

Why” questions in Holocaust Education from perpetrator, bystander and helper perspectives.

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"I worry that the history of the Holocaust, even as it's become more widely acknowledged as important, has also lost some of its sharpness. It's become much less about causes, and much more about pictures and remembering and honoring. What honoring leads to is a lot of respectful silence. That has its place, but it doesn't generate knowledge."

(Timothy Snyder in an interview for the NYT, Sept. 7, 2015)

In confronting the atrocities of the Holocaust, we instinctively reach for the question “why?” This question has been asked by many, including philosopher Hannah Arendt, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, psychologist Stanley Milgram, historian Christopher Browning, theologian Richard Rubinstein and many others. Our first step will be to map the “why” questions of the Holocaust and link them to educational goals for teaching about the Holocaust. Next, we will focus on one “why” question: Why did people behave as they did during the Holocaust? We will zoom-in on three roles: perpetrator, bystander and helper. Using the Holocaust as a historical backdrop, we will consider the social-psychology knowledge which has accumulated on these roles and on the choices underlying them, and consider what moral lessons can be conveyed to students by using this information. Depending on the time, we will also discuss the theo-educational question: Which of these roles can God be said to have played in the Holocaust, and what might be its implication?

During the course, we will become acquainted with several Holocaust education programs including Echoes and Reflections, the I-Witness archives and Facing History and Ourselves.

Course requirements

During the course, you will be asked to write three response papers on texts or website which we will explore. Instructions for writing these response papers will be provided in class #1. You may choose to respond to any three sets of assigned readings but you can only submit your response on the class to which those readings are assigned. Each response paper should discuss and compare all readings for that class. *It is important to prepare and read for all classes, not only for those on which you submit a written response.*

Participation in classes is mandatory. You may miss up to one class during our short semester. Missing more than one class will be reflected in your grade. Active participation in class is encouraged.

There are three grading options in this course: Active participation, an end of term paper or a seminar paper. Full details on all three options will be provided in class #1. Please note that you are responsible to choose and update me on your choice for grading, by August 1st.

On the Following pages, you will find the course syllabus with the topic for every class and required readings, which can all be found on the course website. Please note that our course may adjust and shape itself somewhat according to your interests, topic development and rate of learning.

Class 1: Mapping the terrain of “Why” questions in Holocaust education

July 5 - In this introductory class we will ask ourselves what “Why?” questions are raised by the Holocaust. Can we map some of the answers offered to them? We will then consider what are some of the central goals of Holocaust education, and ask ourselves how the answers to these two sets of questions intersect. We will pose these questions first to ourselves and then, on a broader level, to Holocaust scholarship, considering the dispositional vs. situational and functionalist vs. intentionalist debates.

No reading for this class

Class 2: Why did they do it? Social Psychology’s added explanatory value

July 12 - What can psychology, the study of the individual, say about the Holocaust, which is typically analyzed from a social-historical perspective? We will conduct a brief review of moral and social psychology’s contribution to the study of the Holocaust, by addressing the Browning-Goldhagen controversy about what led the men of the 101 reserve police battalion to brutally murder 1500 Jews in 17 hours in Józefów. We will compare social psychologists’ answers to explanatory attempts of some additional disciplines, such as philosophy and theology.

 *reading for class:*

- Browning, C. (2002). Introduction. In L. S. Newman & R. Erber (Eds.), *Understanding genocide: Social psychology and the Holocaust* (pp. 2–7). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
- Goldhagen, D. (1996). Introduction: Reconceiving central aspects of the Holocaust. In: *Hitler’s willing executioners – Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. Random house
- Monroe (2008). *Cracking the code of genocide: The moral psychology of rescuers, bystanders and Nazis*.

Class 3: Perpetrators – Human nature? Ideology? Group processes? obedience?

July 19 - What can research on the perpetrators who committed the atrocities of the Holocaust, leaders and their followers, teach us about motivations for harming others? We will examine various options including obedience, the continuum of destruction, learning by doing, dehumanization, the role of prejudice, social psychology of groups, human evil, and the power of roles.

 reading for class:

- Staub, E. (2002) The psychology of bystanders, perpetrators and heroic helpers. In: Understanding genocide: Social psychology and the Holocaust (pp. 11-36)
- Blass (1998): The roots of Stanley Milgram's obedience experiments and their relevance to the Holocaust.
- Furnham et al. (2013) The dark triad of personality – A ten-year review. **Social and Personality Psychology Compass**, 199-216.

Class 4: lessons to be learnt by studying the role of perpetrators

July 26 –What should students learn about perpetrators, if anything? How can this information connect to their own lives? What educational messages can we hope to transmit by teaching about the social psychology of prejudice and violence? These are some of the questions we will ask in this class.

 website analysis for class:

Please prepare by carefully reviewing the site <https://www.facinghistory.org/> and the accompanying PDF Resource book from the website, available on our course website.

Please identify three chapters pertaining to perpetration, perpetrators or obedience, describe and discuss them.

Class 5: Bystanders – What causes the bystander effect?

August 2 – How could the silent majority stand by as the atrocities of the Holocaust were taking place? In this class, we will examine the bystander effect, diffusion of responsibility, gradual adjustment, the power of bystanders, moral blindness, just-world thinking and denial.

 reading for class:

- Bar-On, D. (2001). The bystander in relation to the victim and the perpetrator, **Social Justice research** 14(2),125-148.
- Bauman, Z. (2003). From bystander to actor. **Journal of Human Rights**, 2, 131–151.

Class 6: Can educational interventions overcome the bystander effect?

August 9 – Following an understanding of what constitutes standing-by, we will consider today what limits it, and how education can help the goal of improving good and responsible citizenship.

 reading for class:

- Stenberg, R. (2009) A new model for teaching ethical behavior. **The Chronicle Review**.
- Fischer, et al. (2011) The bystander effect: A meta-analysis review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous situations. **Psychological Bulletin**, 571-537.
- Holocaust Education: Why simulation activities should not be used. Anti-Defamation League.

PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO CLASS ON AUGUST 16.

Class 7: Helpers and resisters – What might explain their courage?

August 23 – In this class we will look at the extraordinary people who resisted, helped, rescued and took personal risks for the sake of others. How unusual were they? What motivated them? Do they share common attributes? Is there any way of educating towards helping others at a personal risk?

 reading for class:

- Press, E. (2012). Prologue and chapter 1 - 'Disobeying the law' in: **Beautiful Souls: The Courage and Conscience of Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times**, Picador.
- Snyder, T. (2015). Chapter 12: The righteous few. In: **Black earth: The Holocaust as history and warning**. Random House.
- Midlarsky, E. et al. (2005). Personality correlates of heroic rescue during the Holocaust. **Journal of Personality**, 907-931.

Class 8: Summary and educational reflection

August 30 – In this class we will reflect on our journey during the course, and ask ourselves whether social and moral psychology can help us make sense of the roles people played in the Holocaust and whether their lessons can serve educational purposes in classroom. We will revisit our list of goals for Holocaust education from class 1 and reconsider them in light of the topics discussed in our course.

 reading for class:

- Bunch, K. Canfield, M. Schöler, B. (2005) The Responsibility of Knowledge: Developing Holocaust Education for the Third Generation, in: Humanity in Action Website.
- Byford & Tileagă, (2014): Social psychology, history, and the study of the Holocaust: The perils of interdisciplinary "borrowing". *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 20(4), 349-364

Additional readings for further study:

The roles and history of perpetrators in the Holocaust:

- Browning, C. R. (1992). *Ordinary men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Goldhagen, D. J. (1997). *Hitler's willing executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. London, UK: Abacus.
- Snyder, T. (2015). *Black earth: The Holocaust as history and warning*. Random House.
- Confino, A. (2015). *A world without Jews: The Nazi imagination from persecution to genocide*. Yale University Press.

The psychology of perpetrators, bystanders and rescuers:

- Baum, S.K. (2008). *The Psychology of Genocide: Perpetrators, Bystanders, and Rescuers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Newman L. S. & Erber R. (Eds.) (2002) *Understanding genocide: Social psychology and the Holocaust*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Semelin, J. Andrieu, C. & Gensburger, S. (Eds.), (2011) *Resisting genocide: The multiple forms of rescue* (pp. 495–506). London, UK: Hurst.
- Staub, E. (2003). *The psychology of good and evil: Why children, adults and groups help and harm others?* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press
- Waler, J. (2002). *Becoming evil: How ordinary people commit genocide and mass killing* (pp. vii–x). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Midlarsky, E., Jones, S.F., & Corley, R.P. (2005). Personality correlates of heroic rescue during the Holocaust. *Journal of Personality, 73*(4), 907-934.

Educational interventions to reduce prejudice, bullying, violence and intolerance

- Paluk, E. & Green, D.P. (2009): Reducing prejudice: what works? *Annual Review of Psychology, 60*, 339-367.
- Schechter & Solomon (2006): Does vicarious experience of suffering affect empathy for an adversary? The effects of Israelis' visits to Auschwitz on their empathy for Palestinians
- Polanin et al. (2012) A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Bullying Prevention Programs' Effects on Bystander Intervention Behavior.

- Schultz, L. H., Barr, D. J., & Selman, R. L. (2001). The value of a developmental approach to evaluating character development programmes: An outcome study of Facing History and Ourselves. *Journal of Moral Education*, 30, 3–27
- Cowan, P., & Maitles, H. (2007). Does addressing prejudice and discrimination through Holocaust education produce better citizens? *Educational Review*, 59, 115–130.

What should be taught and what should be left out? – curricular and value considerations

- Kashti, O. (2010, March 23). Prof. Yablonka: "Apart of pornography of evil, learning the technicalities of Holocaust have no educational value." *Ha'Aretz* [Israeli Daily]. Retrieved from <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/1.1194213>
- Elkana, Yehuda (1988): In favor of forgetting.
- Davis, B. L., & Rubinstein-Avila, E. (2013). Holocaust education: Global forces shaping curricula integration and implementation. *Intercultural Education*, 24, 149–166
- Stevick & Michales (2013): Empirical and Normative Foundations of Holocaust education: Bringing research and advocacy into dialogue.

Applying Holocaust education to younger ages

- Short, G. (2003). Holocaust education in the primary school: Some reflections on an emergent debate. *London Review of Education*, 1, 120–129.
- Sepinwall, H. (1999). Incorporating Holocaust education into K–4 curriculum and teaching in the United States, *Social Sciences and the Young Learner*, 11(3), 58-61.
- Feldman, D.: Beginning Holocaust Education:
http://www.lookstein.org/online_journal.php?id=284