

**History 13W: Nazi Germany and the Holocaust\***

Fall 2018

Thursdays, 3-5:45 p.m.\*\*

Sever 111

Instructor: Dr. Brandon Bloch

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\*This course is cross-listed in Germanic Languages and Literatures, NELC (Jewish Studies), and European Studies.

\*\*Most sessions will meet from 3-5 p.m., but selected sessions will extend to 5:45 p.m. See the schedule below. I will be available after class from 5-5:45 p.m. on most Thursdays when the seminar ends at 5.

**Course Description:**

Over seventy years after its defeat, Nazi Germany remains a touchstone in debates about democracy, human rights, and historical memory around the world. This seminar sets the history of National Socialist Germany (1933-45) in its European and global contexts, focusing on the events that have become known as the Holocaust: the annihilation of nearly six million Jews during the Second World War, which occurred alongside the murder of hundreds of thousands of individuals targeted as Roma, homosexuals, disabled people, and political opponents, as well as approximately 1.8 million non-Jewish Poles. We will confront some of the most intractable questions surrounding this period: Why did the Nazi Party come to power in Germany? What were the sources of the regime's ideology and popular support? Was Nazi Germany a "totalitarian" dictatorship that controlled every aspect of life, or did the regime seek to accommodate popular opinion? What roles did antisemitism, racism, homophobia, and ableism play in politics and ordinary life before 1939? When, why, and how did Nazi leaders decide to annihilate European Jewry? What motivated the killers who carried out the Holocaust: zealous adherence to Nazi ideology, or blind obedience to authority? What constitutes "collaboration" or "resistance" in the context of total war and genocide? How did gender, sexuality, class, disability, and ethnicity shape victims' experiences of, and responses to, Nazi persecution? What role should survivor testimony play in studying the Holocaust?

The magnitude of the events has led some observers to suggest that the Holocaust defies explanation, and therefore the human capacity for reason and understanding. The premise of this course, however, is that Nazi Germany and the Holocaust can—indeed, must—be studied historically. While the eliminationist ideology, systematic implementation, and sheer scale of Nazi genocide may have been unprecedented, this need not mean that the Holocaust was without

historical causes and antecedents. Our readings during the second week will introduce four contexts proposed by scholars seeking to understand Nazi Germany's historical roots: global economic crisis during the 1930s; the long history of Christian antisemitism and anti-Jewish violence in Europe; the rise of scientific racism, eugenics, and social Darwinism; and the emergence of an international order based on European (and American) imperial competition. We will keep these contexts in mind in later weeks, as we analyze Nazi rule and the devastation it engendered. Throughout, we consider both "top down" and "bottom up" perspectives; that is, we investigate how power was gained and exercised by Nazi elites, but also how "ordinary" individuals perpetuated, abetted, or subverted the regime's priorities.

This course is a research seminar. Readings and discussions are geared toward honing students' skills in working with primary sources, analyzing competing interpretations, and presenting their own arguments both in speaking and writing. The course culminates in the writing of an original research paper (for more, see the course requirements).

### **Course Books:**

The following books are available for purchase at the COOP and placed on reserve at Lamont Library:

- ❖ William S. Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town, 1922-1945*, revised ed. (Brattleboro, VT: Echo Point Books, 2014) [orig. 1984]. ISBN: 9781626548725.
- ❖ \*\*Doris L. Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). ISBN: 9781442242289.
- ❖ Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2017) [orig. 1992]. ISBN: 9780062303028.
- ❖ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996). ISBN: 9780684826806.
- ❖ Chil Rajchman, *The Last Jew of Treblinka*, trans. Solon Beinfeld (New York: Pegasus Books, 2012). ISBN: 9781605983424.
- ❖ Edith Sheffer, *Asperger's Children: The Origins of Autism in Nazi Vienna* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2018). ISBN: 9780393609646.

Link to purchase course books from the COOP: <https://tinyurl.com/300-HIST-13W-F18-1>

\*\*Please note: The textbook by Doris Bergen, which has been placed on order at the COOP, is also available for free online through the Harvard Library system. The link can be found in the list of Library Reserves for this course.

### **Course Requirements:**

As a research seminar, this course will provide you with the tools to produce a paper based on original research in primary sources. No specific prerequisites are expected. We will go over the necessary background in European history, and the assigned text by Doris Bergen offers a lucid

introduction that assumes no prior knowledge about the Holocaust. However, you should be aware that historical research and writing require a significant investment of time. You will likely find yourself better prepared to complete the assignments if you have taken at least one prior course in the history department or a related humanities or social science department. The course requirements are as follows:

1. Discussion participation (including one week introducing the discussion): 35%
2. Four response papers (approx. 500 words each): 15%
3. Preliminary assignments for research paper (topic description, annotated bibliography, outline/introduction, in-class presentation): 10%
4. Research paper (15 pp. double-spaced): 40%

Because this is a discussion-based seminar, your **regular attendance and informed participation** are crucial. You are expected to attend all meetings of the course, except in cases of a documented medical or family emergency. Please remember that the quality of your contributions to discussions is as important as the quantity, and that asking a well-informed question also counts as participation. I am happy to meet early in the semester if you would like to discuss strategies for reading and taking notes on large amounts of material, or for participating in class. The Bureau of Study Counsel also offers a one-week mini-course on Reading and Study Strategies. Information about registering can be found at <https://bsc.harvard.edu/reading-course>.

Each week, one or two students will open the seminar with a **presentation** of no more than ten minutes introducing the week's readings. Presentations should not simply summarize the readings. Rather, they should introduce two or three overarching themes or debates that tie the readings together, relate the readings to previous weeks of the seminar, and raise some questions for discussion.

You are also expected to post **four response papers** to the course Canvas site, due by 9 a.m. on the day the relevant readings will be discussed in class. Response papers are due by **Sept. 20, Oct. 4, Oct. 18, and Nov. 15**. Feel free to write during any week, as long as you meet these deadlines. Papers should be approximately 500 words and offer a focused argument in response to a particular question or problem. Reading questions will be distributed in advance of each week's meeting. You may respond to one of my questions or address one of your own. It is not necessary (indeed, likely impossible) to incorporate all of the week's reading in the response paper. Instead, discuss those segments of the readings that are most pertinent to your argument.

For the culminating project, each student will write an **original research paper** of approximately 15 (double-spaced) pages, related to some aspect of the course themes. You will have wide latitude in selecting a topic. We will talk about this assignment at greater length in the first weeks of the course. The seminar on Sept. 20 will be extended until 5:45 p.m. in order to discuss strategies for developing a research question and locating sources. For now, please note that this assignment has **four additional sub-components**:

1. One-page description of your topic: **due Oct. 22.**
2. Annotated bibliography of at least six sources (incl. three primary sources): **due Nov. 1.**
  - An annotated bibliography includes a paragraph accompanying each source, briefly describing both the content of the source as well as its relevance for your paper.
3. Paper introduction (2-3 pp.) and/or outline: **due Nov. 12.**
  - You will submit the introductory section of your paper and/or a complete outline to both the course instructor and another class member (designated in advance). The seminar meeting on Nov. 15 will be extended for a peer writing workshop.
4. In-class presentation of research: **Nov. 29.**
  - During the final class session on November 29, each student will speak for approximately five minutes on their research topic and have an opportunity to take questions from the class. You are welcome to use PowerPoint to show examples of visual sources or documents from your research.

If you are a junior history concentrator and would like to write a senior thesis next year, you will need to write at least one longer seminar paper this year (if you have not already done so). You are welcome to use this seminar as an opportunity to complete this requirement. In this case, your final paper should be at least 20 pages in length, and you will only need to write three response papers. Please let me know in advance if you are interested in this option.

### **Late Work:**

Late work will be excused only in cases of a documented medical or family emergency. Response papers will be graded down 1/2 point (out of 10) if submitted after 9 a.m. on the due date but before the beginning of class, and 1 point each day late after that. Research papers will lose 3 points (out of 100) per day late. Please note that I am not able to accept research papers after Thursday, December 20, the last day of the fall semester, without the permission of the Harvard College Administrative Board, which is granted only in exceptional circumstances.

The grading scale is as follows:

90-100=A-range

80-89=B-range

70-79=C-range

60-69=D-range

### **Collaboration Policy:**

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. *However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic.* You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this

discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

We will discuss expectations for citing sources in your written work early in the semester. If you have questions about how to properly cite a source, or whether a citation is required in a particular instance, please speak with me *before* the assignment is due. There is no penalty for checking in advance, and I will let you know if you need to adjust your writing or citation in order to avoid unacknowledged appropriation of a source. Please note that dual submission of work prepared for another course is *not* permitted.

Students enrolled in this course are expected to abide by the Harvard College Honor Code:

*Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one’s own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.*

Further information about Harvard's policies on academic integrity is available in the Harvard College Handbook for Students (<https://handbook.fas.harvard.edu/>). Any suspected case of plagiarism will be reported to the Harvard College Honor Council.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability should present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the instructor by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although instructors are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

### **Laptop Policy:**

Use of laptops is permitted for course-related activities only (e.g. taking notes and referencing readings). Please, no checking email or social media during class. If you need to take a call, you may leave the classroom and return when you are ready.

### **A Note on Sources:**

It goes without saying that this course addresses violent and graphic material, including sources that depict antisemitism, racism, misogyny, sexual violence, homophobia, and violence against disabled people. Moreover, the course raises sensitive issues surrounding the intersections of nationalism, religion, and violence. It is important that we remain respectful of one other's

viewpoints in discussion. Certain readings and discussions will deal with especially violent photographs or film footage, and I will alert the class in advance. Please do not hesitate to meet with me if you have concerns about particular aspects of the course content.

### **Schedule of Readings:**

Readings marked with an asterisk (\*) will be available on the Canvas site.

#### **September 6 (Week 1): Introduction**

#### **September 13 (Week 2): Deep Origins...Antisemitism? Capitalism? Colonialism? Science?**

- ❖ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, intro, ch. 1
- ❖ \*Susannah Heschel, "Theology and Race," in *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, 2008), pp. 1-25
- ❖ \*A. Dirk Moses, "Colonialism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies*, ed. Peter Hayes and John K. Roth (Oxford, 2010), pp. 68-80
- ❖ \*Detlev J. K. Peukert, "The Genesis of the Final Solution from the Spirit of Science," in *Nazism and German Society, 1933-1945*, ed. David F. Crew (London, 1994), pp. 274-99
- ❖ \*Moishe Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," in *Germans and Jews since the Holocaust: The Changing Situation in West Germany*, ed. Anson Rabinbach and Jack Zipes (New York, 1986), pp. 302-14

#### **September 20 (Week 3): Fall of the Weimar Republic and Rise of the Nazi Regime [CLASS UNTIL 5:45—Discussion of research paper assignment.]**

- ❖ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, ch. 2
- ❖ Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power*, Part One (pp. 3-147)
- ❖ \**The Early Goebbels Diaries: The Journal of Joseph Goebbels from 1925-1926*, ed. Helmut Heiber (London, 1962), pp. 27-45
- ❖ \*Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston, 1999), pp. 463-79 ("The Struggle of the Early Period – The Significance of the Spoken Word")

**\*First response paper due by Sept. 20 at 9 a.m.**

#### **September 27 (Week 4): The "People's Community" and the "Racial State"**

- ❖ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, ch. 3
- ❖ \*Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 2004), intro, ch. 2
- ❖ \*Karen A. Fiss, "In Hitler's Salon: The German Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale," in *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich*, ed. Richard A. Etlin (Chicago, 2002), pp. 316-42
- ❖ \*S. Jonathan Wiesen, "American Lynching in the Nazi Imagination: Race and Extra-Legal Violence in 1930s Germany," *German History* 36 (2018): 38-59
- ❖ \*Documents in *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts*, ed. Roderick Stackelberg and Sally A. Winkle (London, 2002)
  - "Proclamation of the Reich Government to the German People, 1 February 1933"
  - "Appeal for the Boycott of All Jewish Enterprises, 31 March 1933"

- "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, 7 April 1933"
- "NSDAP Order for the *Gleichschaltung* of the Free Labor Union, 21 April 1933"
- "Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring, 14 July 1933"
- "Hitler's Speech to the National Socialist Women's Organization, September 1934"
- Emilie Müller-Zadow, "Mothers who give us the future," 1936
- Nuremberg Laws, 15 September 1935

#### **October 4 (Week 5): Social Outcasts in the "Third Reich"**

- ❖ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, ch. 4
- ❖ \*Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, "The Persecution of Sinti and Roma, and Other Ethnic Minorities," in *The Racial State: Germany, 1933-1945* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 113-35
- ❖ \*Willy Cohn, *No Justice in Germany: The Breslau Diaries, 1933-1941*, ed. Norbert Conrads (Stanford, 2012), pp. 1-14, 178-95
- ❖ \*Geoffrey Giles, "The Institutionalization of Homosexual Panic in the Third Reich," in *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, eds. Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus (Princeton, 2001), pp. 233-55
- ❖ \*Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York, 1999), intro, ch. 1

*\*Second response paper due by Oct. 4 at 9 a.m.*

#### **October 11 (Week 6): Disability and the Origins of Mass Killing**

- ❖ \*Henry Friedlander, "From 'Euthanasia' to the 'Final Solution,'" in *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race*, eds. Susan D. Bachrach and Dieter Kuntz (Washington, D.C., 2004), pp. 155-183
- ❖ \*"Sermon of Clemens August Graf von Galen, Bishop of Münster, 3 August 1941," in *Behind Valkyrie: German Resistance to Hitler*, ed. Peter Hoffmann (Montreal, 2011), pp. 211-26
- ❖ Sheffer, *Asperger's Children*, intro, chs. 2-6 (skim pp. 105-126), chs. 8-9, pp. 244-48

#### **October 18 (Week 7): Nazi Racial Imperialism in Eastern Europe**

- ❖ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, pp. 129-45, 186-210, 213-17
- ❖ \*Catherine Epstein, "'A Blond Province': Resettlement, Deportation, Murder," in *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 160-92
- ❖ \*Wendy Lower, "A New Ordering of Space and Race: Nazi Colonial Dreams in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, 1941-1944," *German Studies Review* 25 (2002): 227-54
- ❖ \*Documents in *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook*
  - "Hitler's Reichstag Speech, 30 January 1939"
  - "Re-Germanization of Lost German Blood, December 1940"
  - Goebbels diary entry, 13 December 1941
  - Letter from Alfred Rosenberg to Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, 28 February 1942
  - "Minutes of the Wannsee Conference, 20 January 1942"

*\*Third response paper due by Oct. 18 at 9 a.m.*

*\*1 p. topic description for research paper due on Oct. 22 at 5 p.m.*

**October 25 (Week 8): "Ordinary" Perpetrators?**

[CLASS UNTIL 5:45—Film screening.]

- ❖ Browning, *Ordinary Men* (skip chs. 16-17 and afterword)
- ❖ \*Thomas Kühne, "Performing Genocidal Ethics: Togetherness in Himmler's Elite," in *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918-1945* (New Haven, 2010), pp. 55-94

\*Class on Oct. 25 extended to watch a 60-minute excerpt from Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) for discussion during the following weeks.

**November 1 (Week 9): The Ghetto and Camp System**

- ❖ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, pp. 145-59, 217-23, 237-60
- ❖ \*Anna Hájková, "Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide: Negotiating the Sexual Economy of the Theresienstadt Ghetto," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38 (2013): 503-33
- ❖ Rajchman, *The Law Jew of Treblinka*

\*Annotated bibliography (at least six sources) due in class on Nov. 1

**November 8 (Week 10): Collaboration and Resistance**

- ❖ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, pp. 211-13, 223-35, 260-73
- ❖ \**The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom*, eds. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kermisz (New York, 1979), Notebook Eight, pp. 304-33
- ❖ \*Zivia Lubetkin, *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt* (Tel Aviv, 1981), trans. Ishai Tubbin, pp. 35-61, 91-130, 145-59, 178-89, 199-210, 229-42, 266-83
- ❖ \*"Student Resistance: Leaflets of the White Rose," in *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook*

\*Draft of introduction and/or paper outline due on Monday, Nov. 12 at 5 p.m.

**November 15 (Week 11): Auschwitz, Death Marches, and the *Endkampf***

[CLASS UNTIL 5:45—Peer workshop.]

- ❖ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, ch. 9
- ❖ Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

\*Fourth response paper due by Nov. 15 at 9 a.m.

[No Class on November 22: Thanksgiving]

**November 29 (Week 12): Memory and Representation**

[CLASS UNTIL 5:45—Research presentations.]

- ❖ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, conclusion
- ❖ \*Dan Stone, "Memory, Memorials, and Museums," in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (London, 2004), pp. 508-32

\*Final Paper due on Friday, December 14 at 3 p.m.