

**The Centre for Social Studies**  
**THE HOLOCAUST AND ITS CULTURAL MEANINGS**  
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**Course Description:**

A person can only hope to fully understand the Holocaust if provided with multidisciplinary approaches which would allow a more complete viewing of its multidimensional complexity. The aim of this course is to introduce students precisely to those perspectives more often and more traditionally missed by the majority of Holocaust courses – the sociological, anthropological, and cultural points of view.

The Shoah needs to be understood as something more than a historical or political event stemming from very particular circumstances. It was a sociocultural phenomenon originating out of, taking place within, and rending apart European culture and civilization. The Holocaust was committed by, witnessed by, and suffered by European peoples. After World War II had ended, its refugees were spread across all of the continents of the globe; their experiences and their stories went with them and also infected, as it were, other cultures and civilizations descended from and related to the European. One of the goals will be to demythologize the histories of the Holocaust to enable a critical, analytical, nuanced, and detailed understanding of Europe and Europeans (Jews and non-Jews) in the twentieth century, before and after the Shoah. Another aim will be to treat the Shoah holistically, perceiving it from the perspective of various fields of study.

The course will include 12 meetings; each will comprise a lecture/seminar and, during the second hour of later meetings, presentations and discussions led by students.

**Course Requirements:**

Students are expected to attend regularly (no more than 3 absences) and participate actively. Each full credit student will need to participate in a class presentation.

Full credit participants will also be required to prepare a final paper of 10-15 pages (typewritten, double-spaced, 12pt font) on a subject closely connected to the material presented during the course, but representing individual research and thinking. A one-page outline must be submitted for approval no later than midnight, Monday, 5 December 2011. The final work must focus on a clearly stated thesis statement or question which the paper attempts to prove or answer; it must include an appropriate number of footnotes (no less than 5 in consistent style) and a bibliography (no less than 6 sources – Wikipedia not allowed). Plagiarism of any sort or length will automatically result in failure of the course. The deadline for submission of the final research paper is Tuesday, 31 January 2012.

**Course Outline**

***Class One – 28 October***

*Societal Definitions of Sociological Terms:  
Holocaust, Genocide, Antisemitism, Racism*

What have been the definitions of pertinent keywords in different languages, in different countries, at different times? What do these definitions have in common,

and how do they differ? Why do these disparities appear and what shifts and discrepancies in sociopolitical ideologies and interpretations do they reflect? Specifically, how has the Shoah influenced definitions of these terms which, for the social scientist, should have objective and fixed meanings? What are the differences between pre- and post-WWII definitions of holocaust, genocide, antisemitism, and racism? What do these dissimilarities tell us about what society feels is important now and what lessons it feels it has learned from the Holocaust?

Definitions taken from pre- and post-war dictionaries and encyclopedias, published in the USA, Western Europe, and Central and East Europe.

Sartre, J.P., "What is an antisemite?", H. Fein (ed.), *The Persisting Question*, Walter de Gruyter: New York, 1987, pp58-66.

### **Class Two – 29 October**

*Sociocultural Codes and Mechanisms for Intolerance:  
Stereotypes, Prejudices, Attitudes, Behavior*

Why are stereotypes and prejudices created and why do they remain in modern European societies? In the context of these sociological and psychological mechanisms, what was it that made the Jews the predominant and traditional "other" in European culture? How and why were "us/them" categories created and to which social groups were they applied? How are members of minority groups socially defined? How did Nazi Germany then build upon ancient stereotypes of "others" and constant social mechanisms, and apply the category for the persecution of not only the Jews, but also Roma, the physically and mentally disabled, etc.? How did various, old and new forms of cultural isolation facilitate the Shoah?

Allport, G., *The Nature of Prejudice*, 1954, "The Stereotypes in our Culture".  
Aronson, E., *The Social Animal*, Viking Press: New York, 1972.  
Girard, R., *The Scapegoat*, Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1989.  
Kenrick D. (ed.), *In the Shadow of the Swastika*, University of Hertfordshire Press: Hatfield, 1999.

### **Class Three – 4 November**

*Was the Holocaust the Inevitable Endpoint of European Antisemitism?*

Did or could all forms of antisemitism lead to the Shoah? What is the difference between political, economic, Christian, and social antisemitism, and what is the difference in consequences? What is the difference between secular and religious Judeophobia, anti-Judaism, and antisemitism? Was it political, economic, Christian, or social antisemitism which played the primary role in the prewar years; was it the same during the war? And if antisemitism did not lead directly to the Holocaust, then what are the other sociocultural factors which did cause it? What have been the effects of the Shoah on European Christianity? In the dominant Christian (or Christian-oriented secular) culture of Europe, will Jews continue to feel the threat of antisemitism?

Chalk, F., Jonassohn, K., *The History and Sociology of Genocide*, 1990, pp323-58.

- Ellis, M.H., *Ending Auschwitz: The Future of Jewish and Christian Life*, 1994, ch. 4.
- Marrus, M.R., *The Holocaust in History*, Penguin Books: London, 1989, ch. 5.
- Musial, S., "Black is Black: The Sin of Anti-Semitism Cannot Be Trivialized" in S. Kapralski (ed.), *The Jews in Poland: Volume 2*, Judaica Foundation & the Center for Jewish Culture: Kraków, 1999, pp. 385-392
- Tomaszewski, J., "Anti-Semitism of Men and Anti-Semitism of Things" in S. Kapralski (ed.), *The Jews in Poland: Volume 2*, Judaica Foundation & the Center for Jewish Culture: Kraków, 1999, pp. 87-100.
- Tracy, D., "Christian Witness and the Shoah" in G.H. Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1994, pp81-89.

### **Class Four – 5 November**

*The Uniqueness of the Holocaust vis-a-vis the Question of "Never Again"*

From a sociological point of view, were the mechanisms which caused the Holocaust so unique that such an event could never happen again? Were those who killed extraordinary monsters or ordinary people? Or do this decade's genocidal events in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia represent and illustrate the same sociocultural factors, tendencies, and mechanisms? If we perceived the Holocaust as an enormous, universal tragedy of the whole human species, would we understand the human condition better? If we perceive it as only the Jewish tragedy of the Shoah, how do we avoid the political battles of victimhood? Has or can the Holocaust teach European culture how to avoid genocide?

- Bauman, Z., *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1992, chapter 4.
- Furet, F. (ed.), *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews*, Schocken Books: New York, 1989, (selected pages).
- Goldhagen, D.J., *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, Vintage: New York, 1997.
- Kaplan, H., *Conscience and Memory*, University of Chicago Press: London, 1994, ch. 7, "Redemption and the Life of Meaning."
- Marrus, M.R., *The Holocaust in History*, Penguin Books: London, 1989, ch. 2.
- Niewyk, D., *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 1997.

### **BREAK**

### **Class Five – 18 November**

*The Sociocultural Roles of the Perpetrator, Witness, and Victim*

Earlier, after World War II, lines were drawn between perpetrators and victims; now a third category has been added of the witness or bystander. What does this say about our current understanding of the Holocaust and about contemporary European culture? How sharply can the lines be drawn between these three groups? How should we deal with "good Germans", Jewish police and members of the *Judenrats*, and Polish (or other) rescuers, ambivalent bystanders, and denouncers? Moreover,

was neutrality a possibility; how "neutral" were the neutral states of Europe during the Holocaust and in its wake? What, if any, was the difference between "cold" and "hot" violence then? Can we understand the behavior of individuals? Can we justify their behavior? What are the ethical and moral issues encompassed by these three roles?

Marrus, M.R., *The Holocaust in History*, Penguin Books: London, 1989, ch. 8.

Oliner, S. & P., *The Altruistic Personality*, 1990.

Spiegelman, A., *Maus II*, 1991.

Film: *Fotoamator* (focusing on the firsthand accounts of Germans and Jews in the Łódź ghetto) and/or *Birthplace* (a Polish Jewish survivor traces his family members Shoah histories and fates in the community around his hometown); Kieślowski's *Decalogue 8*

### **Class Six – 19 November**

*Ways of Telling the Tale, Ways of Remembering the Unthinkable*

The Holocaust provoked the writing of poetry, fiction and non-fiction prose (some of these created as the Shoah was taking place), as well as comics and films. How should we interpret these works in general; how should we interpret the tales they tell of the different players (perpetrators, witnesses, victims)? What does the information they relay tell us about the Holocaust, about the various participants, and how we should see them today? What do they teach us about failures of European culture and of Europeans as individuals?

Blonski, J., *The Poor Pole Looks at the Ghetto*.

Borowski, T., *This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*

Levi, P., *Survival in Auschwitz*, 1958, preface, chapters 1, 8, 10, 17 + conversation.

Schiff, H., *Holocaust Poetry*, 1995.

Spiegelman, A., *Maus, vol. I & II*, 1991.

Zych, A. (ed.), *The Auschwitz poems: An Anthology*, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum: Oswiecim, 1999.

### **Class Seven – 25 November**

*An Attempt to Heal the Wounds: War Crimes Trials*

Why were World War II crimes considered unforgivable and unforgettable? Is a war criminal ever too old to be tried; is it ever "inhuman" to try someone who acted inhumanly? How have post-Holocaust war crimes definitions been introduced into our understanding of and emphases on law and human rights? What have been the repercussions of war crimes trials — appearing on the scene in nearly every decade since the war — on European and global society? What does this tell us about how Europeans see themselves? What does this tell us about contemporary European codes of morality? Has the Shoah established a new standard of measure for right and wrong, good and evil by which secularized Europeans can and will guide their group behavior?

Arendt, H., *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, ch. 8, Epilogue and Postscript.

- Bauman, Z., "The Holocaust: Fifty Years Later" in D. Grinberg (ed.), *The Holocaust: Fifty Years After*, Jewish Historical Institute: Warsaw, 1994, pp23-33.
- Bloxham, D., "The Holocaust on Trial: Crimes against Humanity, Justice, and the Writing of the Historical Record" in D.J. Schaller, R. Boyadjian, V. Berg, H. Scholtz (edd.), *Enteignet – Vertrieben – Ermordet*, Chronos Verlag: Zurich, 2004, pp. 295-318.
- Christie, N., "Answers to Atrocities" in G. Skąpska, A. Orla-Bukowska, & K. Kowalski (edd.), *The Moral Fabric in Contemporary Societies*, Brill: Leiden, 2003, pp. 335-353.
- Kaplan, H., *Conscience and Memory*, University of Chicago Press: London, 1994, ch. 8, "Existential Democracy and Human Rights."
- magazine and newspaper articles, and "Letters to the Editor" discussions regarding Holocaust war crime trials in Western Europe, extradition of criminals to Central & Eastern European countries, General Pinochet case.

### **Class Eight – 26 November**

*Cultural Memory and Social Consciousness of the Holocaust: Jewish Perspectives, Part 1*

What do today's Jews and Jewish organization know of the Holocaust? Of what facts are people today more aware? What is being forgotten, what is being emphasized, what is being distorted? What is the cultural memory which is being shaped? In light of the "Europeanness" of Israeli and United States society, what are the different memories and histories taught and shown in those two countries? How do events like the March of the Living, and "death camp field trips" by Israeli secondary school students shape their Shoah memory and consciousness, as well as that of Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, and other European nations they visit? How do films (documentary and other) influence Jewish memory of the Holocaust?

- Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities*, Verso Books: London, 1991, ch. 11.
- Berenbaum, M., *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as told in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum*, 1993, ppiv-65.
- Boyarin, J., *Remapping Memory*, Introduction and ch. 1.
- Richmond, T., Konin, Vintage: London, 1996, Introduction, Part I: 11-15; Part II: 24; Part III: 46-48; Part IV: 67-69.
- Young, J.E., *The Texture of Memory*, Yale University Press: Princeton, 1993, ch. 9-10, 11-12.

**BREAK (outline due by 5 December 2011)**

### **Class Nine – 9 December**

*Cultural Memory and Social Consciousness of the Holocaust: Jewish Perspectives, Part II*

Films: excerpts from Lanzmann's *Shoah* and excerpts from Marzyński's *Shtetl*. Continuation of discussion in light of these documentaries. Comparisons of documentaries to popular, commercial films such as *Schindler's List*, *Life is Beautiful*,

and *The Train of Life*. What memory is shown, what is not shown, what memory is being created?

Felman, S., "Film as Witness: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*" in G.H. Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1994, pp90-103.

Hoffman, E., *Shtetl*, Mariner Books: New York, 1998.

Lanzmann, C., *Shoah* (script published by Schocken Books)

### **Class Ten – 10 December**

*Cultural Memory and Social Consciousness of the Holocaust:  
Non-Jewish Perspectives, Part I*

According to one source, one of every five Americans does not know or is not sure Jews were killed during the Holocaust. What, in fact, do today's non-Jewish societies remember of the Holocaust? Of what facts are people today more aware? What is being forgotten, what is being emphasized, what is being distorted? What are the real influences and effects of revisionism and other forms of Holocaust (and Holocaust participation) denial? What are the different memories and histories taught and shown in Germany, Poland, Holland, and the United States? How do they differ and how are they the same? How do they represent particular versions of European culture and European cultural history as a whole? Why have the stories of Wallenberg, Schindler, Karski and others become more predominant and important in the European telling of the tale?

Hartman, G.H., "Introduction: Darkness Visible" in G.H. Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1994, pp1-22.

Steinlauf, M., "Reflection on the Shadow of the Holocaust in Post-War Poland" in D. Grinberg (ed.), *The Holocaust: Fifty Years After*, Jewish Historical Institute: Warsaw, 1994, pp61-72.

Young, J.E., "Jewish Memory in Poland" in G.H. Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1994, pp215-231.

Young, J.E., *The Texture of Memory*, Yale University Press: Princeton, 1993, ch. 11-12.

### **Class Eleven – 16 December**

*Cultural Memory and Social Consciousness of the Holocaust:  
Non-Jewish Perspectives, Part II*

Film: *The Nasty Girl* (about Anna Rosmus' research into the wartime history of her hometown in Germany). What forms of Holocaust "amnesia" are present in Germany in specific and European societies in general? How do nation states and local communities attempt to alter their image with regards to their roles in the Holocaust? How are they coming to terms – or not – with direct collaboration or indirect complicity in crimes against humanity?

- Fresco, N., "Negating the Dead" in G.H. Hartman (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1994, pp191-203.
- Irwin-Zarecka, I., *Frames of Remembrance*, ch. 1 and 3.
- Welzer, H., *Grandpa Wasn't a Nazi: The Holocaust in German Family Remembrance*, AJC: New York, 2005.
- Young, J.E., *The Texture of Memory*, Yale University Press: Princeton, 1993, ch. 1-2.

### **Class Twelve – 17 December**

#### *In the Aftermath of the Holocaust in Central Europe*

What problems in dealing with the Shoah are more specific and unique for Central Europe? How did the Shoah (and subsequent sociopolitical events) specifically impoverish the culture of this region? What "amputee pain" has been and is being experienced and what is being done today to alleviate it? Why does it seem that there is something called "antisemitism without Jews"? What effects have the shifts to political democracy and economic capitalism had on feelings towards Jews? How have the Lauder Foundation and other activism from within Jewish communities affected perceptions and discussions of the Holocaust in Central Europe? How has the Shoah been memorialised in Central Europe and especially at the death camp museums in Poland and how will it be portrayed at the new Berlin museum? How will dealing with the Shoah help bring Central European nations back into the fold of "Europe" as a whole? Will it help restore memory of the multicultural life which so enriched these vast regions before World War II?

- Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, J., Orla-Bukowska, A., "After the Fall: Attitudes Towards Jews in Post-1989 Poland", *Nationalities Papers* ed. H. Huttenbach, June 1998, pp265-82.
- Bibo, I., "The Jewish Question in Hungary after 1944", ed. K. Nagy, *Democracy, revolution, self-determination*, Columbia University Press: New York, 1991, pp192-244.
- Davies, N., "The Jewish Strand in European History" in S. Kapralski (ed.), *The Jews in Poland: Volume 2*, Judaica Foundation & the Center for Jewish Culture: Kraków, 1999, pp. 87-100.
- Kugelmass, J., Boyarin., J., Baker, Z., *From a Ruined Garden*, Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1998.
- Orla-Bukowska, A., "Presenting and Representing the Shoah in the Post Communist World" in D.J. Schaller, R. Boyadjian, V. Berg, H. Scholtz (edd.), *Enteignet – Vertrieben – Ermordet*, Chronos Verlag: Zurich, 2004, pp. 319-347.
- Orla-Bukowska, A., "Representing the Shoah in Poland and Poland in the Shoah" in R. Lentin (ed.), *Re-Presenting the Shoah for the Twenty-First Century*, Berghahn Books: Oxford, 2004, pp. 179-194.
- Shafir, M., "Denying the Holocaust where it Happened: Post-Communist East Central Europe and the Shoah" in R. Lentin (ed.), *Re-Presenting the Shoah for the Twenty-First Century*, Berghahn Books: Oxford, 2004, pp. 195-226.
- Steinlauf, M., *Bondage to the Dead*, Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, 1997.

## Literature

- Allport, G., *The Nature of Prejudice*, 1954.
- Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, J., Orla-Bukowska, A., "After the Fall: Attitudes Towards Jews in Post-1989 Poland" in H. Huttenbach (ed.), *Nationalities Papers*, June 1998, pp265-82.
- Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities*, 1991.
- Aronson, E., *The Social Animal*, 1972.
- Bauman, Z., *Modernity and the Holocaust*, 1992.
- Berenbaum, M., *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as told in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum*, 1993, ppiv-65.
- Bibo, I., "The Jewish Question in Hungary after 1944" in K. Nagy (ed.), *Democracy, revolution, self-determination*, 1991, pp192-244.
- Blonski, J., *The Poor Pole Looks at the Ghetto*.
- Borowski, T., *This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*.
- Chalk, F., Jonassohn, K., *The History and Sociology of Genocide*, 1990.
- Ellis, M.H., *Ending Auschwitz: The Future of Jewish and Christian Life*, 1994.
- Furet, F. (ed.), *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews*, 1989.
- Girard, R., *The Scapegoat*, 1989.
- Goldhagen, D.J., *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, 1997.
- Grinberg, D. (ed.), *The Holocaust: Fifty Years After*, 1994.
- Hartman, G.H. (ed.), *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, 1994.
- Hoffman, E., *Shtetl*, 1998.
- Irwin-Zarecka, I., *Frames of Remembrance*.
- Kaplan, H., *Conscience and Memory*, 1994.
- Kapralski, S. (ed.), *The Jews in Poland: Volume 2*, 1999.
- Kenrick D. (ed.), *In the Shadow of the Swastika*, 1999.
- Kugelmass, J., Boyarin., J., Baker, Z., *From a Ruined Garden*, 1998.
- Levi, P., *Survival in Auschwitz*, 1958.
- Marrus, M.R., *The Holocaust in History*, 1989.
- Niewyk, D., *The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 1997.
- Oliner, S. & P., *The Altruistic Personality*, 1990.
- Richmond, T., *Konin*, 1996.
- Sartre, J.P., "What is an antisemite?" in H. Fein (ed.), *The Persisting Question*, 1987, pp58-66.
- Schiff, H., *Holocaust Poetry*, 1995.
- Spiegelman, A., *Maus I and II*, 1991.
- Steinlauf, M., *Bondage to the Dead*, 1997.
- Young, J.E., *The Texture of Memory*, 1993.
- Zych, A. (ed.), *The Auschwitz poems: An Anthology*, 1999.

internet sources:

<http://www.auschwitz.org/>

<http://www.auschwitz.org.pl/new/index.php?tryb=news&rok=2007&language=EN>

<http://www.auschwitz.org.pl/html/eng/aktualnosci/linki.php>

<http://www.ushmm.org/>

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/>

<http://www.ushmm.org/research/center/publications/fulllist.php?sort=date#occasional>

<http://www.yadvashem.org/>

<http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/genocide/>

<http://www.hdot.org/>