Course Title: “The Final Solution to the Jewish Question”: The Nazi Policy of Extermination

Name of Instructor: Dr. David Silberklang

Number of Credit Points: 3

Instructor Email: david.silberklang@yadvashem.org.il; david.silberklang@huji.ac.il (write to both)

Time Course is offered: Fall Semester, Sundays, 12:15 – 14:45

Course Description:

The course will examine the development and implementation of the “Final Solution” and various historical theories regarding the Nazis’ decision-making process through reading and analysis of historical literature and some of the key documents from the period. Did Hitler and the Nazi leadership plan to murder the Jews all along, or did they reach this decision at a late date? How and based on what factors was the decision reached? What were the roles of Occupied and Axis societies? What did Jews perceive?

The examination will be thematic, geographical, and chronological, and will raise questions regarding the interconnections between different periods, places, and factors that affected policy-making and responses.

Course Requirements:

Students will write two five-page (double-spaced) analytical essays on the readings and a term paper on a topic of their choice. The two essays can address readings in weeks 3 – 11.

Students with relevant language skills (e.g., German, Polish, Russian, Dutch, French, etc.) can write one of the essays on primary sources or a secondary source in that language. This should be discussed with the instructor.

The term paper topic must be approved by the instructor. Proposals for seminar papers (25-30 pages), or short secondary research papers (10-15 pages) should be submitted by December 18.

Final Grade:
Class participation 10%
Two short papers 40% (20% each)
Final Paper 50%

For those not writing a term paper:
Class Participation 33%
2 Short Papers 66% (33% each)

Required Book:
Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939 – March 1942* (Jerusalem and Lincoln: Yad Vashem and University of Nebraska Press, 2004) [available for purchase from Yad Vashem for NIS 75 in English; NIS 49 in Hebrew]

**Course Outline and Reading List:**

**Week 1, October 30**

A. Stages to the Final Solution
   Intentionalism and Functionalism

**Read at least 2 of the following articles:**


  Also available in Marrus, ed., *The Nazi Holocaust, vol. 3*, pp. 217-264

  Also available in Marrus, ed., *The Nazi Holocaust, vol. 3*, pp. 301-350


- Ian Kershaw, “Hitler’s Role in the ‘Final Solution’,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, 34 (2006), pp. 7-43

**B. Nazi Anti-Jewish Policies in the Third Reich in Documents, 1933-1939**


- Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, April 7, 1933 + First Regulation for the Implementation of the Law, pp. 39-42
- Nuremberg Laws, September 15, 1935 + First Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law, pp. 77-80
- Establishment of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Vienna, August 1938, pp. 99-101
- Riots of *Kristallnacht* – Heydrich’s Instructions, November 1938, pp. 102-104
- Discussions by the Authorities Following *Kristallnacht*, pp. 108-115
- Regulation for the Elimination of the Jews from the Economic Life of Germany, November 12, 1938, pp. 115-116
- Regulation for the Payment of an Expiation Fine by Jews Who Are German Subjects, November 12, 1938, p. 117
- SS Views on the Solution of the Jewish Question, “Jews, What Next?” pp. 118-121
- German Foreign Ministry Memorandum on Policy Regarding Jews in 1938, pp. 126-131
- Extract from the Speech by Hitler, January 30, 1939, pp. 132-135

- The Four-Year Plan, Hitler’s Confidential Memo on Autarky, August 1936
  on line: [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1551](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1551), from *Documents on German Foreign Policy: from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry*
November 6 – No Class. The class will be made up during the seminar at Yad Vashem.

Week 2, November 13 Anti-Jewish Policies in the Third Reich and in Europe, 1939-1941


- Christopher R. Browning, The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939 – March 1942 (Jerusalem and Lincoln: Yad Vashem and University of Nebraska Press, 2004), chapter 2, pp. 12-35

- Dan Michman, “The Jewish Ghettos under the Nazis and Their Allies: The Reasons Behind Their Emergence,” in Guy Miron and Shlomit Shulhani, eds., The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), pp. xiii-xxxix

Documents

From Documents on the Holocaust:
- Instructions by Heydrich on Policy and Operations Concerning Jews in Occupied Territories, September 21, 1939, pp. 173-178
- Identifying Marks for Jews in the Government-General, November 23, 1939, pp. 178-179
- Ban on Changes of Place of Residence by Jews Within the Area of the Government-General, December 11, 1939, pp. 179-180
- From a Discussion on the Compulsory Evacuation of the Jewish Population of the Wartheland to the Government-General, January 30, 1940, pp. 183-185
- Establishment of the Judenräte, November 28, 1939, pp. 191-192
- Extracts from the Warsaw Ghetto Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan, pp. 201-204

- Vermerk: Amtschef und Einsatzgruppenleiterbesprechung, 27 September 1939


Recommended:

- Wolfgang Benz, “Exclusion as a Stage in Persecution: The Jewish Situation in Germany, 1933-1941,” in David Bankier and Israel Gutman, eds., Nazi Europe and the Final Solution (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003), pp. 40 – 52

Week 3, November 20

Ghettos and “Territorial Solutions”

- Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, chaps 3-4, pp. 36-168

- Excerpts from: *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust* and *The Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, Volume 2, Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe*

Students should read entries for 2 ghettos in 2 different areas or zones of Nazi control, in both ghetto encyclopedias (4 entries in all) – one ghetto in a medium or large community (more than 20,000 Jews) and one in a small community.

Documents


- Order to establish the Lublin Ghetto, March 20, 1941

From *Documents on the Holocaust*:
- Deportation of Jews from Austria to Nisko (Lublin), October 1939, pp. 143-144
- Instructions for the Depopulation of the Jews from the Palatinate (Pfalz), October 1940, pp. 145-147
- Escape of Jews from Poland to the Soviet Union at the Beginning of the War, pp. 189-191
- Directives Issued by the Head of the Department for Jewish Affairs on Policies Concerning Treatment of Jews in the Government-General, April 6, 1940, pp. 195-197
- The Madagascar Plan, July 1940, pp. 216-218
- From a Speech by Frank on the Madagascar Plan, July 12, 1940, p. 218
- Regulation for the Ban on Jewish Emigration from the Government-General, November 1940, pp. 219-220
- Order by Fischer on the Establishment of a Ghetto in Warsaw, October 2, 1940, pp. 220-221

Week 4, November 27

1941 – Shooting the Jews

  [The same chapter from the first edition of this book may also be used]

- Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Jerusalem and Lincoln: Yad Vashem and University of Nebraska Press, 2009), chaps. 8-9, pp. 88-121

- Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, chaps 6-7 (with Jürgen Matthäus), pp. 213-308


Week 5, December 4

A. The First Six Months of Murder – Documents

From *Documents on the Holocaust*:
- Extracts from a Report by Einsatzgruppe A in the Baltic Countries, 1941, pp. 389-393
- Göring Orders Heydrich to Prepare a Plan for the “Final Solution to the Jewish Problem,” July 31, 1941, p. 233
- Supplementary Regulations for the Ban on Changes of Residence by Jews in the Government-General, October 15, 1941, p. 181


- Order Banning the Emigration of Jews from the Reich, October 1941

- Report on the Shooting of Jews and Gypsies, November 1, 1941
  http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20%205320.pdf

- Report by Police Officer Salitter, December 11, 1941

Lithuania as a Case Study:
- David Bankier, *Expulsion and Extermination: Holocaust Testimonials from Provincial Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2011), pp. 16-41; 96-160 (choose sections)


B. The Spread of the Murder, 1941-1942

- Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution*, chaps 8-9, pp. 309-423


From *Documents on the Holocaust*:
- Protocol of the Wannsee Conference, January 20, 1942, pp. 249-261

**Week 6, December 11**

“Operation Reinhard”

- Yitzhak Arad, “‘Operation Reinhard’: Extermination Camps of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, 16 (1984), pp. 205-240


Read 2 of the following articles:


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From *Documents on the Holocaust*:
- Protocol of the General Meeting of the Judenrat in Lublin on March 31, 1942, pp. 269-272
- Signed Obligation by SS Men Taking Part in an Extermination Operation to Observe Secrecy, July 18, 1942, pp. 274-275
- Order by Himmler, July 19, 1942, for the Completion of the “Final Solution” in the Government-General, pp. 275-276
- Announcement of the Evacuation of the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto, July 22, 1942, pp. 281-282

- Memo by Fritz Reuter, Lublin, March 17, 1942
- Deportation order, Lublin, March 17, 1942
- Memo by Richard Türk, March 30, 1942
- Letter from Włodawa, June 1, 1942

**Week 7, December 18**

A Global Solution, 1942-1943 - I

(Paper Proposals Due)


*In Addition to the Above - Each student should focus on ONE of the following 4 sections:*

**A. The Third Reich and the “Protectorate”**


- Eichmann Informs Jews of Deportations from Austria and of Theresienstadt

**B. Western Europe, Scandinavia, the Middle East, and North Africa**


- Order to Wear the Yellow Star, Netherlands, April 28, 1942
  http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20%202430.pdf

- German, French, and Jewish Organizations in Occupied France

- Eichmann Memo to Rademacher, June 22, 1942

And 1 of the following articles:


**December 25**

No Class – Hanukkah and Christmas

**Week 8, January 1**

**A Global Solution, 1942-1944 II**

**A. The Balkans – Serbia, Greece, Croatia, Slovakia**

- Hilberg, *Destruction*, pp. 679-742 [or 3rd edition, pp. 723-792]


- Andrew Apostolou, “‘The Exception of Salonika’: Bystanders and Collaborators in Northern Greece,” Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 14:2 (Fall 2000), pp. 165-196

- Instructions to the Jewish Community of Salonika on Wearing the Yellow Star

- German Instructions on Organizing the Jewish Community of Salonika

### B. The Balkans – Bulgaria, Romania

- Hilberg, Destruction, pp. 742-796  [or 3rd edition, pp. 792-853]

- The Evacuation of the Jewish Population from the Banat

- Plan for the Extermination of Romanian Jewry, Gustav Richter


### Week 9, January 8 A Global Solution, 1942-1944 III

#### Each student should focus on ONE of the following sections:

### A. Hungary


### B. USSR, Ukraine, Belorussia:

- Arad, The Holocaust in the Soviet Union, chaps. 18-22, pp. 251-311


**Week 10, January 15**  
**Auschwitz-Birkenau**


**Week 11, week of January 16-19**  
**Forced Labor and the Final Solution**  
**(at Yad Vashem)**


**Week 12, January 22**  
**Summing Up**

Korherr Report  
[http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/English42.pdf](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/English42.pdf)
Odilo Globocnik’s Summary Reports on “Operation Reinhard,” in *Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1950), pp. 538-545; 704-709; 714-720; 725-731