The Wasserman Jewish Studies Center
At Baruch College presents:

New York – Poland

“The Holocaust and Historical Memory”

Winter Session, January 2015

This course is cross-listed as: JWS 3950, ENG 3950, HIS 3360

For more information, interested applicants should visit the Office of Study Abroad. Scholarship funding is available for qualified Baruch candidates.
The Holocaust and Historical Memory
Winter Intersession 2015

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Course Description:
This course will place the history of the Holocaust – the murder of European Jews – at the center of a broader discussion of anti-Semitism, the rise of Nazism, and the persecution of other groups designated as outsiders and/or enemies of the Nazi regime. At the heart of this course is a trip to Poland, where we will visit the sites we have considered visually and textually. The point of this trip is not only to strengthen your understanding of the historical and cultural components of this course, but also to enliven your relationship to the study of history, the existence of racism, and the power of memory. This course will examine a wide range of cultural documents – fiction and memoirs, films and photographs, testimonies and essays – that focus on historical circumstances and events often understood as indescribable.

Course Goals:
The goal of this course is to introduce students to a range of Holocaust documents: historical, artistic, literary, religious, and philosophical and then talk about these texts both in the abstract and in the shadow of the actual event. Students will be responsible for reading, discussing, and analyzing these diverse and often difficult materials – both in class and in written assignments.

Grading:
1. Short Writing Assignments 25%
2. Class Participation 25%
3. Paper 1 25%
4. Final Project/paper 25%

Assignments:
Short Writing Assignments:
In the week before we leave for Poland and in the week following our return, you will be asked to write two response papers to two texts that we have covered in our class discussions. You will need to submit one response paper in our first week and one in our last. You choose the day of your submission, but it can be no later than Thursday of each week. A response paper examines and analyzes a specific aspect of the text or film. Some examples might include the use of a single word or sentence; the shifting between tenses; the narrator’s tone or voice; the use of irony; the use of metaphor; a reference included in the text. The point of a response paper is to examine deeply rather than broadly. Response papers can be conversational in tone—they are less formal than the traditional academic paper. You will be given a model response paper.
on our first day of class and I always welcome questions about your ideas for topics
to cover in your response papers. Each response paper should be about two pages in
length or 500 words.

Class Participation:
This is a short intense course and its success depends on you coming to class prepared
and on your willingness to engage in the wide range of material that you will have the
opportunity to visit and experience. In most college-level courses you have the option
to make yourself less visible or to opt out on a particular day. That is not the case
with this course, which demands your mindfulness and presence.

Paper 1:
Due: The Day Before We Travel

Below you will find three different topics for your first paper. If you would like to
propose your own paper topic, please be sure to run it by me before beginning. Your
paper should be about 5 pages long. All citations can be noted within the text. So, for
example, a quotation should be followed with: (author page #). Your paper should
include a minimum of two and a maximum of three textual references.

1) Three different categories of people have emerged from our readings on the
Holocaust: victims, bystanders and perpetrators. Kaplan, Fink, Donat, and Bryks
write about victims. Richter and Wolf describe the role of bystanders. Browning,
Goldhagen, Klee, Friedlander and Lanzman reveal portraits of perpetrators. One
question that emerges from thinking about these groups is: how sharply are they
delineated? Richter, Browning and Wolf, for example, describe a certain kind of
victimization, one that is experienced not by Jews but by certain Germans. How
and why is it (or isn’t it?) important to our understanding of Holocaust history and
literature that we maintain strict separations between these three groups?

2) One problem that has arisen in a number of texts we have read so far is that the
role of Jews seems somehow minimalized or even marginalized. This is true in
“Hitler and the Germans,” “Exchanging Glances,” “One Day in Jozefow,” and
“Night and Fog.” Is it acceptable to write or represent the Holocaust, as these
authors/filmmakers do, without mentioning the Jews? Why or why not? What
obligations do historians and artists have in representing the Holocaust? Are these
obligations different from other events they might describe?

3) Primary documents, secondary sources, documentary film and fictional accounts
are among the sources you have read so far. What are the limitations and
advantages of each type of source in representing the Holocaust? Should any of
them be weighted (considered somehow more or less valuable) over others and
why? What differences do you notice between older and more recent sources?

Final Project/Paper:
Due: The Last Day of Class

Below you will find three different topics for your final project. If you would like to
propose your own project topic, please be sure to run it by me before beginning. Your
project or paper should reflect the very special nature of this class. Given the creative parameters of the final project, it is difficult to prescribe a suggested length. Instead, I urge you to use your final projects as an opportunity to think deeply about an aspect of our trip to Poland and how it can be harnessed to provoke productive and intellectually rigorous discussion and study. Your final project should be cumulative; you will begin working and thinking about it in Poland. You are allowed to create a final project with one partner from the class. As with your earlier paper, all citations can be noted within the text. So, for example, a quotation should be followed with: (author page #).

1) Create a photographic/video essay of our trip to Poland, one that reflects on memory and memorialization as it relates to the Holocaust. This essay will both analyze the process of memorialization and participate in it. In order to successfully complete this assignment, you will want to look at several sample photographic essays that I will provide. You will need to identify a theme or tension that you want to explore; select a series of images (not too many!) that connect meaningfully to the idea you explore; write captions and analysis that explore the photos and relate them to your larger idea.

2) Create an original exhibit around a specific figure, site, town or family that interested you during our course. This exhibit should have a textual element to it, one in which you introduce your person/community to an uninformed reader. You need to think about other meaningful aspects to include in the exhibit beyond text. This might include a pictorial element; it might also include some kind of interactive component. You need to think carefully about audience in preparing this project, and gauge it appropriately. You will also want to reflect on the memorials and exhibits we visited as a class and think about what you found particularly effective or inspiring in creating a moment of remembering. You will have the opportunity to speak to exhibition designers at the Museum of Jewish Heritage to gain a sense of the various elements that go into museum exhibit design.

3) Write a paper that is a longitudinal study of a series of Holocaust memorials and/or monuments that we have visited over the course of our class. Some questions you should consider addressing include: How have the conception of memorials and/or monuments shifted since the immediate aftermath of World War II until now? Do you notice differences between monuments and/or memorials in Poland and those in New York and how do you interpret these differences? How has the function of remembering changed over time?

Required Books:
Jan T. Gross, Neighbors (Penguin)

All additional readings marked with an asterisk will be available on Blackboard under course documents and should be printed and read before class.

Attendance: Attendance is taken every class period. Please see me immediately after class if you are late, or you will be marked as absent. Because of the travel component within this course, it is imperative that you attend class faithfully in the
week before our trip and, as part of our debriefing, after the trip. If you miss 3 classes or end up not joining us for the trip you will automatically be dropped from the class with a WU grade (counts as an F). To be excused without penalty you must present a doctor’s note. If you decide to drop the class, see the Registrar to withdraw officially so you can receive a W grade (not an F), and notify me as soon as possible.

**Blackboard:** The syllabus, reading assignments for each class, and particular class information, changes, etc., will be posted on Blackboard. Be sure to check Blackboard regularly.

**Academic Integrity:** We will closely follow Baruch College’s policy on Academic Honesty.

Plagiarism is not permitted. To plagiarize is to steal or pass off the language or ideas of another writer as your own. Anyone caught plagiarizing will be given an automatic F for that essay and will be asked to meet with the Dean of Students. More than one instance of plagiarism will lead to a failing grade for the semester.

You are allowed, of course, to use the language and the ideas of other writers, but you must acknowledge your sources. When you are repeating another writer’s language verbatim you must use quotation marks and cite your source with a parenthetical citation (including the last name of the author and the page number) and an entry in your works cited list. When you are paraphrasing another writer—putting that writer’s ideas into your own words—you also must include a parenthetical citation and an entry in your works cited list.

If you have further questions about Baruch’s policy on plagiarism, please click on the following link: [www.baruch.cuny.edu/facultyhandbook/StudentGuidetoAcademicIntegrity.htm](http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/facultyhandbook/StudentGuidetoAcademicIntegrity.htm). If you have any confusion at all about what constitutes plagiarism, please come see me.

**Schedule of Meetings and Assignments**

**Week 1:**

**The Appeal of Fascism**

**Insiders and Outsiders**

*Marion Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*, pp. 74-118; *Christopher Browning, “One Day in Jozefow: Initiation to Mass Murder”*; Daniel

**Perpetrators**
Ernst Klee, “‘Turning on the Tap was No Big Deal’: The Gassing Doctors during the Nazi Period and Afterwards,”*; Claude Lanzmann, “Shoah” (excerpts); and Alain Resnais, “Night and Fog” (film).

**Paper 1 Due**

**Deportations and Ghettos (will be continued in Poland)**
excerpts from *Here There Is No Why*, by Rachel Roth; guest presentation with Rachel Roth

**Departure for Poland.**

**Day 1 in Poland:**
- Arrival in Warsaw; check-in to hotel; lunchboxes in rooms upon arrival;
- Study tour of Jewish Warsaw, including ghetto wall, Umschlagplatz, Mila 18, Monument to Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the Jewish cemetery;
- Return to hotel for group dinner, review session, introduction to the next day
- Discuss Goldin, “Chronicle of a Single Day”*

**Day 2 in Poland:**
- Breakfast in the hotel;
- Study trip to Treblinka (all-day trip with brown bag lunch provided);
- Return to the hotel for dinner
- Discuss Oyneg Shabes Archives and testimony by Jakob Kryzpicki

**Day 3 in Poland:**
- Check-out of hotel; depart for Krakow by train; check-in to Krakow hotel; lunch;
- Tour of Jewish Krakow including synagogue
- Dinner at the hotel
- Discussion of Rachmil Bryks, “Berele in the Ghetto”*
- Short Writing Assignment Due

**Day 4 in Poland:**
- Breakfast in the hotel
- Walking tour of Old City of Krakow
- Meeting with Righteous Gentile
- Dinner on your own or come join Professor Lang

**Day 5 in Poland:**
- Breakfast in hotel and check out
Visit to museum in former Schindler factory, the ghetto site, and the site of former Plaszow camp
Lunch
Depart for Auschwitz
Check in to hotel
Tour the Auschwitz Jewish Center exhibits
Group Dinner
Discuss Ruth Kluger, “The Camps,” in Still Alive*

Day 6 in Poland:
Breakfast at hotel
Study tour of Auschwitz I
Lunch
Workshop with Auschwitz-Birkenau Staff
Dinner
Discussion of Charlotte Delbo, “Arrivals, Departures”*
Short Writing Assignment Due

Day 7 in Poland:
Breakfast in hotel
Study tour of Birkenau
Lunch
Options: return to the Auschwitz Jewish Center; free reflection; walking tour of Jewish Auschwitz (the town)
Dinner
Discussion of Primo Levi, “The Gray Zone”

Return to the United States

Historical Recovery: Bystander Stories
Jan Gross, Neighbors

Holocaust Denial
Errol Morris, “Mr. Death”; Deborah Lipstadt, “Canaries in the Mine”*

Holocaust Memorialization

Trip to the Museum of Jewish Heritage

Final Project Due