**History 258 The Holocaust**

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***Thematic organization***:

Hitler’s genocide of Europe’s Jews remains one the best-documented episodes in world history. Other religious, ethnic and racial groups have also suffered persecution; however, this twentieth century effort reached industrial proportions. While more than ten millions European civilians died under Nazi control, the disproportionate numbers were Jews. More than five million dead by the Germans’ own paperwork. It is likely that the number may exceed six million.

This four-year period of systematic murder required hundreds of thousands of ordinary people to act as perpetrators: ordinary soldiers to round up Jews from occupied countries; architects and engineers to design the camps; contractors to bid on their construction along with offers of high efficiency gas ovens; and finally, the major chemical industries profitably produced tons of poison gas.

In this course we will explore the roots, methods, and outcomes that produced this horrific episode of our recent past. We would like to think that it cannot happen again, or that we would respond differently. But we shall also probe these questions along the way.

**Required Readings:**

**Wolfgang Benz*, The Holocaust: A German Historian Examines the Genocide***

* Paperback:176 pages
* Publisher:Columbia University Press; Revised ed. edition (May 15, 2000)
* ISBN-10:0231112157
* ISBN-13:978-0231112154

**Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness: An Examination of Conscience***

* Paperback:379 pages
* Publisher:Vintage; 1st Vintage Books ed edition (January 12, 1983)
* ISBN-10:0394710355
* ISBN-13:978-0394710358

**Required Viewing:**

***Constantine’s Sword***

* Actors: [Philip Bosco](http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-keywords=Philip+Bosco&search-alias=dvd), [Natasha Richardson](http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-keywords=Natasha+Richardson&search-alias=dvd), [Eli Wallach](http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-keywords=Eli+Wallach&search-alias=dvd), [Liev Schreiber](http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-keywords=Liev+Schreiber&search-alias=dvd" \t "_blank), [James Carroll](http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-keywords=James+Carroll&search-alias=dvd)
* Directors: [Oren Jacoby](http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-keywords=Oren+Jacoby&search-alias=dvd)
* Run Time:96 minutes
* ASIN: B00181XY6M

***Conspiracy***

* Actors: [Kenneth Branagh](http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-keywords=Kenneth+Branagh&search-alias=dvd), [Stanley Tucci](http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-keywords=Stanley+Tucci&search-alias=dvd)
* Directors:[Frank Pierson](http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&field-keywords=Frank+Pierson&search-alias=dvd)
* Run Time:95 minutes
* ASIN: B00005YUO

You may acquire these books directly from an online source or a local campus bookstore; the DVDs will be available via streaming options, at a local UW Colleges’ campus via Interlibrary Loan, or purchase. We have worked hard to keep costs at a minimum for texts and DVDs, yet want to assure the best possible variety of source materials in a variety for formats.

There is a third visual source we will provide. It is the 1965 production of the vitally important social psychology experiments titled *Obedience*. It is possible to read about these results, however, the full 45-minute documentary provides important evidence that is best observed: tone of voice, visual cues in body language, facial expressions.

***Expectations***:

Students need to make the best of their time on a weekly basis. Why should we pay attention to something so obvious? Well, reading and writing require time to comprehend the materials in order to *understand* what’s going on.

In this course format of faculty guided self-study, your ideas and analysis are valuable. Command of facts is as vital as any feelings about events. Opinions are valuable, but recall that opinions are sustained by evidence. It is important to develop an argument logically, rationally, consistent with the evidence.

Please note that some weeks more than others will require a greater commitment for reading and viewing the narrated power point lecture materials. Plan accordingly to use your time, a bit ever night, so that the week's assignment do not get postponed for a hurried attempt to cram a week's worth of materials into a single day or perhaps a few hours.

Rushed work not only reduces the short-term goal of a high grade, it also defeats the longer-term goal of acquiring knowledge along with skills of integrating knowledge in a useful and relevant way. This is why the course requires the following modes of assessment:

**I. Discussion Threads. *Weekly Discussion Threads*: These are worth 10 points for each week of the class, for a total of 150 points.**

*Discussion Threads.* The questions posed for your discussion threads cannot be answered in a short, single sentence, or one-word answers. The prompts are designed to elicit your response to the materials. How you answer them is not necessarily a matter of right or wrong, but of curiosity, of opinion rooted in evidence of fact or experience. As you note, these weekly threads are worth 10 points each (a total of 150 points), almost one-fourth the final semester grade. Given that these are weekly assignments, the advantage of full participation is cumulative. I prefer this to regular quizzes based on names and dates. Such an approach does not indicate efforts to understand material, only short-term memory skills.

*Why a discussion thread?* Research consistently demonstrates that engaging an idea through written and spoken practice helps people to develop greater analytical skills. It also suggests that through writing and discussion we are better able to develop an understanding of the materials and their implications. Through this process they become more familiar to us and, in getting responses from others to our own perceptions, we can rethink whether our own understanding of events seems reasonable.

*What makes for a good discussion thread?* The easiest answer is *authenticity*. The most difficult thing for many of us is to engage in an unfamiliar topic among a group of strangers. We are afraid of looking foolish or even downright stupid. Trust me, I share this fear. However, we are gathered here to learn about a very important chapter in our collective history. Unless we can begin to speak our minds and ask questions, to feel secure in our uncertainty, to seek the thoughts of others, how can we advance our own understanding?

The emphasis on discussions threads is *threads.*While I do not expect pages and pages of comments, I do expect thoughtful contributions along the way: answering some people’s questions, posting an opinion of one’s own, or asking for some extra input. In the past, some people have felt strongly enough to look up some additional materials and post those links. This is fine. It is not necessary, but it certainly demonstrates a degree of involvement that is encouraging.

*How will we be assessed (graded) on these discussion threads?* Each week, at the end of the scheduled discussion thread, I will make notes regarding frequency and substance of posted remarks. It seems reasonable that at least three comments should be worth points—and substantive, thoughtful responses should also gain maximum points. To write, simply, “me too” or some such response is not going to get any credit. You do not need to write a full paragraph or elaborate beyond several sentences; however, in reading these threads (both for yourself and for the instructor), there should be a sense of an ongoing give-and-take, a genuine engagement in the subject matter at hand.

The ultimate function of these discussion threads is to get student comfortable talking and thinking about materials prior to the quizzes and exams. *Contingent on enrollment, students will be divided into groups of three to five to make posting and responses easier to follow.*

**II. Quizzes. An average of the two quiz grades (up to 50 points) will count toward the final semester grade.**

*Quizzes:* There will be two quizzes scheduled during the course. Each quiz will be due around the end of fourth and eighth week of the class, the subject matter for these quizzes will be set out in the syllabus.

These quizzes are brief, written responses; they build upon the discussion threads and ask you to focus on two or three key points and explore the connection among these important points (e.g., people, ideas, events). The quizzes are intended to build upon the discussion threads, but also to get students thinking about the essay exams. The quizzes are a sort of shorter version of the exam, a rehearsal so to speak. The exams build upon the quizzes, which are built upon the discussion threads that are, in turn, built upon the assigned readings, viewings and study prompts.

The quizzes will be two pages minimum in length. You may write more if you like, but the writing length exists to press students to think about and express their thoughts at some length. We need to develop skills in setting forward an idea (thesis, point of view) clearly, concisely, and *sustained with relevant evidence*.

**III. Exams. An average of the two exam grades (up to 100 points) will count toward the final semester grade.**

*Exams:*There will be two exams due in this class, generally toward the sixth and twelfth week of the course. The subject matter for these exams will be set out in the syllabus.

These exams are written responses; they build upon the discussion threads and quizzes; they ask you to focus on important people, ideas, and events. The exams build upon the assigned readings, viewings, and study prompts.

The exams will be four pages minimum in length. You may write more if you like, but the writing length exists to press students to think about and express their thoughts at some length. We need to develop skills in setting forward an idea (thesis, point of view) clearly, concisely, and *sustained with relevant evidence*. Please be sure to answer the question asked; think about how the question relates to the materials we have covered up to that point.

These exams will follow standard in-text citation format (source and page number); there will be no need for a “works cited page” if you use only the materials assigned for this class. However, you are free to go beyond the materials here and if you do, then you will need to cite the formally at the end of the exam.

**IV. Final Report.**

*Final Report:*In this written assignment, you will explore one of a series of optional films regarding some aspect of the Holocaust. The object of this exercise is to get you thinking about the larger stream of events, the story arc, as it were, and be able to describe where and how the film you have chosen fits into the series of events we have studied.

Imagine how *you*might present the core of issues discussed over term, embodied in a film. No single film can do this, of course, but this exercise compels you to review events in your own mind and grapple with the difficulty of representing such a sweeping and complex tragedy as the Holocaust.

As you begin this report, start with a brief background to the film; state whether it is based on historical factual events, a memoir or autobiography, a novel (a work of fiction), or perhaps as a response to another film. Move along to describe, briefly, the plot outline and which episodes strike you as most relevant to the course. Note *why* these episodes remain central to your decision; **then, analyze the film’s appeal or utility as a way to impart an understanding of this period.**

The report should be at least four pages in length. *You may use films other than those listed below, but need to get approval before doing so.* Use a “works cited” page at the end, especially if you go beyond the required readings assigned in the class.

The report grade (up to 100 points) will count toward the final semester grade.

**Possible film choices:**

*Amen (2002)*

*The Pianist (2002)*

*The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (2008)*

*The Grey Zone (2001)*

*Son of Saul  (2015)*

*Naked Among the Wolves (2015)*

*The Zookeeper's Wife (2017)*

**Recap of Procedures:**

1. Read the assigned chapter materials from one of the two texts (see above) and/or the assigned power points.
2. Begin a discussion based on the assigned discussion topic; this will be drawn from the study prompts that accompany each of the assigned readings.
3. Each discussion thread must be completed by the stated date; you may make use of the materials or ideas from earlier discussion threads in subsequent discussion threads.

**Grade Points**

Available points weekly discussion thread          150

Available points average of two quizzes                50

Available points average of two exams                100

Available points for final project/ essay               100

Total possible points available                            400

**Grading Scale:**

A (400) A- (360) B+ (330) B (300) B- (260)

C+ (230) C (200) C- (160) D+ (130) D (100)

D- (60) F (0)

# Course Schedule

**Be sure to check the syllabus for a full description of the requirements in completing these assignments. Pace yourself and plan accordingly for completing the work in a timely manner for the summer session.**

**Week 1 January 28 - February 4**: The Longest Hatred, view and discuss Constantine's Sword;

**Week 2 February 5 - February 11**: Images in Popular Culture: from the Middle Ages to the 20th Century

**Week 3 February 12 - February 18**: Elements of success of the Nazi Party (First quiz due by Thursday, 2/21.)

**Week 4 February 19** - **February 25:** Creating Legislative Exclusion

**Week 5 February 26 - March 4:**Euthanasia as a Learning Curve;

**Week 6 March 5- March 11**: Removing "Undesirable" Elements from Society (First exam due by Thursday, 3/5.)

**Week 7 March 12 - March 18:** Moving Away from Uncoordinated Mass Murder;

**Week 8 March 19 - March 25:** Mass Murder to Genocide: The Wannsee Conference of January, 1942

**Week 9 March 26 - April 1:** Model of Industrial Efficiency: Treblinka (Part I)

**Week 10 April 2 - April 8:** Industrial Mass Murder: Treblinka (Part II) (Second quiz due by Thursday, 4/11.)

**Week 11 April 9 - April 15:** Another Chapter in the History of Auschwitz;

**Week 12 April 16 - April 22:** Franz Stangl: Man's Career as a Case Study (Second exam due by Thursday, 4/25.)

**Week 13 April 23 - April 29:** Complicity

**Week 14 April 30 - April May 6:** Obedience to Authority is Universal

**Week 15 May 7 - May 15:** Final Projects Discussion Threads (Final Projects will be due by Wednesday 5/15.)

**I. Required Viewing Videos**

In addition to the textbook readings, we will also be viewing videos. Instead of asking that all students purchase these videos through the bookstore, we are leaving it up to each student to obtain copies themselves. We understand that this adds an additional cost to the course, but the stories contained in these videos are integral to developing a comprehensive perspective on the topics.

Below are a few suggestions that might help find videos

1. **Streaming** - many streaming services are available, however, some services such as Netflix tend to rotate their catalog. Your best option is to search for the titles on the streaming search website such as

* https://www.justwatch.com ,
* [http://watchi.ly,](http://watchi.ly)
* <http://www.canistream.it>

1. **Digital rental**- if you do not have a subscription to a streaming service, you may be able to digitally rent films as well
2. **Purchase** - search for title at your favorite retailer and purchase the DVD
3. **Local library** - the <https://www.worldcat.org/> database can help you find the DVD from a local library. Libraries may also be able to do interlibrary loans, so you should be able to pick up a copy at your local library.

Keep in mind that streaming is the best option because there is no wait time for shipping or for a film to be available from the library. It is best to just plain ahead as much as you can. You may even consider subscribing to a streaming service temporarily. **Note that due to copyright restrictions, UW Colleges Online does not have streaming rights to these films, nor do we condone any illegal downloading.**

II. Final Project Film List

Amen (2002)

The Pianist (2002)

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (2008)

The Grey Zone (2001)

Son of Saul  (2015)

Naked Among the Wolves (2015)

The Zookeeper's Wife (2017)

(As noted in the syllabus, these are recommendations for a common core that serve as shared reference points that will make it easier for students to discuss. However, if you have another film in mind, please discuss it with me beforehand so that I can assess its value to the course and your project.)

### ****Grading and Function of Discussion Threads****

Discussion Threads. The questions posed for your discussion threads cannot be answered in a short, single sentence, or one-word answers. The prompts are designed to elicit your response to the materials. How you answer them is not necessarily a matter of right or wrong, but of curiosity, of opinion rooted in evidence of fact or experience. As you note, these weekly threads are worth 10 points each (a total of 150 points), almost one-fourth the final semester grade. Given that these are weekly assignments, the advantage of full participation is cumulative. I prefer this to regular quizzes based on names and dates. Such an approach does not indicate efforts to understand material, only short-term memory skills.

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### Each reading and viewing assignment has study prompts to help you focus attention on key points; these study prompts will help you to develop ideas and responses in your Discussion Threads.

### Tips for success

* Post to the discussion areas as soon as you can, however, only post after you have completed the other activities.
* Schedule time during the week for discussion. It might make sense to plan for later in the week to give yourself time to access the materials
* Frame your responses using as an academic. In other words, be professional and check your spelling and grammar
* Ask questions if you are not sure how to answer.
* Respond to questions other students ask if you have an idea of what
* Think of discussions as a place to comprehend the materials and making connections, a place to collegially critique each other’s ideas, a pace to negotiate meaning by refining ideas, a place to encourage, support, and share

This course uses online discussions extensively. Further, these discussions can become emotional and heated. The thing to keep in mind is that this is a save learning environment where all ideas are welcome and debate is encouraged. Keep in mind that a good online discussion should involve more than just “doing the assignment."  It is about engaging with the materials, the instructor, and fellow students. Immerse yourself!

## Succeeding in HIS 258

**Succeeding in this course means be an active learner and participant**. **The materials in this course may be very difficult due to the emotional nature of the topic. However, it is a history course, which means you will need to learn to think, analyze, and write clearly with reference to the evidence.**

**Additionally, keep these things in mind:**

* **Find a way to take notes as you read or watch the assigned video materials. The provided study prompts will help guide you in this acquiring this skill and important habit.**
* **Develop a knowledge base for this course. Feel free to consult websites (NEVER end with Wikipedia--you may start there to get an overview, but always move beyond it to credible, reputable sites to learn more).**
* **If you lack some background and want some more, the best place to check for a timeline of events, key names, or other points of interest (perhaps mentioned in passing in the required materials) is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. (**[**www.ushmm.org/learn/timeline-of-events/1933-1938**](http://www.ushmm.org/learn/timeline-of-events/1933-1938)**)  There is a great deal at this site beyond this chronology, so feel free to look around.**
* **If you use an online source, please cite it for all of us to visit and assess.**
* **Start preparing for the final project on "day one"--thinking about films as we move along and after you have seen or read materials.  Ideally you will have some ideas for a final project film report by the 10th week of class.**

## ****Course Readings and Assigned Videos****Pay attention to the weekly assignment and be sure to give yourself plenty of time to read, think, analyze what you have read. Pace yourself based on the length and variety of the assigned readings along with the number of study prompts. There is a great deal of information contained in both books, much of it subtle, or not obvious as to why it might be important (hence the study prompts).

## Viewing the Narrated PowerPoint Lectures ****The narrated/ voice-over power points have been very helpful to students who have commented favorably on them over the years. The narration helps to guide the viewer/ listener to making connections among the various slides; it also helps to locate the subject matter in reference to where we are as per the readings or films. These are embedded in the weekly sections labeled "Reading Guides and Lecture Materials."****