

MEMORY, HISTORY AND REPRESENTATION OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: THE DESTRUCTION OF THE JEWS OF EUROPE

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The seminar focuses on the history of the persecution and extermination of the Jews of Europe before and during the Second World War and aims at the exploration of historiographical and methodological issues posed by scholarly studies on the Holocaust. The seminar will deal with the central role of testimony in the writing of the history of the Holocaust and with the special role of memory in post-war societies. The use of survivors' testimonies reflected the need for a historical perspective that would not reproduce the conceptual categories of the Nazis. We will deal with the following questions: When does the survivor testimony enter the historical narrative? What are the uses of testimony? How does the use of testimony affect the study of the past? The inscription of memory on social and historical places (monuments, remnants, landscapes) and on forms of art such as literature, poetry, and cinema constitute fruitful ground in order to think on the relationship between memory and history.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES: The seminar intends to:

- Develop students' abilities in oral and written communication.
- Promote familiarization with different kinds of sources and with the methodological and theoretical issues that their use poses.
- Introduce students to new categories of analysis such as trauma and emotion.
- Encourage students to think reflexively about the use of sources in order to historicise memory and experience of the Second World War.

TEACHING: Lectures include also presentation of oral history archives (Archive of Oral Testimonies of the Dept. of History, Archaeology & Social Anthropology of the University of Thessaly, Centropa Jewish Witness to a European Century, Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute's Visual History Archive, Yad Vashem Archives), of electronic sources and of photographic material and as well as theoretical and methodological introduction to the use of the available material.

ASSESSMENT: Oral presentations and submission of two essays of 2,000 words during the semester. All students submit an essay of 4,500 words at the end of the semester.