

Responses to the Holocaust

PHR-420-7 / Winter 2018-19
Phillips Academy



Instructor: Mr. Prescott
Location: Chapel 016
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

An exploration of the Holocaust through diaries, memoirs, films, works of fiction, and later nonfiction reflections on the phenomenon. Questions to be engaged will include the following: What was it like for the victims? What was it like for the perpetrators? Who were the bystanders? How could it have happened? What elements from Jewish, Christian, and secular tradition contributed to its possibility? What inspired and motivated resistance, and how were resistance efforts sustained? How have various Jewish, Christian, and secular thinkers responded to the challenge of this event? What have been some of its effects on our own feelings about life and human beings?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION, AND POLICIES

I. Required Texts:

1. Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992)
2. Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006)
3. Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)
4. Fred Uhlman, *Reunion: A Novella* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971)
5. Simon Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (New York: Schocken Books, 1997)

II. Evaluation

i. Classroom Participation (25%) – Much of this class will proceed as a seminar, which means careful reading of assigned work, regular attendance, and participation in class are all essential in order to succeed in the course. A separate handout/rubric will be distributed regarding expectations for classroom participation/discussion.

ii. Short Essays (30%) – Three different reflection-style essays will be assigned throughout the term. More specific information about the expectations for these assignments will be provided in a separate handout.

iii. Longer Essays (35%) – Two longer essays will be assigned in the second half of the term. More specific information about the expectations for these assignments will be provided in a separate handout.

iv. Group Project (10%) - Students will work together in groups of 2-4 to research the oppression of various groups under Nazi rule, which will culminate in a presentation to the class.

III. Extensions – Generally speaking, I do not grant extensions. In addition to allocating class time for papers, prompts are also handed out at least one week in advance of the due date, so the expectation is that students will plan ahead and manage their time appropriately. The only exception to this policy is when a student has three or more **major** assignments due on the same day, in which case students are expected to follow the protocols outlined on p. 51 of the Blue Book under “Workload & Assignments” (which includes 24-hours advance notice).

IV. Late Work – All written assignments are due at the beginning of class (please upload to Canvas). Any work handed in after this point will be counted as late and will receive a lower grade as a result. Please note that problems with technology are **not** an excuse for lateness. Anticipate that the printer will break, that files will be lost, or that your computer will die!

V. Revisions – Students who are interested in revising their essays are encouraged to meet with me soon after feedback is returned.

VI. Absences - As noted above under Classroom Preparation/Participation, regular attendance is essential if one is to succeed in this course! However, I realize that this course is not your only commitment this term, just as I realize that circumstances inevitably arise that are outside of your control. First and foremost, I ask that you communicate with me (the earlier the better). Please note that students are responsible for all announcements or changes made in class. Regarding **Personal Time**, I ask that students follow the procedures outlined on pp. 54-55 of the Blue Book. Finally, in the event that an assignment is due on the day a student is sick (with an excused absence from the Health Center), said assignment will be due at the beginning of the next class meeting.

VII. E-mail – I will respond to all e-mail within 24 hours. However, please note that any e-mail sent after 8:00 PM will not receive a response until the following morning, so please plan ahead!

VIII. Religious Observances – Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that fall during the term. Should you have a religious observance that conflicts with participation in the course, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

IX. Disabilities – Students with learning, physical, or psychiatric disabilities who may require disability-related classroom accommodations should contact Mrs. Warner at the Academic Skills Center (lwarn@andover.edu) to acquire appropriate documentation.

X. Technology – Although we live in an increasingly digitized world, please note that I do not allow the use of computers/tablet/phones during class unless otherwise specified.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Unit 1: Introduction to the Holocaust

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29– INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST

- No assigned readings

WEEK 1 – HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE HOLOCAUST

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3 – THE HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST: 1933-1941

- Read: Donald Niewyk and Francis Nicosia, *The Columbia Guide to the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 3-14.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5 – THE HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST: THE FINAL SOLUTION

- Read: Donald Niewyk and Francis Nicosia, *The Columbia Guide to the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 14-41.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7 – EBI FRIDAY (NO CLASS)

WEEK 2 – REUNION

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10 - REUNION

- Read: Fred Uhlman, *Reunion: A Novella* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972), all.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12 – REUNION

- Due: Short Essay #1

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14 – HITLER’S AMERICAN MODEL

- Read: James Q. Whitman, *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law*, pp. 1-10, 137-141

HAPPY WINTER BREAK!

Unit 2: Jewish and Non-Jewish Victims

FRIDAY, JANUARY 4 – TBD

- Note: No assigned readings

WEEK 3 – JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP

MONDAY, JANUARY 7 – THE FIRST PHASE: SHOCK

- Read: Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), pp. 3-32

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9 – THE SECOND PHASE: APATHY

- Read: Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), pp. 32-72

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11 – THE THIRD PHASE: LIBERATION

- Read: Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), pp. 72-93

WEEK 4 – THE HOLOCAUST AND FORGIVENESS

MONDAY, JANUARY 14 – FILM: NIGHT AND FOG

- Due: Short Essay #2

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16 – THE SUNFLOWER

- Read: Simon Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (New York: Schocken Books, 1997), pp. 3-55

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18 – THE SUNFLOWER

- Read: Simon Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (New York: Schocken Books, 1997), pp. 55-98.

WEEK 5 – THE HOLOCAUST AND FORGIVENESS

MONDAY, JANUARY 21 – MLK DAY (NO CLASS)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22 – THE SUNFLOWER

- Read: Simon Wiesenthal, “The Symposium,” *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (New York: Schocken Books, 1997); read entries by the Dalai Lama, Edward Flannery, Matthew Fox, Rebecca Goldstein, Deborah Lipstadt, Dith Pran, and two additional entries of your choosing

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23 – THE SUNFLOWER

- Due: Short Essay #3

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25 – RELEASE TIME

- Note: Work on projects

Unit 3: Bystanders and Perpetrators

WEEK 6 – NON-JEWISH VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST

MONDAY, JANUARY 28 – NON-JEWISH VICTIMS: POLES, HOMOSEXUALS, AND THE ROMA

- Due: Group Presentations 1, 2 and 3

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30 – NON-JEWISH VICTIMS: JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES AND THE DISABLED

- Due: Group Presentations 4 and 5

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1 – GERMAN BYSTANDERS

- Read: Milton Mayer, “No Time To Think,” *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* (1994)

WEEK 7 – REACTIONS OUTSIDE OF GERMANY

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5 – INTERNATIONAL BYSTANDERS

- Read: David S. Wyman, “The Setting: Europe and America,” in *The Abandonment of the Jews: American and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books), pp. 3-15.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6 – THE MILGRAM EXPERIMENT

- Read: Christopher R. Browning, Preface, Chs. 1, 2, and 5, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Force Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8 – THE JÓZEFÓW MASSACRE

- Read: Christopher R. Browning, Chs. 7 and 8 in *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Force Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992), pp. 55-77

WEEK 8 – ORDINARY MEN

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11 – HEAD OF SCHOOL DAY

- Note: Class does not meet

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13 – THE STANFORD PRISON EXPERIMENT

- Read: Christopher R. Browning, Ch. 18 in *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Force Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992), pp. 159-189.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15 – WRITING WORKSHOP

- Due: Journal entry on writing feedback

Unit 4: Rescuers and Resisters

WEEK 9 – RESCUERS AND RESISTERS

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18 – JEWISH RESISTANCE

- Due: Long Essay #1

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 – DEEP EVIL AND DEEP GOOD

- Read: Michael Bess, “Deep Evil and Deep Good: The Concept of Human Nature Confronts the Holocaust,” *Choices Under Fire: Moral Dimensions of World War II* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), pp. 111-135.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22 – NON-JEWISH RESCUERS

- Read: Gay Block and Malka Drucker, *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust* (New York: TV Books, 1992), pp. 19-21, 72-83

WEEK 10 – FINALS WEEK

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25 – CONFERENCE PERIOD

- Work on final paper

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 – DUE: FINAL ESSAY

- Due: Long Essay #2