

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**REL 3194: The Holocaust**

Spring 2013

**MWF 1:00-1:50 in FAM 107**

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***This syllabus is subject to change; it is current as of January 3, 2013***

***Course Orientation:***

*Description:* This course is a survey of historical, ethical, and theological issues relating to the Holocaust, the systematic destruction of Jews and Jewish life by the Nazi regime during World War II. A specific focus of the course is “Religion and the Holocaust: Jews and Christians Before, During, and After WWII.” This is not a class on the history of the Holocaust itself, though a basic familiarity with the facts of the Nazi assault on Jewry will be necessary. Students without such a background may wish to read any one of a number of works on Holocaust history on their own to supplement their knowledge (extra credit may be available). This course is also infused with material from the Wolfsonian-FIU collection, which will provide critical visual and material cultural background to and context for the rise of Nazism. Some of this material will be on view in the Wolfsonian Teaching Gallery at the Frost Art Museum for most of the semester as part of a special exhibit, “Race and Visual Culture under National Socialism,” for which the professor is the guest curator, and which the class will visit several times during the semester. The subject of the class is engaging, disturbing, and taxing: sensitivity and thoughtfulness are essential throughout! Regular class lectures and seminal readings from the course texts will be supplemented by excellent audio-visual material and special guest lectures organized as part of a lecture series, “Material and Visual Culture of the Holocaust,” that coincides in part with class meetings. Important dates on which class does not meet are indicated with an asterisk. A tour of the Holocaust Memorial-Miami Beach will also be arranged.

***Objectives:***

- Students will learn to see the Holocaust in greater historical, religious, and cultural context.
- Students will gain an understanding of classical antisemitism and its implications.
- Students will consider the roles religion plays in situations of extremity, as well as the ethical choices people make in such situations.
- Students will examine material and visual culture objects relating to the Nazi period and understand them in context.
- Students will develop critical thinking skills in close reading, reflection, and response.

The course is divided into **four** parts.

- *Introduction:* We discuss the general background of the Holocaust as well as key questions and theories central to the course.
- *Before WWII:* We discuss the historical and religious issues and events that led up to the Holocaust.
- *During WWII:* We discuss life in the ghettos and camps, Jewish and Christian responses, ethics, resistance, and survival.
- *After WWII:* We discuss liberation, survivor “guilt” and silence, life in the aftermath, Christian and Jewish theological responses, the moral legacy of the Holocaust, and contemporary remembrance issues and activities.

**Texts:**

**Required Books:**

- Richard L. Rubenstein and John K. Roth, *Approaches to Auschwitz: The Holocaust and Its Legacy*, revised ed. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2003). ISBN 9780664223533. **Make sure you purchase this edition only!**
- Steve Hochstadt, ed., *Sources of the Holocaust* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). ISBN 9780333963456.
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, trans. Stuart Woolf (NY: Touchstone Books, 1996). ISBN 9780684826806.
- Elie Wiesel, *Night*, rev. ed. (NY: Hill and Wang; 2006). ISBN 9780374500016. **This is the required edition.**

**Required Reserves and Handouts:**

- Steven Heller, *Iron Fists: Branding the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Totalitarian State* (London and NY: Phaidon, 2008), Chapter 1: "The Nazis," pp. 12-75. **On 2-hr reserve.**
- Jeremy Aynsley, *Graphic Design in Germany, 1890-1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), Chapter 5: "Style and Ideology: Nazification and Its Contradictions in Graphic Design, 1933-1945," pp. 178-211. **On 2-hr reserve.**
- Franklin H. Littell, *The Crucifixion of the Jews: The Failure of Christians to Understand the Jewish Experience* (NY: Harper and Row, 1975; reprint Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), excerpts. **PDF posted to Blackboard.**
- New Testament Gospel excerpts. **PDF posted to Blackboard.**
- Steven Katz, typology of religious responses to the Holocaust. **PDF posted to Blackboard.**

**Assignments and grading:** All students will complete the following (*Students must fulfill all categories to receive a grade for the course*):

1. **Eleven** quizzes (through FIU Online/Blackboard): each is designed to apply to the week that precedes it and is meant to be taken at the end of each week; however, quizzes close on Mondays at 11:59 pm to allow for sufficient time. Quiz #1 will be open an extra week to accommodate late registrations. There will be no extensions on the quizzes. It is recommended you attempt the quiz for the first time on Fridays after completing the week's readings and lectures; if you are not satisfied with your grade, review the material and take it again on Sunday. You may attempt each quiz up to three times, but the questions will vary with each attempt. Each quiz is worth 4% of your final grade; the *lowest grade* will be discarded, totaling **40% of your final grade**
2. **Two take-home** essay exams, to be submitted to turnitin.com via Blackboard (no separate turnitin registration required) of about 1000 words each; each is worth **10% of your final grade**.
3. **One** 750-word (minimum) Comparative Object Study/Essay on two items displayed in the exhibition, "Race and Visual Culture under National Socialism;" further details will be provided. The essay is worth **15% of your final grade**.
4. **A Final Examination** during the scheduled two-hour final exam slot (check PantherSoft) consisting of an essay and a series of paragraph-long term identifications. **The Final Exam is worth 15% of your final grade.**
5. **Class attendance and participation: 10% of your final grade.**

**Grading Criteria:**

All student work will be assigned numerical grades, corresponding to the following letter grades, according to the criteria below. Final grades will be calculated according to the percentages outlined above and converted to final letter grades for the course.

98-100	A+	“As” are awarded for excellent to exceptional work, free of technical and stylistic errors,
93-97	A	showing sustained thought and engagement with the material on an appropriate but impressive
90-92	A-	academic level.
88-89	B+	“Bs” are awarded for good to very good work, with some occasional errors, but nonetheless
83-87	B	clearly indicating a good grasp of the material and assigned task.
80-82	B-	
78-79	C+	“Cs” are awarded for average to above average work, meeting minimal standards but marked
73-77	C	with errors, and exposing gaps in student performance and/or fulfillment of the assignment.
70-72	C-	
68-69	D+	“Ds” are awarded for barely passing to below average work, usually riddled with errors and
63-67	D	seriously deficient in fulfilling the assignment.
60-62	D-	
Below 60	F	“Fs” are awarded for unacceptable work.

**Course Regulations and Expectations:**

- READINGS must be completed by the date for which they are assigned. Careful preparation of readings is essential for comprehension, participation, and overall performance!
- DUE DATES: Online quizzes are designed to be attempted on each Friday date indicated in the class schedule but remain open through the weekend to accommodate students who may have missed material during the preceding week; all quizzes *close at 11:59 pm on Mondays* unless otherwise noted and will not be re-opened. Students not completing quizzes by closing time will receive a zero for that quiz. The two take-home exams and the Comparative Object Study will remain open past the due date and time but will be penalized **one half letter grade** (five points) for each *day* late, or part thereof, up to a maximum 30 point deduction.
- PLAGIARISM and any and all forms of academic dishonesty will *not* be tolerated. Plagiarism is stealing someone else’s words or original ideas. Plagiarism occurs in two forms: (1) uncredited quotations (including words copied from elsewhere but not bracketed by quotation marks and quotations without proper citations and documentation) and (2) uncredited paraphrases. In both cases, to avoid plagiarism, students must properly cite the source material. Only commonly known facts and concepts, general material learned in the course of research and study, and students’ original ideas do not require citation. Students found violating standards will fail the course and will be reported directly to the Office of Academic Affairs. For useful guidelines, go to the **Plagiarism Prevention** section on the FIU Library’s website: <http://libguides.fiu.edu/plagiarism>.
- ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY in class are required and expected. Tardiness is disruptive and will be noted, and repeated tardiness will negatively impact the student’s attendance grade; the professor reserves the right to refuse entry to students arriving late. Missed classes beyond the first 3 will result in progressively stiffer point deductions from the attendance/class participation grade; students with more than 9 unexcused absences from class will receive a 0 for that portion of the grade.
- FIU’s CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN WRITING offers free services. Take advantage of them! See <http://writingcenter.fiu.edu/>
- EXTRA CREDIT is always available for the diligent student. For this course, there are two options for extra credit: (1) You may attend and write (2-3 pages) about a pre-approved Holocaust-related event scheduled during the semester or (2) you may view one of the videotaped testimonies of Holocaust survivors available at the BBC library, take notes, and write up a summary (2-3 pages). See me for more information and suggestions. *Due no later than April 19*. No exceptions to this deadline will be permitted.

**Schedule of Lecture/Discussion Topics and Readings** (subject to change):

<b>• Part I</b>	<b>• Introduction</b>	
January	7	Orientation <i>Reading:</i> browse the textbooks, review the syllabus
	9	What is the Holocaust? What's in a name? Why study the Holocaust? <i>Reading:</i> Rubenstein & Roth, pp. ix-22; Hochstadt, pp. 1-6.
	11	<i>Video:</i> "The Cross and the Star: Jews, Christians, and the Holocaust," a film by John J. Michalezyk (NY: First Run Features, 1992). Call # BM645.H6 C76 1992 or NVS 567 (2 <sup>nd</sup> of two features—make sure to watch the correct film if watching individually!) <b>Online quiz #1</b>
<b>• Part II</b>	<b>• Before World War II</b>	
	14	The Jew as Outsider <i>Reading:</i> Rubenstein & Roth, pp. 25-47
	16	<b>Special Class Lecture: Dr. Richard Freund, "Archaeology at Sobibor"</b>
	18	The Jew in the Gospels <i>Reading:</i> Hochstadt, pp. 7-21; Gospel excerpts (handout). <b>Online quiz #2 (Online quiz #1 will remain open an extra week)</b>
	21	<i>MLK Day—no classes</i>
	23	Classic Antisemitism <i>Reading:</i> Rubenstein & Roth, pp. 49-70
	24*	<b>"Race and Visual Culture under National Socialism," Exhibition Opening, 4pm</b>
	25	Christian Antisemitism <i>Reading:</i> Littell, pp. 24-43 (on electronic reserves); Hochstadt, pp. 22-35 <b>Online quiz #3</b>
	28	The Failure of Emancipation <i>Reading:</i> Rubenstein & Roth, pp. 71-95.
	29*	<b>Special Lecture and Musical Performance at the JMOF-FIU, 7pm</b>
	30	The Jewish Question <i>Reading:</i> Rubenstein & Roth, pp. 97-117.
February	1	<i>Gallery Visit/Class Discussion</i> <i>Reading:</i> Heller (at Green Library, 2-hr reserve)
<b>• Part III</b>	<b>• During World War II</b>	
	4	<b>Special Class Lecture (tent.): "Antisemitism in Europe," Frank Luca, Senior Librarian, Wolfsonian-FIU</b> <b>Exam #1 due by 11:59pm</b>
	6	Towards The Final Solution <i>Reading:</i> Rubenstein & Roth, pp. 121-142; Hochstadt, pp. 36-55.
	8	<i>Gallery Visit/Class Discussion</i> <i>Reading:</i> Hochstadt, pp. 56-84 <b>Online quiz #4</b>
	11	The Final Solution to the "Jewish Question" <i>Reading:</i> Rubenstein & Roth, pp. 143-166
	13	Genocide as State Policy: Focus on Sources <i>Reading:</i> Hochstadt, pp. 85-178
	15	<i>Gallery Visit/Class Discussion</i> <b>Online quiz #5</b>
	18	The Mechanics of Murder I <i>Reading:</i> Rubenstein & Roth, pp. 167-183.



17	Contemporary Issues; web resources <i>Reading:</i> Hochstadt, pp. 255-99; web sites TBA
19	<b><i>Online quiz #11</i></b> Final Exam review
TBA	<b><i>Final Exam during scheduled exam time block.</i></b>

- THIS syllabus outlines everything you need to know for this course. Please make sure you have read it through carefully.