The Holocaust in American Culture
Prof. David Greenberg
Journalism & Media Studies

Class Time: MW Period 6 (4:30-5:50)        Room: Bishop 211
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Course No.: 04:567:473:03

Syllabus

Description. When the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. opened in 1993, people asked why a “European” catastrophe was being memorialized alongside shrines to Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln. One answer is that since World War II, the experience and memory of the Holocaust have helped shape American culture. This course looks at a few of the ways the Holocaust and Nazism changed America: by fostering a distrust of the masses among intellectuals; by promoting civil liberties and religious toleration; by encouraging a view of the Soviet Union as equivalent to Nazi Germany; by elevating the goals of protecting human rights and stopping genocide foreign policy; and by providing a new focus for Jewish identity. Through these and other topics students will analyze the role that the Holocaust plays in American life.

Course Requirements.

• Regular attendance and active participation. This course meets 2½ hours a week. Arriving on time and staying for the duration is essential. Students may miss one class, no questions asked. Students who miss more than one class, or substantial portions of a class, will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each class missed, even if you inform me in advance. In case of severe illness or extraordinary circumstances, you must provide documentation. If you have a conflict such as a job or sports that will force you to come late, leave early, or miss class, you should not take this course. A key purpose of a seminar like this is to teach students to develop and share their own ideas. The very work of the course consists of engaging in a discussion about ideas. Students who abstain from discussion are missing the course’s whole purpose. A class in which you do not contribute (or try to contribute) to discussion is equivalent to a missed class. Proficient spoken and written English is expected.

• Reading. The reading for this class ranges from 150 to 200 pages a week.

• Classroom presentations. Each week one student will prepare a 15-minute presentation framing the main book under discussion. This presentation should not summarize the reading. Rather, it should aim to achieve two main goals:
1) It should place the reading in the literature to which it belongs. How does this work resemble or differ from other books on the topic? What is its contribution to understanding the topic? What controversies did it respond to or generate?

2) The presentation should offer salient ideas and questions about the reading. Typically this will involve giving some background: Who is the author? How was the book received upon publication? To answer these questions, of course, it’s necessary to read other works on the topic and do some research. (I may be able to suggest books.) As a rule, you should plan to read at least three books for the presentation. You will not necessarily be rewarded for reading more books, although doing so will probably make for a richer presentation, and that richness will be rewarded.
• **Short paper.** Students will write a paper of no more than 5 pages, due **Feb. 12.**

• **Term paper.** Students will write a term paper of no more than 10 pages, due **Apr. 25.**

• A note on Internet research. It is tempting these days to do your research with Google or other search engines. This is not permitted. The websites you discover this way vary widely in their accuracy and reliability. Certain sites found through search engines can contain valuable information, but you must take care to validate them. Also, it's important to distinguish between library databases and Internet search engines. Many universities subscribe to databases that contain various journals. (Here are Rutgers': [http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/indexes/indexes.shtml](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/indexes/indexes.shtml)) You should use these databases, which collect scholarly journals, newspapers, and the like. They will not turn up random people's home pages. However, even with these databases, you are advised to scrutinize the sources that you dig up. A statement made in a scholarly journal like *The Journal of American History* is to be read differently from one made in a political magazine like *Human Events.*

### Additional Rules and Information.

• Cell phones must be turned off and may not be used in class.

• Laptops may be used for note-taking only. No emailing or Web-surfing during class.

• Students must show up on time and stay for the duration of the class. During class, students should not engage in personal conversations, read newspapers, do crossword puzzles, or undertake other personal diversions unrelated to class activity.

• **Academic Integrity.** Plagiarism and cheating are forbidden, according to the terms of Rutgers University policy. It is your responsibility to review and obey these policies. The policy is [at http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html](http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html).

• On plagiarism, the statement below (from [history.rutgers.edu/undergrad/plagiarism.htm](http://history.rutgers.edu/undergrad/plagiarism.htm)) appears in Rutgers University’s rules. Like all such rules, it applies to this class.

> Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be promptly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: “to paraphrase Plato's comment ...” and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.
Reading List.

Required
Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust* (Franklin Watts)
Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust* (Plume)
Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Mariner Books)
Jackson Spielvogel, *Hitler and Nazi Germany* (Prentice Hall)
Stuart Svonkin, *Jews Against Prejudice* (Columbia University Press)

Films
*The Diary of Anne Frank*
*The Double-Headed Eagle: Hitler’s Rise to Power*
*Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr.*
*Schindler’s List*
*The Trial of Adolf Eichmann* or *The Specialist*

Weekly Assignments.

Book available at Rutgers University Bookstore or in Alexander library reserves
Article or book chapter available at online library reserves. Go to www.libraries.rutgers.edu and click on “Find Reserves” in the left-hand column.
Film to be viewed at Livingston Campus Media Center or, if necessary, on your own.

W Jan 17  Introduction

M Jan 19  The History of Anti-Semitism

W Jan 24  Weimar Germany and the Nazi Rise to Power
- Spielvogel, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, Chapters 2-3.

M Jan 26  The Nazi State
- Spielvogel, Chapter 4.
- Bauer, Chapters 5-6.

W Jan 31  Hitler – Film
- Spielvogel, Chapters 5 & 7.
- The Double-Headed Eagle

M Feb 5  Hitler and The Holocaust – Discussion
- Spielvogel, Chapter 9.
- Bauer, Chapters 9, 13.
American Reaction
- David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust. Chapters 2, 16.
- Lucy Davidowicz, “Could America Have Rescued Europe’s Jews?”

The Postwar Years
- Novick, The Holocaust in American Life, Chapters 5, 6.

Totalitarianism in Theory
- Peter Baehr, Introduction to The Portable Hannah Arendt, pp. xvi-xxi.

Nazism and Communism
- Stuart Svonkin, Jews Against Prejudice, Chapters 5-7.

McCarthyism
- Peter Viereck, “The Revolt Against the Elite,” in The Radical Right, pp. 135-54.

Rise of Civil Liberties
- Svonkin, Jews Against Prejudice, Chapters 2, 3.
- Richard Primus, The American Language of Rights, Chapter 5.

Life in the Camps and the Question of Lessons

The Diary of Anne Frank
Mar. 12-14  **SPRING BREAK**

M Mar. 19  **The Anne Frank Debate**


☐ Ralph Melnick, “With My Own Eyes,” *The Stolen Legacy of Anne Frank*.


☐ reread Novick, pp. 117-20.

W Mar. 21  **Genocide and Foreign Policy I**


☐ Irwin Cotler, “The Holocaust, Nuremberg, and Human Rights.”

M Mar. 26  **Genocide and Foreign Policy II**

☐ Novick, Chapter 11, pp. 239-263.


☐ Elie Wiesel, “For the Dead and the Living.”


W Mar. 28  **The Trial of Adolph Eichmann or The Specialist**

☐ Novick, Chapter 7. [18]

☐ Arendt, excerpts from *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, pp. 313-388.

M Apr. 2  **The Eichmann Debate**


W Apr. 4  **Jewish Identity**

☐ Novick, Chapters 8-10.


☐ Jonathan Rosen, “The Uncomfortable Question of Anti-Semitism.”

M Apr. 9  **Holocaust Denial - Film**

 بصورة  *Mr. Death*

☐ Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust*, Chapters 1-4.

☐ Novick, Chapter 12.

W Apr. 11  **Holocaust Denial - Discussion**

☐ Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust*, Chapters 8-11.


M Apr. 16  **Mainstreaming the Holocaust – Film**

 بصورة  *Schindler’s List*

W Apr. 18  **Mainstreaming the Holocaust – Discussion**

☐ Yosefa Loshitzky, “Introduction.”

☐ Omer Bartov, “Spielberg’s Oskar.”
Jeffrey Shandler, “Schindler’s Discourse.”
Leon Wieseltier, “Close Encounters of the Nazi Kind.”
Stanley Kauffmann, Review of Schindler’s List (2 parts)

M Apr. 23  Discussion of Term Papers
           Rosenbaum, Explaining Hitler, Introduction, Chapters 4, 5

W Apr. 25  Discussion of Term Papers
           Rosenbaum, Explaining Hitler, Chapters 13-15.

M Apr. 30  The Search for Answers
           Rosenbaum, Explaining Hitler, Chapters 16, 19-20.