History 13W: Nazi Germany and the Holocaust
Fall 2018
Thursdays, 3-5:45 p.m.*
Sever 111

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*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 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 six million Jews, alongside the murder of hundreds of thousands of individuals targeted as Roma, homosexuals, disabled people, and political opponents, during the Second World War. 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:


Link to purchase course books from the COOP: [https://tinyurl.com/300-HIST-13W-F18-1](https://tinyurl.com/300-HIST-13W-F18-1)

**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): 40%

2. Three response papers (2-3 pp. each): 10%

3. Preliminary assignments for research paper (topic description, annotated bibliography, outline/introduction, in-class presentation): 10%

4. Research paper (15-18 pp.): 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.

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 three response papers to the course Canvas site, due by 9 a.m. on the day of the relevant class meeting. At least one response paper is due by week four, and at least two by week six. Papers should be approximately 2-3 pages double-spaced 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 15-18 (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:


2. Annotated bibliography of at least five sources (incl. two 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 at 5 p.m.**
   - 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 5-8 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. 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. Work submitted within twenty-four hours after the deadline will be graded down one point (out of 100). For each day late after the first day, work will be graded down one-third of a letter grade. (So, an assignment submitted two days late will be graded down from an A to an A-, three days late to a B+, etc.)

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 Administrative Board.

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.

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

- Bergen, War and Genocide, ch. 1
- *Geoff Eley, "Where Are We with Theories of Fascism?" in Nazism as Fascism: Violence, Ideology, and the Ground of Consent in Germany, 1930-1945 (London, 2013), ch. 7

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)

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
  - "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"
  - "Concordat between the Holy See and the German Reich, 20 July 1933"
  - "Theological Statement on the Present Situation of the German Evangelical Church," 29-31 May 1934
  - "Hitler's Speech to the National Socialist Women's Organization, September 1934"
  - "Reich Citizenship Law, 15 September 1935"
  - "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, 15 September 1935"

**First response paper due by Sept. 27 at 9 a.m.**
October 4 (Week 5): Social Outcasts in the "Third Reich"

- Bergen, War and Genocide, ch. 4
- *Willy Cohn, No Justice in Germany: The Breslau Diaries, 1933-1941, ed. Norbert Conrads (Stanford, 2012), selections
- *Marion Kaplan, Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany (New York, 1999), intro, ch. 1

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
- Sheffer, Asperger's Children, intro, chs. 2-6 (skim pp. 105-126), chs. 8-9, pp. 244-48

*Second response paper due by Oct. 11 at 9 a.m.

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

- Bergen, War and Genocide, pp. 129-45, 186-210, 213-17
- *Christopher R. Browning, "From 'Ethnic Cleansing' to Genocide to the 'Final Solution'": The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, 1939-1941," in Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers (Cambridge, 2000), ch. 1

*1 p. topic description for research paper due in class on Oct. 18

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

[CLASS UNTIL 5:45—Film screening.]

- Browning, Ordinary Men (skip chs. 16-17 and afterword)

*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
- Rajchman, The Law Jew of Treblinka

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

November 8 (Week 10): Collaboration and Resistance
- *Zivia Lubetkin, In the Days of Destruction and Revolt (Tel Aviv, 1981), trans. Ishai Tubbin, selections

*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

*Third 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

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