

**HIS 392: THE HOLOCAUST: HISTORY & MEANING  
(HIS 692 for Graduate Students)**

I. Required Readings: (books to be purchased)

Richard L Rubenstein & John K. Roth, *Approaches to Auschwitz; the Holocaust and its Legacy*, rev. ed. (2003)  
Elie Wiesel, *Night* (1961)  
Otto Friedrich, *The Kingdom of Auschwitz* (1994 ed.)  
Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men; Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (1998 ed.)  
Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness; An Examination of Conscience* (1973)

Required Reading on your own:

Accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus in the Gospels: Matthew (Chs. 26-27), Mark (Chs. 15-15), Luke (Chs. 22-23), John, (Chs. 18-19); Acts 2: 22-25; 3:13-15; 7: 51-53; Paul First Letter to the Thessalonians, 2:14-16; John 8:42-45.

II. General Information:

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Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays: 10:45 AM -12:00 Noon  
Monday 2:00-3:30 PM; Tuesday 5:30-6:30 PM (and by appointment)

III. Course Information:

**Attendance Policy:** The roll will be taken at each class meeting. More than four unexcused absences may lead to being dropped from the course.

**Examinations and Quizzes:** The mid-term exam will be held during the class period on Thursday, March 1st. The final exam is scheduled for May 3<sup>rd</sup> from Noon -3:00 PM. Two shorter quizzes are scheduled on the dates noted in the syllabus, February 6 and April 3.

**Class Discussion:** Contributing to class discussions is essential. **Questions are very much encouraged.** Effective participation in class discussions can add a 10 % bonus to the final grade.

**Course Papers:** Two course papers of 5-6 pages each are required. The first paper (dealing with the origins of anti-Semitism) is due on February 15; the second paper (dealing with the the Browning and Sereny books) is due on April 24. Detailed instructions for these papers will be forthcoming.

**Graduate Students:** You are asked to produce a 15-20 page book review essay on books and articles related to the Holocaust. The reading list needs to be approved by the instructor.

**Grading Policy:** Mid-Term Exam (20 %); Quizzes (15%); Course Papers (20% each = 35%), Final Exam (30 %)

IV. Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to

1. understand the long history of anti-Semitism,
2. understand how religious teachings and modern science has been used to promote anti-Semitic feelings,
3. explain how someone like Hitler came to power,
4. understand the ideological underpinning of modern racism,
5. understand how the Nazi system functioned in the escalation of its persecutions,
6. to appreciate how various scholarly disciplines contribute to an understanding of the Holocaust, and
7. understand how the Holocaust has reshaped understandings about religious doctrines, human psychology, and history.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Jan. 9 Course Introduction

**Why the Jews?**

Reading Assignment:

Rubenstein & Roth (R&R), "Prologue"  
Wiesel, *Night*.

Jan. 11 Problems in Studying the Holocaust  
" 16 Discussion of Elie Wiesel's *Night*  
" 18 FILM: "The Longest Hatred"

Reading Assignment: R & R: Ch. 1, "The Jew as Outsider; The Greco-Roman and Early Christian Worlds";

Ch. 2, "The Triumph of Christianity and the 'Teaching of Contempt'";

Ch. 3, "The Irony of Emancipation: France and the Dreyfus Affair,"

Ch. 4, "Toward Total Domination," pp. 97-99)

The Four Gospel Accounts of the Crucifixion (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)

Jan. 23 Ancient Hatreds (Pagan and Early Christian)  
" 25 The Church Fathers and the Jews  
" 30 Jews in the Middle Ages and the Reformation  
Feb. 1 Jews and the Enlightenment; the Dual Legacy  
" 6 The Birth of Modern Racism (Aryans and Semites) (**Quiz # 1**)

**Why the Germans? Reading Assignment:**

R & R: Ch. 4, "Toward Total Domination"

Feb. 8 Germans and Jews in 1900  
" 13 Jews in World War I (1914-1918)  
" 15 "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" (**1<sup>st</sup> Paper Due**)  
" 20 The German Crisis of the 1920s  
" 22 FILM: "The Nazis -- A Warning -- Helped into Power"  
" 27 Review for Mid-Term Exam

March 1 **MID-TERM EXAM**

March 5-9 **SPRING BREAK**

## The Nazi's "Jewish Problem" and their Search for a Solution

### Reading Assignment:

R & R: Ch. 5, "Rational Antisemitism"

Ch. 10; "Their Brothers' Keepers" Christians, Churches, and Jews

- Mar. 13            1933: The Nazi Dictatorship and Nazi Population Policy
- " 15            Defining Who is a Jew (Aryan Paragraph and the Nuremberg Laws)
- " 20            FILM: "The Nazis – A Warning: Chaos and Consent"
- " 22            Jewish Emigration: A Solution? Why did it Fail?
- " 27            Nov. 9, 1938: The *Kristallnacht* Pogrom (Beginning of the Holocaust?)
- " 29            Rescuing Jewish Children - The *Kindertransport* (Mr. Jack Hoffmann)

## The Making of the "Final Solution: (1939-1945)

Reading Assignment: R & R: Ch. 6, "War and the Final Solution,";

Ch. 7, "A Racial Struggle of Pitiless Severity,"

Ch. 8, "Priority over all Other Matters.";

Ch. 9, "Victims and Survivors"

Otto Friedrich, *The Holocaust Kingdom*

Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men*;

Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness*.

- Apr. 3            1939: War and Euthanasia (T-4) (**Quiz # 2**)
- " 5            1940: Nisko "Reservation," Madagascar, and Ghettos
- " 10            1941: Decision for Mass Murder
- " 12            1941-1942: Establishing the Death Camps
- " 17            FILM: "Obedience" (Discussion of Ordinary Men)
- " 19            What Did the World Know?
- " 24            Holocaust Denial    (**2<sup>nd</sup> paper due**)
- " 26            Can it Happen Again? Other Holocausts
- May 1            Review for Final

**May 1 (Last Class Meeting): REVIEW.**

**May 3 (Noon –3:00 PM):**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR HIS 392 COURSE PAPERS

### I. Paper Due on February 16.

**In a paper of 5-6 pages, address the following question:**

*In the documentary film "The Longest Hatred" the philosopher/historian, John K. Roth claims that Christianity was a necessary condition for, but not a sufficient cause of, the Holocaust. In your paper discuss and evaluate Roth's statement and the various arguments that are forwarded as explanations for the development of the "longest hatred" known as anti-Semitism. Be sure to discuss the role of religion, economics, racism, and possibly human psychology.*

In addressing the question draw upon the lectures, the Rubenstein and Roth textbook, and the documentary film itself.

### II, Paper Due on April 24.

**In a paper of 5-6 pages, address the following question:**

*In Ordinary Men Christopher Browning speaks of at least some of the perpetrators of the Holocaust as "ordinary men." Discuss how he explains how "ordinary" men can become mass murderer. Do you agree or disagree with Browning's thesis or explanation. From your reading of Gitta Sereny's Into That Darkness, would you consider Franz Stangl to be an "ordinary man? Why or why not?*

Be sure to illustrate your general statements with quotations and/or citations from both Browning and Sereny