HISTORY 201

Introduction to Historical Methods and Methodology

The United States and the Holocaust

Fall 2016

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The Holocaust—the murder of six million Jews under the Nazi regime—did not touch American soil. Yet, from the *Diary of Anne Frank* to *Schindler's List* to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Holocaust has taken central stage in the American cultural imagination. How can we understand the power of the Holocaust in a society that was, in general, physically untouched by the catastrophe?

This HST 201 class will explore connections between American history and the Holocaust. In the first part of the class, we will ask questions about how the United States responded to the mass murder of Jews in Europe. How did American Jews respond? In the second part of the class, we will ask questions about the legacy of the Holocaust in the United States after 1945. How were survivors of the Holocaust integrated into American society? How have representations of the Holocaust in literature, film, and theater changed over time in the United States? How and why has the Holocaust been memorialized in American public spaces?

This class is not only an exploration of the relationship between the United States and the Holocaust, however. It is also an introduction to the methods of historical inquiry. We will discuss the differences between primary and secondary sources. We will compare the perspectives of different historians on controversial subjects like American Jews’ responses to the Holocaust. We will analyze sources ranging from oral histories to graphic novels to films. We will explore public historical representations of the Holocaust, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Finally, you will act as an historian yourself by researching primary and secondary sources that will help you to write an original paper, or to develop an original museum exhibit, on a subject of your choice related to the subject of the United States and the Holocaust.

**COURSE TEXTS:**

Hasia Diner, *We Remember With Reverence and With Love* (NYU Press, 2010)

Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory* (New York: Viking, 1995)

Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999)

Art Spiegelman, *Maus I* and *II* (New York: Pantheon, 1986; 1992)

* Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 8th ed. (Bedford, 2015)

Document Packet, Fermaglich, History 201, Fall 2016

NOTE: All texts are available at the Student Bookstore, 421 Grand River Avenue, 351-4210. All texts, except the class document packet, are also available on 2-hour reserve at the Main Library (2W), 432-6123

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Class participation**: **25% of your grade.**

This is a seminar, and as such, participation (which includes attendance, preparation, and active discussion) is mandatory. If you miss more than 3 classes, your participation grade will automatically drop .5 (from a 3.5 to a 3.0, for example) for each additional day missed. You are expected to bring books and articles (or detailed notes) with you on the day they are due.

**Short analyses (2)**: **each** **15% of your total grade, or 30% total**

There will be two short (3-4 page) analyses due in the first half of the semester. You will be given more information closer to the assignment’s deadline.

***Paper 1 is due Monday, September 26 at 12 pm***

***Paper 2 is due Friday, October 28 at 5 pm***

**Final project**: **45% of your total grade total**

There will be one long (12-15 page) paper due at the end of the semester.

Alternatively, you can produce a museum exhibit and a 7-9 page paper that explains the exhibit. Or you can produce a website and a 7-9 page paper that explains the website. The paper should address the subject of the United States and the Holocaust in some way; details will be posted on D2L.

As the semester progresses, you will need to turn in short assignments that will help you prepare to write the longer paper/exhibit. Those assignments are as follows:

**Prospectus**: you must hand in a topic for your final paper and an annotated bibliography of three primary and three secondary sources that you believe will help you with that topic. These two items (topic and bibliography) together will make up your prospectus. This prospectus is not written in blood, nor will it be graded, so don't panic about it, but do be thoughtful as you work on it: it is to help you get started thinking about your paper.

***The prospectus is due Friday, October 7 at 5:30 pm.***

***If you do not hand in a prospectus on October 7, your final paper grade will drop by 0.5.***

**Conference**: you need to meet with me at least once to discuss your paper. I'm happy to meet with you as often as you'd like (!), but we need to meet at least once. The meeting must either take place during office hours or in a scheduled appointment; grabbing me for five minutes as I'm running out of class does not count.

***This conference must take place before 5:30 pm on Monday, October 17***

***If you do not meet with me before October 17, your final paper grade will drop by 0.5.***

**Conference B:** if your final project is a digital humanities project (a website or museum exhibit), you must also have a conference with our class assistant, Dawson McCall. His office hours are: Mon, 2 to 8 p.m. and Wed, 10 am to 3 p.m. If you cannot make those hours, please contact him to make an appointment. His email address is: [mccalld3@msu.edu](mailto:mccalld3@msu.edu). You will need to have Dawson sign a form, indicating that you met with him, and then bring me that form. The forms are available on D2L.

***If you are doing a digital humanities project, you must have a conference with Dawson by Monday, November 21 at 8 pm.***

***If you do not meet with Dawson before November 21, your final paper grade will drop by 0.5.***

**Rough Draft:** **10% of your grade**

You need to turn in a rough draft of your final paper or museum exhibit. Do the best you can on this draft, as it will make it easier for you to complete your final paper, but do not panic about it. The final paper is the main thing to worry about.

***The rough draft is due posted to D2L on Tuesday, November 22, at noon.***

***If you do not turn in a rough draft on time, your final paper grade will drop 0.5.***

**Gallery Walk Project:** You will need to create a visual presentation of your rough draft. You can either create a brief Powerpoint presentation that highlights your argument and sources; or you can display your digital history project; or you can create an old-fashioned poster that highlights your argument and sources. For three days at the end of the semester, the class will circulate in the LEADR lab, looking at one another’s projects.

***You will sign up for a Gallery Walk project due date later in the semester: it will be either November 28, 30, or December 5.***

***If you do not turn in a Gallery Walk project on time, your final paper grade will drop 0.5.***

**Final Paper**: **35% of your total grade**

Your final paper will be graded on the degree to which you have responded to the constructive criticism you received from me on your rough draft.

***The final paper is due posted to D2L on Thursday, December 14, at 5:45 pm.***

**COURSE POLICIES:**

**Lateness:**

Late papers' grades are dropped .5 each day they are late. Weekend days count as days late, and you cannot hand in a paper more than 1 week late.

Final papers cannot be turned in late.

**Rewrites:**

Anyone who receives a grade lower than a 3.25 on a short analysis can rewrite it; rewrites must be turned in a week after you receive your paper back graded. I strongly encourage you to come speak with me before turning in a rewrite, but it is not required. You will only receive a higher grade if you have made efforts to respond to all of my comments. Rewritten papers will receive an average of the new grade with the old one.

**Plagiarism:**

Please see the course handout on Angel for a definition of plagiarism.

Plagiarism can result in a grade of 0.0 for a paper or in a grade of 0.0 for the class, depending on the circumstances. Do not plagiarize.

**Religious holidays:**

Please see me about any conflicts between class and religious holidays at least a week beforehand. I am very happy to give extensions, early assignments, and other help in making up work if I have advance notice.

**Disabilities:**

Please see me as early as possible if you need any additional help with learning. I am very happy to accommodate any needs as necessary.

**Email:**

I use email quite frequently to communicate with you about class matters. Please be sure that you check email at least once a day on weekdays. In return, please know that I check email at least once a day on weekdays and will make every effort to respond to you within 24 hours of your message. I do not regularly check email on weekends, however, so please be aware that I may not be able to respond to weekend emails until Monday.

**Help Rooms:**

The College of Social Science has established Help Rooms, which offer academic support to students enrolled in History courses and IAH and ISS courses taught by History professors. The Help Rooms are staffed by experienced undergraduate students majoring in history and operate in the Neighborhoods and Main Library, with numerous sessions offered throughout the week to accommodate students’ schedules. For a full list of locations, hours of operation, and upcoming workshops, please visit them at SocialScience.msu.edu/HelpRooms

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**Weeks 1 and 2: Introduction to the Class, and to the Holocaust**

***Questions to think about:***

***What is a primary source?***

***What is a secondary source?***

***What occurred during the Holocaust?***

***What events led up to the Holocaust?***

***How do historians interpret the events of the Holocaust? In what ways do historians agree, and in what ways do they disagree?***

Wednesday, August 31: Introduction to Class

Monday, September 5: **class cancelled for Labor Day**

Wednesday, September 7: Understanding the Holocaust; thinking about history

**Reading due**: *Maus I*

Monday, September 12: Understanding the Holocaust; thinking about history

**Reading due**: Spiegelman, *Maus II*

Rampolla, 1-23

**Week 3: Survivors in America: oral testimony as primary sources**

***How did the United States react to survivors of the Holocaust?***

***What were survivors’ experiences in the United States?***

***Was arrival in America a “happy ending” for survivors?***

***How do historians use oral testimonies as primary sources?***

Wednesday, September 14: Survivors in America

In-class viewing: survivor testimony

**Reading due**: Document 1: “Vladek, 1972” from Spiegelman, *Metamaus*

Monday, September 19: Survivors in America

**Readings due**: Diner, *We Remember with Reverence*, chapter 3

Document 2: Helmreich, *Against All Odds*

Document 3: Cohen, “The Myth of Silence,”

Document 4: Kobrin, “Between the Myths of Mobility and Altruism”

**Week 4 and 5: Researching and Writing Papers**

Wednesday, September 21: Analyzing secondary sources and writing papers

**Reading due**: Rampolla, 24-41; 51-81

***Monday, September 26: Analysis 1 due to D2L at 12 pm***

Monday, September 26: Research workshop: meeting at the Main Library, room TBA

Wednesday, September 28: Digital workshop: meeting at the LEADR lab, 112 Old Horticulture

**Reading due**: Rampolla, 82-118

Monday, October 3: **Class cancelled for Rosh Hashanah**

**Week 6: Were we our brothers' keepers?: historians consider the American Jewish community's response to the Holocaust**

***Questions to think about:***

***Did the American Jewish community work to save European Jews?***

***What constrained American Jews from doing more?***

***What are secondary sources?***

***How do historians develop different understandings of historical events?***

Wednesday, October 5: American Jews and the Holocaust

***Prospectus due Friday, October 7 at 5 pm***

Monday, October 10: **class cancelled for Yom Kippur**

Wednesday, October 12: American Jews and the Holocaust

**Readings due**: Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*, ch. 2

D2L: Sheramy, "There are Times When Silence is a Sin"

D2L: Leff, “A Tragic ‘Fight in the Family’”

**Week 7: The Holocaust in American Culture: museums as secondary sources**

***What place does the Holocaust have in contemporary American culture?***

***How are museum exhibits created?***

***How do historical debates get reflected in museums?***

***What is the relationship between memory and history?***

Monday, October 17: Research workshop: primary sources.

We will meet at the Main Library, room TBA

***Conference due by Monday, October 17, at 5:30 pm***

Wednesday, October 19: Memorializing the Holocaust in museums

**Readings due**: Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, Intro, ch. 1, ch. 4 and Conclusion

Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*, chs. 10-11

Sunday, October 23: trip to Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, MI

Bus will meet at 9:30 am outside Berkey Hall

We will return to East Lansing by 4 pm

There is no cost for this field trip

If you cannot attend, please come speak with me as soon as possible.

**Week 8: The Holocaust in American Culture; museums as texts, films as primary sources**

Monday, October 24: Museums as texts: discussing the West Bloomfield Holocaust Museum

Wednesday, October 26: The Holocaust in American Culture, 1945-1967

In-class viewing: *Gentleman’s Agreement*

***Friday, October 28: Analysis 2 due posted to D2L by 5 pm***

**Week 9: The Holocaust in American Culture: films as primary sources**

***How did Americans interpret the Holocaust after the war?***

***How did the Holocaust shape and change American culture?***

***Did American Jews address the Holocaust in the years after the war?***

***How do historians use film as a primary source?***

Monday, October 31: The Holocaust in American Culture, 1945-1967

In-class viewing: *Gentleman’s Agreement*

Wednesday, November 2: The Holocaust in American Culture, 1945-1967

**Readings due**: Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*, chs. 5-6

Diner, *We Remember With Reverence*, Introduction, ch. 1

**Week 10: Research**

Monday, November 7 andWednesday, November 9: Research week; professor will hold office hours in Cybercafe, Main Library

**Week 11: Research**

Monday, November 14 and Wednesday, November 16: Research week; professor will hold office hours in Cybercafe, Main Library

**Week 13: Research**

Monday, November 21: Research day: professor will hold office hours in Cybercafe, Main Library

Wednesday, November 23: class cancelled for Thanksgiving

***Rough drafts due Tuesday, November 22 at 12 pm (noon)***

**Week 14: Gallery Walk**

Monday, November 28: class will meet in the LEADR lab, 112 Old Horticulture

Gallery walk presentations of rough drafts due

Wednesday, November 30: class will meet in the LEADR lab, 112 Old Horticulture

Gallery walk presentations of rough drafts due

**Week 15: Gallery Walk**

Monday, December 5: class will meet in the LEADR lab, 112 Old Horticulture

Gallery walk presentations of rough drafts due

Wednesday, December 7: Tying things up: Jewish memory, American history, and the Holocaust

***The final paper is due on Thursday, December 14, at 5:45 pm***