

Germanic and Slavic Studies 580 A01

The Holocaust*

Fall 2020

CRN: 11784

*Crosslisted with History 450 A01



Leo Haas, Terezin

Online discussion: Thursdays, 2:30pm – 4:20pm*

(*see course schedule for further details)

Instructor: Dr. K. Semmens

E-mail: ksemmens@uvic.ca

“Drop in” Office Hours by Zoom: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00am-11:00am

Alternate Office Hours by Zoom: By special arrangement based on instructor and student availability between Monday and Thursday, 9:00am-4:00pm
(plus virtual office hours via Brightspace discussion forum)

Territory Acknowledgment:

We acknowledge with respect the Lkwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This online undergraduate/graduate seminar course investigates the Holocaust as an historical event by examining its origins, progression, central characters, key sites and enduring legacies.

The Holocaust was the systematic mass murder of the Jews of Europe by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War. This course will therefore prioritize Jewish experiences of Nazi terror. However, the course will also look at how Nazi racial policy targeted other social and ethnic groups. In addition, we will cover the post-1945 representation of the Holocaust by writers, filmmakers, museum and memorial designers, and even graphic artists, in an attempt to assess the meaning the Holocaust still has today.

ONLINE FORMAT:

This course normally meets in person. Due to Covid 19, we will be meeting virtually each week. Please have patience for your instructor's first attempt at online teaching!

It is expected that students will "attend" synchronous seminars on Thursdays, 2:30-4:20pm via Zoom (see course schedule below). There are also asynchronous learning components for students to complete at their own pace. Seminars will not be recorded, but there will be opportunities for students to participate on their own time via alternate assignments if, in exceptional circumstances, they cannot attend. To repeat: It is expected that students will show up for the weekly scheduled Zoom meetings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students who successfully complete requirements for GMST 580 will be able to:

- describe and compare the evolution, key events and central figures of the Holocaust in diverse European countries at various times between 1933 and 1945
- distinguish diverse axes of identity (eg. race, gender, class, religion, nation) that shaped Holocaust experiences, both of victims and perpetrators
- outline and compare various "sites" of the Holocaust
- identify key turning points in Holocaust history, and describe the relationship between those turning points and the course of the Second World War generally
- identify, describe, and evaluate distinct scholarly approaches to historical questions about perpetrators, bystanders and victims
- read original evidence, scholarly arguments, and relevant popular depictions closely and critically
- devise two primary source analyses, exploring and synthesising a range of sources, weighing their relative merits and limitations, and crafting a coherent and convincing argument about the historical value of that source
- give an oral presentation on a primary source analysis

We will practice these skills regularly in reading for discussions, preparing discussion questions, debating and discussing readings and ideas, writing primary source analyses and presenting in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (GMST 580 ONLY):

This is a cross-listed graduate Germanic and Slavic Studies course/ undergraduate History course. There are therefore two different sets of evaluation criteria. Be sure to complete the assignments required for **GMST 580** by the stated deadlines. If in doubt, ask!

PLEASE NOTE: Students must complete assignments 1, 3, and 4 to pass the course.

1. Seminar Participation (ongoing)	25%
2. Discussion Questions (ongoing)	10%
3. Two Primary Source Analyses (2 x 25% due 22 October and 3 December)	50%
4. Oral Presentation by Zoom on one Primary Source Analysis (any Thursday, but no later than 19 November)	15%

READINGS:

Please see the COURSE SCHEDULE. The following texts are required and are available at the UVic Bookstore in hard copy format. Please contact me if you have trouble acquiring these books. They are also available in ebook format if needed:

Peter Hayes, *Why? Explaining the Holocaust* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2017)
Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: A Memoir* (Touchstone, 1996)
Anne Frank's Diary: The Graphic Adaptation, adapted by Ari Folman (Pantheon Books, 2018)

All other required readings, photographs, films and oral histories are available online via the Brightspace website. Please contact me if you cannot access these materials.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Seminar participation (25%)

Seminars allow students to enter into a dialogue with other students, the instructor, the authors we read and, indeed, the past itself. **Simply “showing up” for the Zoom meeting online is not enough.** Both the quantity and quality of your vocal contributions to class discussions will be assessed. That said, evaluating participation in an online course presents special challenges. I will therefore also be looking at the “Chat” log at the end of

every seminar. I expect to hear students' actual voices as much as possible; however, there may be occasions when adding a comment or question by chat might be more appropriate. PLEASE NOTE: your chat comments will be seen by all students unless you direct them only to the instructor.

Top participation grades will go to students whose vocal comments convey a thorough understanding of assigned material, provide useful comparisons across readings, offer independent critical interpretations and engage the ideas of their peers. Chat comments can complement those contributions. I will also be dividing the class into smaller breakout rooms at times and “dropping in” to monitor discussions there; active engagement in these smaller settings can also increase your participation mark.

Because of the importance of discussion to this class, students who miss more than two Zoom seminars should be in touch with the instructor as soon as possible.
Please see the Participation Grading Rubric available on Brightspace.

At any time during the term, I am happy to give feedback and/or an interim participation grade should students wish. See the syllabus and Brightspace for a reminder!

2. Discussion questions (10%)

I want to hear more from you! What questions are going through your minds as you read and think about the Holocaust? Each week, before the beginning of class, you will submit a list of at least **five (5)** detailed, thoughtful questions that arose from that week's readings and from thinking about that week's topic specifically (ie. not just questions about the Holocaust in general). You do not need to answer them. You will upload them to Brightspace as a Word document (not a pdf).

Each set of questions is worth 1% (to a maximum total of 10%). Partial marks will not be assigned. There must be at least 5 applicable, appropriate, edited and proofread questions with specific page references to the readings on that week's topic and assigned texts, videos, websites, etc. You may only submit these questions **before** the beginning of the relevant class (Thursdays, 2:30pm). You may submit them any time before then, but no late questions will be accepted.

PLEASE NOTE: These questions should not include the discussion questions I have posted on Brightspace.

3. TWO Primary Source Analyses (2 x 25% = 50%)

You will analyze two primary sources of your choice relating directly to the topics and themes covered in this course in two separate assignments, **due Thursday, 22 October 2020 and Thursday, 3 December by 5:00pm**. The purpose of this assignment is to read, analyze and contextualize your chosen primary source. Ultimately, you are answering the question: How valuable is it as an historical source? A copy of the source (photograph,

postcard, newspaper article, document, etc., etc.) must accompany your paper. You must use *at least five academic secondary sources* to complete your analysis, **not including course texts, readings, encyclopedias, newspaper articles or websites**. Some of the questions you might wish to consider include:

What can you say about the author of the document?

What perspective did he or she have on the event?

What were his or her biases, prejudices, etc.?

What was the purpose behind creating the document?

Is its timing significant?

How reliable is the document?

Is it internally consistent?

What kinds of sources might be used to corroborate or challenge it?

How does it differ from what historians have later said about its subject matter?

Word length: 1750 words. **You must include a 'Works Cited', a cover page, footnotes or endnotes, and numbered pages.**

PLEASE NOTE: Primary source analyses should be uploaded to Brightspace. **PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED MORE THAN TWO WEEKS AFTER THEIR DUE DATES WITHOUT A FORMAL EXTENSION REQUIRING DOCUMENTATION.**

4. Oral Presentation on Zoom on ONE Primary Source Analysis (15%)

In a 10 minute presentation to the class online on any Thursday up to and including **Thursday, 19 November 2020**, with an accompanying PowerPoint or other visuals, students will outline their thesis about the source and walk us through their analysis of it.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Even though our classes are taking place virtually, the same standards of academic integrity still apply. UVic has a well-developed Policy on Academic Integrity for undergraduate and graduate students. The links to these are posted on our Brightspace site.

Students are required to abide by all academic regulations set as set out in the University calendar, including standards of academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity (e.g. cheating and plagiarism) are considered serious and may result in significant penalties. **Please note: I reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software or other platforms to assess the integrity of student work and I am required to submit all cases of suspected plagiarism and any other form of cheating to the Chair of Germanic and Slavic Studies for further investigation without exception. If you still have questions, please ask me.**

COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUITY AND FAIRNESS

The University promotes a safe, respectful and supportive learning and working environment for all members of the university community. The University fosters an environment characterized by fairness, openness, equity, and respect for the dignity and diversity of its members. The University strives to be a place that is free of discrimination and harassment, injustice and violence. The strength and vibrancy of the University is found in the diverse life experiences, backgrounds and worldviews of all its members. (https://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/GV0200_1105_.pdf)

A NOTE ON PRONOUNS

We as a Department acknowledge and support each student's right to and preference for their own personalized pronouns in all our classes. Dr. Semmens uses she/her.

STUDENT WELLBEING

Online learning poses special challenges and doing so during a pandemic even more. Please take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. Take time away from screens whenever you can. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. Resources include:

Counselling Services - Counselling Services offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students. Due to Covid 19, appointments take place by phone. See <https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/>

Health Services - University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives. See <http://www.uvic.ca/services/health/>

Center for Accessible Learning (CAL) - Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the CAL as soon as possible. See <https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>. CAL documentation is needed for any accommodations.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS*:

(*unless otherwise noted, seminars take place synchronously via ZOOM on Thursdays at 2:30pm)

September 10 – Introduction: European Jews and Anti-Semitism before 1933

Read:

Hayes, “Why Another Book on the Holocaust?” and “Targets: Why the Jews?”, in *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, xiii-xvi, 3-35.

Do:

Log on to our Zoom classroom (details on Brightspace) at 2:30pm to meet your instructor and each other, and learn more about Germanic and Slavic Studies 580.

Familiarize yourself with the Brightspace site.

Tell us more about yourself in the Brightspace “Introducing Ourselves” Discussion Forum if you wish.

September 17 – Struggling with *Mein Kampf*

Read:

Hayes, “Attackers: Why the Germans?”, in *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, 36-72.

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: 1941), *at least* Volume 1, Chapters X, XI and Volume 2, Chapters III, IV.

<http://www.archive.org/details/meinkampf035176mbp>

Do:

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

September 24 – Kristallnacht and the Outbreak of War

Read:

Hayes, “Escalation: Why Murder?”, in *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, 73-113.

Rudolf Bing, Herta Nathorff and Marie Kahle, in *The Night of Broken Glass: Eyewitness Accounts of Kristallnacht*, ed. by Uta Gerhardt and Thomas Karlauf (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 56-64, 88-89 and 148-157.

Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: 1998), 145-172.

Do:

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

October 1 – The “Jews’ Cities”: The Ghettos

Watch:

Moving into the Krakow Ghetto,
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/types-of-ghettos>

A few minutes of Theresienstadt, 1944,
<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1000172>

Read:

Hayes, “Why Didn’t More Jews Fight Back More Often?”, in *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, 176-217.

“Theresienstadt”, Holocaust Encyclopedia, USHMM (as much as possible!)
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/theresienstadt>

The Terezin Diary of Gonda Redlich, ed. Saul S. Friedman (Lexington: 1992), selected excerpts.

Listen:

Philipp Manes, *As If It Were Life*, read by Dr. Klaus Leist
<https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/philipp-manes/>

Do:

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

October 8 – The Perpetrators and the “Holocaust by Bullets”

Read:

Hayes, “Annihilation: Why This Swift and Sweeping?”, in *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, 137-160 only.

“Einsatzgruppen”, Yad Vashem

<https://www.yadvashem.org/untoldstories/documents/GenBack/Einsatzgruppen.pdf>

Thomas Kühne, “Watching Terror: Women in the Community of Crime”, in *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler’s Community, 1918-1945* (New Haven: 2010), 137-161.

Do:

Contact me for an interim assessment of how you are doing in GMST 580 so far if you wish.

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

October 15 – ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING ONLY (NO ZOOM MEETING)

Watch:

Auschwitz: The Nazis and the Final Solution,

<https://ihavenotv.com/surprising-beginnings-auschwitz-the-nazis-and-the-final-solution>

Do:

Schedule a private or small group office hour session with me this week if you need assistance on your assignments for this course.

October 22 – Auschwitz and the “Final Solution”

FIRST PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSES DUE BY 5:00PM

Read:

Hayes, “Annihilation: Why This Swift and Sweeping?”, in *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, 114-137, 160-175.

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*.

Do:

Submit your first primary source analysis within the next two weeks without penalty.

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

October 29 – Diving and Passing: The Holocaust in Hiding

Read:

Hayes, “Homelands: Why Did Survival Rates Diverge?”, in *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, 218-258.

Anne Frank’s Diary: The Graphic Adaptation.

Zoe Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust: A Feminist History* (Oxford: 2017), 53-78.

Do:

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

5 November – Beyond the Jews: Other Victims, Part I

Read:

“Genocide of European Roma (Gypsies), 1939-1945”, USHMM
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/genocide-of-european-roma-gypsies-1939-1945>

Lisa Pine, “Hashude: The Imprisonment of ‘Asocial’ Families in the Third Reich”, *German History* 13, no. 2 (1995): 182-198.

Meike Rotzoll, et. al., “The First National Socialist Extermination Crime: The T4 Program and its Victims”, *International Journal of Mental Health* 35, no. 3 (2006): 17-29.

“Hitler’s Black Dilemmas”, Chapter 4 in Clarence Lusane, *Hitler's Black Victims: The Historical Experiences of European Blacks, Africans and African Americans during the Nazi Era* (Routledge, 2004), 86-117.

Do:

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

November 12 – NO ZOOM MEETING (READING BREAK)

Do:

TAKE A BREAK FROM SCREENS IF YOU CAN!

Email me with assignment questions if you have them.

November 19 – Beyond the Jews: Other Victims, Part II

FINAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Read:

Samuel Clowes Huneke, “The Duplicity of Tolerance: Lesbian Experiences in Nazi Berlin”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 54, no.1 (2019): 30-59.

“Nazi Persecution of Soviet Prisoners of War, USHMM
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nazi-persecution-of-soviet-prisoners-of-war>

Peter Brock, “Jehovah’s Witnesses as Conscientious Objectors in Nazi Germany”, Chapter 25, in *Against the Draft: Essays on Conscientious Objection from the Radical Reformation to the Second World War* (Toronto: 2006), 425-447.

Do:

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

November 26 – ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING ONLY THIS WEEK (NO ZOOM MEETING): The Holocaust on Trial

Note: There is no Zoom meeting for GMST 580 students today.

Read:

Richard Evans, *Lying about Hitler: History, Holocaust and the David Irving Trial* (New York: 2001), 104-148.

Frederick Schweitzer and Marvin Perry, Chapter 5, “Denying the Holocaust” (p.175-212) in *Anti-Semitism: Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present* (ebook)

Do:

If desired, get together online as a group to discuss these readings on your own time.

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

December 3 – Representing and Remembering the Holocaust: Museums and Memorials

SECOND PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSES OR ESSAYS DUE BY 5:00PM

Read:

Hayes, “Aftermath: What Legacies, What Lessons?”, in *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, 300-343.

Katrine Tinning, “To Survive Ravensbrück: Considerations on Museum Pedagogy and the Passing on of Holocaust Remembrance”, *Museum & Society* 14, no. 2 (2016): 338-353.

Do:

Submit your second primary source analysis within the next two weeks without penalty.

Submit your minimum 5 discussion questions by 2:30pm.

ONLINE STUDENT CONDUCT

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and supportive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to this experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. The University will not tolerate racism, sexualized violence, or any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment.

Please be advised that by logging into UVic’s learning systems and interacting with online resources you are engaging in a university activity.

All interactions within this environment are subject to the university expectations and policies. Any concerns about student conduct, may be reviewed and responded to in accordance with the appropriate university policy.

To report concerns about online student conduct: onlineconduct@uvic.ca