reading:

Finish reading Bergen

01/29: German and European Jews, 1900-1939

Reading:

Steven M. Lowenstein, "East European Jews Before World War II," in Alex Grobman, Daniel Landes, and Sybil Milton, eds., *Genocide, Critical Issues of the Holocaust: A Companion to the Film 'Genocide'* (Los Angeles/Simon Wiesenthal Center/Chappaqua: Rossel Books, 1983), pp. 18–27. (e-reserves)
Steven M. Lowenstein, "Western European Jews Before World War II," in *ibid.*, pp. 28–38. (e-reserves)
Richard Levy, "Antisemitism" in Peter Hayes and John K. Roth, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 23-38. (e-reserves)

01/31: The Nazi State

Reading:

Robert Gellately, "The Gestapo and German Society: Political Denunciation in the Gestapo Case Files," *Journal of Modern History*, 60:4 (December 1988), 654-694. (e-reserves)

Dieter Kuntz, "Hitler and the Functioning of the Third Reich" in Jonathan C. Friedman, ed., *The Routledge History of the Holocaust* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 69-81. (e-reserves)

Gerhard Weinberg, "'Germany's War for World Conquest and the Extermination of the Jews.'" *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 10:2 (Fall, 1996), 119-133. (e-reserves)

02/05: No class

02/07: Camps and Ghettos

Reading:

Karin Orth, "Camps" in Hayes and Roth, pp. 364-380. (e-reserves)

Martin C. Dean, "Ghettos" in Hayes and Roth, pp. 340-353. (e-reserves)

02/12: Postwar Life

Readings

Tadeusz Borowski, "The January Offensive," from *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (New York: Viking, 1959), 144-153 (e-reserves)

Boaz Cohen, "The Jewish DP Experience," in Friedman, 412-422. (e-reserves)

Tara Zahra, "Prisoners of the Postwar: Displaced Persons, Expellees, and Jews in Austria After World War II." *Austrian History Yearbook* 41 (2010): 191-215. (e-reserves)

02/14: Paper introduction

02/19: VHA introduction, Meet with Joel Kitchens (**MEET IN EVANS LIBRARY 204B**)

02/21: The Liberation of the Camps. **LIBERATION PAPER DUE**

Reading:

Watch "Nazi Murder Mills" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jdefO0Dxhc>)

Listen to Edward R. Murrow's broadcast from Buchenwald

(http://www.otr.com/murrow_buchenwald.shtml) Full text available at

http://www.mysocialstudiesclass.com/Murrow_at_Buchenwald_Transcript.pdf

02/26: No class

Reading:

Begin reading Christopher Browning, *Remembering Survival*

02/28: Oral History

Reading:

Finish reading *Remembering Survival*

03/05: Writing Center Workshop

03/07: Pre-writing Conferences, 10 am – noon in instructor's office

03/12: No class, Spring Break

03/14: No class, Spring Break

03/19: Meet at Sam Houston Sanders Corps Center (lobby)

03/21: Meet at George Bush Presidential Library (lobby)

03/26: No class, work on drafts

03/28: No class, **DRAFTS DUE BY 5:00 PM**

04/02: Graduate student panel

04/04: Holocaust Denial

Reading:

"Denial Web Article" (e-reserves)

Berel Lang "Six Questions On (Or About) Holocaust Denial," *History and Theory*, 49:2, May, 2010, pp. 157-168. (e-reserves)

04/09: The Holocaust and Genocide **DRAFTS RETURNED**

Reading:

Yehuda Bauer, "Comparison with other Genocides" in Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 39-67. (e-reserves)

04/11: The "Americanization" of the Holocaust.

Reading:

Watch excerpt from "Band of Brothers"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTPkXLC7jI4> Warning: graphic material

Alvin Rosenfeld, "The Americanization of the Holocaust" in Alvin Rosenfeld, ed. *Thinking About the Holocaust: After Half a Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 119-150. (e-reserves)

04/14 (Sunday): Screening of *Defiance*, Evans Annex 417c

04/16: Hollywood and the Holocaust. **DEFIANCE PAPER DUE**

Reading:

Nechama Tec, *Defiance*

04/18: Careers in History

04/23: WWI German Soldier Letters presentation with David Chroust. Meet in Cushing Library Lobby

04/25: Lunch

04/30: **FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 5:00 PM**

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy:

Students in this course are expected to act according to the Aggie Honor Code: *"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."* Violations of the Honor Code will be referred to the Honor Council. For information about the rules and procedures of the Honor Council, see <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>.