History 425/525, "The Holocaust in Its History" (online version)
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COURSE OVERVIEW

The Holocaust is considered by many scholars to be the definitive event of the twentieth century. Historians have studied it intensively, while countless films and works of literature have explored its every angle. Impressions of it are woven into the Western psyche. And interest in it has been on the rise, not decreasing. One might expect the opposite, given that the Holocaust ended more than sixty years ago, with the liberation of the last of the death camps in 1945, and that the number of individuals who can personally recall the killing campaign has been dwindling. Nevertheless, college-level courses on the Holocaust, virtually non-existent prior to 1980, are now to be found in the curricula of thousands of institutions of higher learning in the United States and Europe, and the subject is widely taught to school-age children -- this again, in sharp contrast to the situation in past decades.

"The Holocaust in Its History" has been taught at Oregon State University since 1982. Originally an Honors seminar, it has been in the History curriculum since 1990, and in 1998 it received its current designator, History 425/525.

While this course deals in depth with the Holocaust, the subject that it addresses is significantly broader than that. The first third of the course is intended to provide background. This component confronts the common question, "How could it have happened?" One cannot intelligently address this issue without being acquainted with the history of Antisemitism and with the fact that Jew-hatred spilled over into largescale violence many times before the Holocaust was even imagined. After the section of the course that is devoted to the background of the Holocaust, the event itself will be examined during the following four to five weeks. The closing weeks of the course will deal with the issues of comparative genocide and of what (if anything) humankind has learned from the Holocaust.

HST 425/525 is now being offered as a distance learning course, through OSU’s E-Campus program. Every attempt has been made to make this course as similar as possible to the version that is taught on campus in Corvallis. All lectures have been recorded and are made available to students, as are the Power Point slides that augment each lecture. A film, Zegota: A Time to Remember, is streamed to students in the course. Readings and lecture material are the basis for on-line discussions.

HST 425/525 AND OSU COURSE REQUIREMENTS

HST 425/525 is a 4-hour course. For students who are not majoring in History, it satisfies the Contemporary Global Issues requirement within the OSU Baccalaureate Core. History majors must take a CGI course outside their major to fulfill the Bacc-Core, although HST 425/525 helps to satisfy other History and university requirements.

The university rationale for the CGI component of the Bacc-Core reads as follows: Our world has become increasingly interdependent. Social, economic, political, environmental, and other issues and problems originating in one part of the world often have far-reaching ramifications in other parts of the world. These issues and problems not only transcend geographical boundaries but also cross academic disciplines. Therefore, if students are to acquire understanding of and to discover effective responses to such issues and problems, they must acquire both global and multidisciplinary perspectives.
OSU also specifies student learning outcomes for CGI courses. By the close of such a course, including HST 425, a student may expect to be able to:

1. Analyze the origins, historical contexts, and implications of contemporary global issues.
2. Explain the complex nature and interdependence of contemporary global issues using a multidisciplinary approach.
3. Articulate in writing a critical perspective on contemporary global issues using evidence as support.

In HST 425/525, the global problem addressed is genocide and mass murder. The twentieth century saw genocidal episodes become commonplace and far more large-scale and violent than they had been previously, and early indicators in this century suggest that the tendency toward such violence has not abated. In the context of HST 425/525, the primary example of genocide is, of course, the Holocaust itself. However, the course also provides an overview of several other episodes of genocide or mass murder that occurred during the twentieth century, episodes that suggest patterns in causes, course, and local and international reaction. While HST 425/525 provides a central pool of knowledge, students are also encouraged to tailor it to their own particular interests. They may find it useful to choose a research-paper topic that relates to their majors or their chosen vocations. The assigned books are intended to approach the broad issue of genocide from a number of angles, and should likewise speak to the respective interests of each student.

IS THIS COURSE RIGHT FOR YOU?

Whether offered in a classroom setting or through E-campus, HST 425/525 draws well and is consistently rated highly by students, many of whom count it among the best courses that they have taken while at university. It should be added, however, that students who enroll in the course are for the most part truly interested in the subject. "The Holocaust in Its History" is designed to be a good and beneficial course, not an easy one. It is, in fact, difficult in two respects, physically and emotionally. The workload is rather heavy, though not heavier than the subject deserves. As is noted elsewhere in this syllabus, there are three books required (four for graduate students), and there is also a research paper. Students should likewise be prepared to devote considerable attention to the lectures. While some degree of overlap is inevitable, readings have their province in the course, and lectures have theirs. The two components are intended to be complementary, rather than to cover the same ground. To fully benefit from the course, as well as to receive good grades, students need to be willing to work.

The course is difficult not only as regards the amount of work. Students should be prepared for a course that they may find difficult psychologically. It should be obvious that much of the subject matter inherent in HST 425/525 is depressing, and it will be presented honestly, being neither exaggerated nor minimized. There will not be many silver linings.

A special note to underclassmen: Over the years, dozens of freshmen and sophomores have taken "The Holocaust in Its History," and many have done very well. Motivation, dedication, and discipline are more important in deciding how valuable an experience the course will be for a student, and how well he or she will do, than class status is. Furthermore, the course is intended to be self-contained. No student should stay away because of a lack of background on the subject or on history in general. However, this is a course that tests many student skills, among them note-taking, reading critically, studying, and research/writing. Students who may be considering taking the course should assess their skill level before enrolling.

A special note to teachers: For individuals who currently teach, or are planning to teach, history or social studies on the middle- or high-school level, HST 425/525 should provide an excellent grounding, not only as relates to detailed information on the Holocaust and related issues, but also in terms of analysis. At a time when more and more school districts and states are requiring that public-
school students be provided with some knowledge of the Holocaust, teachers and student teachers are likely to find this course valuable, as many have in the past.

**A special note to graduate students:** Students who are taking this course for graduate credit (i.e. as HST 525) are expected to use mainly primary sources in preparing their research papers. In addition to the reading assignments for HST 425, they should read *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey*, by Fergal Keane, and prepare a 1500-2000-word paper in response to the question, "How similar in terms of background and execution were the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide?"

**HOW WE PROCEED**

**BLACKBOARD:** To all intents and purposes, students in HST 425/525 must be able to access Blackboard and to make significant use of the materials provided there. Any students who have difficulty in accessing it should contact the instructor. For this course, Blackboard provides: (1) syllabus; (2) all lecture outlines; (3) study aids; (4) past exams [Note: the questions on your exams will be different, but reviewing rests given previously may provide you with a sense of the order of difficulty]; (5) notes on the paper [required reading]; (6) bibliography [useful in preliminary research for paper]; (7) a film documentary, *Zegota: A Time to Remember*; (8) the contents, in .pdf, of Richard Levy’s sourcebook, *Antisemitism In the Modern World*; (9) all lectures, both audio and video (Power Point); (10) Power Point slides alone, without audio (students are encouraged to print out these slides and to take their lecture notes in the space provided next to each slide); (11) access to discussion board; (12) model progress report; (13) model research paper.

**ASSIGNED TEXTS:**


Thomas Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor*

J. K Roth & Michael Berenbaum, eds., *Holocaust: Religious and Philosophical Implications*  
[For HST 525 students only] Fergal Keane, *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey*

**EXAMS:**

Note: Exams are neither open book nor open notes. Students who live in or near Corvallis should take their exams on the OSU campus; arrangements may be made through E-campus (https://secure.oregonstate.edu/ecampus/proctoring); for further information, contact Samantha Smith, Testing Coordinator, at ecampustesting@oregonstate.edu; 541-737-9204, or 800-667-1465. Students who reside elsewhere should make separate provisions for proctoring, and then inform Samantha. Acceptable proctors include college testing centers, librarians, university instructors or administrators and educational service officers of corporations or military installations (for more details, check this link: http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/services/proctoring/finding_proctor.htm). After locating a proctor, the student should make arrangements through E-campus, by contacting https://secure.oregonstate.edu/ecampus/proctoring.  

Alternative arrangements are available, and students who encounter difficulty in locating a suitable proctor should contact the instructor, as should anyone who believes that he or she may need extra time on the exams (times are restricted to 110 minutes on both the midterm and final).

A. Midterm (25% of course grade [20% for graduate students]): short essay section, based on lecture (write on 6 of the 12 questions presented); long essay, based on Levy, readings 1-15, 17-21 (1 of 2)  

B. Final (35% [30% for graduate students]): short essay section, based on lecture (post-midterm), *Zegota*, and Levy, readings 16, 22-25 (5 of 10); long essay, based on *From the Ashes*
of Sobibor (1 of 2); long essay, based on Roth and Berenbaum (1 of 2)

RESEARCH PAPER:

The paper is worth 30% of the course grade. It is due Monday of the Ninth Week of the term. By Friday of Week Five, students are required to submit a progress report, consisting of: (a) the text of their introduction, including a thesis statement; (b) a detailed outline (about 2 pp.) of their paper; and (c) an annotated bibliography (i.e. provide a comment on the usefulness and appropriateness of each source as regards your topic). NOTE: this will be graded, and will account for 10% of the grade on the paper; the choice of topic will be binding.

Topics may focus on: the Holocaust itself; other 20th-century episodes of mass murder (background may precede 20th); any aspect of Jewish/non-Jewish relations in Europe, to 1945.

If you wish to proceed on your own, try to choose a topic that is well documented (at least six good sources [e.g., no survey texts or encyclopedia articles should be cited]; primary materials and articles in scholarly journals preferred). [Note: a primary source is one that emanates from the time period studied in the paper, preferably one that provides an inside view of the topic; for example, a student writing about life at Auschwitz might well refer to memoirs of men and women who survived that camp.] A list of relevant works is available at Blackboard. [Note: students who are taking this course for graduate credit (i.e., as HST 525) are expected to base their papers mainly on primary sources.] Books that are assigned as texts in HST 425 may not be cited, though they may be helpful in locating sources. While the Internet is a fine resource for locating published sources, electronically obtained materials may be referred to in the paper and be cited only if they are primary in nature (and unavailable in published form) or full-text articles published in reputable journals, with the same page numbering that appears in printed form [Note: in general, these are .pdf files]. Except in very unusual cases -- consult the instructor for details -- specific page references are required for each citation. Films, such as documentaries, are usually unsuitable as sources; again, if you feel the need to cite such a work, consult the instructor. In choosing topics, students should mainly consider what is in print, not what is on the Web.

Papers should be in large part analytical, rather than just narrative. The paper should be 3500-4500 words long (12-15 pages double-space, assuming one-inch margins and 12-point font) and properly noted. The bibliography should include only works that you have cited in your notes. All aspects of preparation, including research, writing, typing, and proofing, are to be your work alone. Help is available on all aspects of preparation. A style book that includes information on research, as well as model footnotes and bibliographical entries, is available at Blackboard.

Your grade will be determined primarily by the quality of research, the conceptualization of the topic and construction of the essay, the depth of analysis, and writing skills.

On all aspects of preparation, HELP IS AVAILABLE. Just contact me.

ADDITIONAL PAPER [for graduate (HST 525) students only]; 10% of course grade:

1500-2000 word essay comparing the causes and course of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994, as described by Fergal Keane, to the Holocaust.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

This accounts for 10% of the course grade, and is based on student participation in discussions. Quality as well as quantity of input will be considered.
### WEEKLY LECTURE SCHEDULE

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<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week One:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. The Roots of Antisemitism (to 1000 C.E.)</td>
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<td>B. Antisemitism becomes Endemic (1000-1500), I</td>
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<td><strong>Week Two:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Antisemitism becomes Endemic, II</td>
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<td>B. Ebb and Flow of Hatred (1500-1900), I</td>
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<td><strong>Week Three:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Ebb and Flow of Hatred, II</td>
<td>Levy, readings 1-15, 17-21</td>
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<td>B. Europe Approaches the Holocaust (1900-1941)</td>
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<td><strong>Week Four:</strong></td>
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<td>MIDTERM EXAM; available through proctors, Monday-Friday</td>
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<td><strong>Week Five:</strong></td>
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<td>Perpetrators, Bystanders, and Rescuers</td>
<td>(Progress report due Friday)</td>
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<td><strong>Week Six:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Reaction of Societies and Institutions</td>
<td>(View Zegota)</td>
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<td>Levy, readings 22-24</td>
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<td><strong>Week Seven:</strong></td>
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<td>Confronting the Unthinkable</td>
<td>Blatt, entire</td>
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<td><strong>Week Eight:</strong></td>
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<td>A. Remembering the Holocaust</td>
<td>Roth &amp; Berenbaum, entire</td>
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<td>B. Nazi Persecution of Non-Jews</td>
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<td><strong>Week Nine:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Century of Mass Murder</td>
<td>(Research paper due Monday)</td>
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<td><strong>Week Ten:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning from the Holocaust</td>
<td>Levy, readings 16, 25</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM</strong></td>
<td>will take place during OSU Finals Week; available through proctors, Monday-Friday.</td>
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### WEEKLY DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

Week One: Topics covered in lecture (i.e. the early history of Antisemitism); NOTE: all discussions will include issues from lecture; they will also provide students with an opportunity to raise questions germane to the course, or to share information.

Week Two: Medieval and Early Modern Antisemitism (as discussed in lecture)

Week Three: Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Antisemitism; German focus, to 1941; Levy readings
Week Four: No formal discussion (because of midterm), but postings on relevant issues are welcome

Week Five: Perpetrators and bystanders

Week Six: Altruism; Zegota, A Time to Remember; reading assignments from week six in Levy

Week Seven: Blatt, From the Ashes of Sobibor

Week Eight: Roth and Berenbaum

Week Nine: Lectures on genocidal campaigns other than the Holocaust

Week Ten: General review and perspectives

Plagiarism
You are expected to submit your own work in all your assignments, postings to the discussion board, and other communications, and to clearly give credit to the work of others when you use it. Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “F.” Link to Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct: http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm.

Students with Disabilities
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability and Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

Student Evaluation of Teaching
We encourage you to engage in the course evaluation process each term – online, of course. The evaluation form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions through ONID. You will login to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.

Textbook Information:
NOTE: For textbook accuracy, please always check the textbook list at the OSU Bookstore website (http://www.osubeaverstore.com/).