

Sociology of the Holocaust
Sociology 240, Spring 2006: E4TBA
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30-5:45 PM, PH 118
TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

Instructor

Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur

Mikaila.Arthur@nyu.edu –OR– marthur@qc1.qc.edu

Telephone: (917) 678-8879 (calls accepted 5-10 PM Sunday through Thursday ONLY)

Office Hours: By Appointment Only. Before or after class are good times.

Website: <http://homepages.nyu.edu/~mma235/classes.html>

Course Description:

The Holocaust was an extreme and a unique event in human history. But it was hardly a “historical accident”. Over a period of little more than a decade, Jews, homosexuals, Roma, political adversaries, and mentally and physically disabled people were systematically marginalized and later murdered. This immense act of destruction required the co-ordination of millions of peoples’ actions. How could this happen in the twentieth century, at the height of modern western civilization, in a country respected for its achievements in the arts, in literature and in philosophy?

This question remains challenging to us today. Have we fully understood what made this event possible? What are the implications of the fact that this happened for our assumptions about modern society? How can we as citizens learn lessons from the Holocaust and how do we include them in our everyday practice? The course asks systematically over the course of a semester: how could this happen and what can we learn about modern social life—including contemporary U.S. society—by looking at evidence about the Holocaust?

Required Materials:

Todorov, Tzvetan. 1996. *Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in the Concentration Camp*. New York: Henry Holt and Company (New: \$14.95)

Wyman, David. 1998. *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945*. New York: The New Press (New: \$18.95)

These books are available at the QC Bookstore, at Amazon.com, and on reserve in the library

A photocopied reading packet is also required, available at QC Copy Center, located right across the street from the main gate and under the pizzeria. The readings in this packet are also available on reserve (some in photocopies, some in book form). The password for the course EReserves site is ART240.

Grading:

1. PARTICIPATION (5% of your course grade). In order to do well in this course, you must regularly attend class and come prepared by having done the required course readings. Regular participation in class is required and will count towards your final grade. What counts is not that you are always right or that you speak every day but that you engage with the materials and other students’ thoughts with serious intellectual effort and with respect for each other’s feelings, backgrounds, opinions, and ideas. If you have serious difficulty

speaking in class, please meet with me early in the semester to develop an alternative plan for fulfilling this requirement, such as frequent email communications.

2. **READING RESPONSE QUIZZES** (15% of your course grade).. About fifteen times during the semester, there will be short in-class quizzes. These quizzes will ask you to respond to one discussion question that tests your understanding of the course readings by writing approximately one page. The dates for these quizzes will not be announced. While you can be excused from a quiz if you have a legitimate reason for being absent from class, you can not make up quizzes. Since quizzes will also be used for attendance purposes, please submit a quiz even if you cannot otherwise answer the question
3. **PAPERS** (60% of your course grade). There will be three papers in this course, one at the conclusion of each unit. These papers will be based on the readings that you do for the course and will not require significant outside research. Each paper will be 4-6 pages long. For the third paper, on memory, you will have the option of doing a creative project in lieu of an analytical paper—more details will be provided later in the semester. You will be required to submit your papers both in class and electronically through Turnitin.com. Each of the three papers will be worth 20% of your course grade.
4. **FINAL EXAM** (20% of the course grade). An in-class open-book final exam will be given during the regularly scheduled exam period. This exam will be based on essay-style questions.
5. **READING**. Normal expectations for a college course are that you should do about two hours of work outside class for every one hour in class. As you are spending two and a half hours a week in class, that means you can expect to spend up to five hours a week in reading and writing assignments. Be sure to always complete the required reading. There is also an additional reading assignment you can complete for extra credit; details appear later on in this syllabus.

Schedule of Classes

Thursday, January 26 Introductory Meeting

UNIT I: WHEN AND WHERE THE HOLOCAUST HAPPENED

Tuesday, January 31 Why Study the Holocaust in Sociology?

Weissmark, *Justice Matters*, “Introduction” (3-22) (RP)

Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, “Prologue” (3-46)

Thursday, February 2 Modernity

Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (409-426) (RP)

Baumann, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, “The Scandal of Ambivalence” (18-54) (RP)

Tuesday, February 7 Bureaucracy

Browning, “The German Bureaucracy and the Holocaust” from *Genocide* (145-149) (RP)

Weber, “Bureaucracy” (196-244 in Gerth and Mills) (RP)

Thursday, February 9 Racism

Gilman, “Are Jews White?” from *Theories of Race and Racism* (229-237) (RP)

Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, “Elements of Anti-Semitism” (168-208) (RP)

Tuesday, February 14 Why Germany?
Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, "Introduction" (3-27) and "Explaining the Perpetrators' Actions" (375-416) (RP)
Elias, *The Germans*, "Introduction" (1-20) (RP)

Thursday, February 16 Why Not?
Browning, *Ordinary Men*, "Ordinary Men" and "Afterword" (159-224) (RP)

Tuesday, February 21 [No Class—Monday Classes Meet]

Thursday, February 23 [Class Cancelled]

UNIT II: THE MECHANICS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Tuesday, February 28 State-Citizenship
Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, "The Perplexities of the Rights of Man" (290-302) (RP)
Krause, "Statelessness Today" (RP)
*First Paper Due: Explaining When and Where the Holocaust Happened

Thursday, March 2 International Aspects
Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, "Background" (3-19) and "The War Refugee Board" (209-310)

Tuesday, March 7 International Aspects II
Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, "Conclusion" and "Afterword" (311-354)
Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, "The Perils of Judgment" (229-253)

Thursday, March 9 The Concentration Camp I
Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, "Neither Heroes Nor Saints" (47-120)

Tuesday, March 14 The Concentration Camp II
Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, "Neither Monsters Nor Beasts" (121-198)

Thursday, March 16 The Logic of Profit
Marx, "Wage Labor and Capital" from *The Marx-Engels Reader* (203-217) (RP)
Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*, "Aryanizations" (94-134) (RP)

Tuesday, March 21 The Logic of Profit II
Pross, *Paying for the Past: The Struggle Over Reparations for Surviving Victims*, "Taking Stock" (165-183) (RP)
Hayes, *Industry and Ideology: I.G. Farben in the Nazi Era*, "Commerce and Complicity" (325-376) (RP)

Thursday, March 23 Census Technology
Aly and Roth, *The Nazi Census: Identification and Control in the Third Reich*, "Introduction" (1-8), "Statistics on Jews" (56-93) and "The Value of a Human Being" (94-98) (RP)
Black, *IBM and the Holocaust*, "France and Holland" (292-332) (RP)

Tuesday, March 28 Eugenics
Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis*, “The Destruction of ‘Lives Not Worth Living’” (177-222) (RP)
Benedict, “Caring While Killing: Nursing in the Euthanasia Centers” from *Experience & Expression* (95-111) (RP)

Thursday, March 30 Medicine and Science
Misterlich, *Doctors of Infamy*, Excerpts from the Doctor’s Trials (55-90 and 146-167) (RP)
Cohen, “The Ethics of Using Medical Data from Nazi Experiments,” available online at <http://www.jlaw.com/Articles/NaziMedEx.html>

Tuesday, April 4 Obedience
Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, “The Accused,” (21-35), “An Expert on the Jewish Question” (36-55), “Duties of a Law-Abiding Citizen” (135-150), and “Judgment, Appeal, and Execution” (234-252) (RP)

Thursday, April 6 Collaboration versus Resistance
Glass, “Two Models of Political Organization: Collaboration Versus Resistance,” *ABS* 43:2 (278-300) (RP)
Todorov, “Nonviolence and Resignation” and “Forms of Combat” (197-228)

Tuesday, April 11 Resistance and Solidarity
Tec, “Jewish Resistance in Belorussian Forests: Fighting and the Rescue of Jews by Jews” from *Resisting the Holocaust* (77-94) (RP)
Neiberger, “An Uncommon Bond of Friendship: Family and Survival in Auschwitz” from *Resisting the Holocaust* (133-150) (RP)

Thursday, April 13 [No Class—Spring Break]

Tuesday, April 18 [No Class—Spring Break]

Thursday, April 20 [No Class—Spring Break]

REMEMBERING AND RESPONDING TO THE HOLOCAUST

Tuesday, April 25 Varieties of Responses
Adorno, *Never Again! The Holocaust’s Challenge for Educators*, “Education After Auschwitz” (11-20) (RP)
Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, “Telling, Judging, Understanding” (254-284)
(Visit a Yom Hashoah Service)
*Paper 2 Due: Making the Holocaust Possible

Thursday, April 27 Retelling
Segev, *The Seventh Million*, “Prologue: Ka-Tzentnik’s Trip” (3-14) RP
Spiegelman, *Maus II*, “Auschwitz (time flies)” (39-74) RP

Tuesday, May 2 Remembering

Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*, “Theorizing Remembering” (50-74) and “Memory and Trauma” (139-145) (RP)

Young, *The Texture of Memory*, “Introduction” (1-16) (RP)

Thursday, May 4 Memorializing

Segev, *The Seventh Million*, “Holocaust and Heroism” (421-445) (RP)

Young, *The Texture of Memory*, Excerpts (RP)

Young, *At Memory’s Edge*, Excerpts (RP)

(Visit a Holocaust Memorial)

Tuesday, May 9 Misremembering

Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment*, “Did Six Million Really Die?: Holocaust Denial and the Law” (212-225) (RP)

Shermer and Grobman, *Denying History*, “How Deniers Distort History” (99-122) (RP)

Thursday, May 11 Judgment and Consequences

Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment*, “Didactic Legality and Heroic Memory” (150-184) (RP)

Douglas, “The Shrunken Head of Buchenwald”, *Representations* 63 (39-64) (RP).

Tuesday, May 16 Course Review and Summary

Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, “Notes on Morality” (285-296)

*Paper 3 Due: Considering The Past/Memorial Design Project

Tuesday, May 23 Final Exam

The exam is scheduled for 4-6 PM in the regular classroom.

Course Policies and Resources

Attendance

As noted above, you are expected to attend class regularly. I certainly understand that at times, students do have legitimate reasons for missing class (such as family emergencies, illness, or religious observance). If you know you will be absent, you must notify me in advance. If an emergency comes up, please notify me as soon as possible about how long you expect to be out. Excused absences will not be penalized if I know about them at the earliest available opportunity. In addition, I expect that you will come to class on time and prepared to learn and return from all class breaks promptly. Lateness is distracting to your fellow students.

In addition, all assignments are due in class on the assigned due date. If you can not attend class on a day when an assignment is due, please make your best effort to turn it in ahead of time. If this is impossible, I will accept e-mailed assignments *if they have been sent before 4 pm on the assigned due date*. Please attach the assignment as an .rtf, .pdf, .html, or .doc file. Remember to always submit a copy of your essays through the Turnitin.com website. If you do not receive an e-mail confirming that I have received and successfully opened the file, then you must resend it. Technical problems will not be an acceptable excuse for lateness.

Academic Integrity

As in all college courses, I expect all students to adhere to a strict standard of academic integrity. Any student who cheats or commits plagiarism will receive a grade of 0 for that assignment. Repeated offenses will result in a grade of F for the course. Be aware that I have caught and penalized many students in the past.

I require students to provide evidence that they have thought seriously about this statement of academic integrity. Therefore, I require you to submit all three of your course essays to the Turnitin.com plagiarism detection website. Doing this counts for two daily quiz grades. If you do not have Internet access, I encourage you to get it promptly, as discussed under “Information Technology” below. However, if this is impossible for you, speak to me promptly and I will give you an alternative assignment which does not require the Internet. The enrollment password for Turnitin.com is “yadvashem” and the class ID is “1428124.” If you provide me with an e-mail address, I will register you for Turnitin.com. For help, see http://www.turnitin.com/static/training_support/tii_student_qs.pdf.

Offenses against academic integrity include:

- ↳ Submitting work that does not use proper attribution of all sources, whether print, internet, or simply a conversation with a classmate or friend. Proper attribution includes a correctly formatted citation and bibliographic entry every time you use an idea that did not come entirely from your own head, whether you quote directly, paraphrase, or merely draw on a text. All standard citation formats are acceptable in this course (such as MLA, Chicago, APA, etc.) though you need to be internally consistent. For those who are not familiar with a particular citation format, here are two links for the citation format used by the American Sociological Association: http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/sociology/resources/writing_citation.html and <http://www.calstatela.edu/library/bi/rsalina/asa.styleguide.html>.
- ↳ Copying work from other students or writing papers as a joint effort, unless specifically directed to do so. This does not prohibit you from discussing assignments with your peers, but the product of your work must be your own. In addition, you may not submit papers written for other courses without my prior approval.
- ↳ Purchasing your papers from a web source, hiring someone to write your papers for you, submitting papers written by other individuals, or downloading or copying all or part of your paper from a website. Be aware that it is easier to detect this sort of dishonesty than you might think and many students have been caught.

Information Technology

You are expected to have access to e-mail for the duration of this course. If you do not have access to e-mail, <http://mail.yahoo.com> is a good source for free e-mail accounts. I would suggest you check your e-mail often (at least twice a week), as I will send important information about the course via e-mail. If you have any changes in your e-mail address during the course, please notify me immediately. If you do not have access to a computer at home, Queens College does provide computer labs and you can check your e-mail there.

There is also a website associated with this course. This website provides an updated copy of the syllabus, essay questions, discussion questions, and useful links. It is available at <http://homepages.nyu.edu/~mma235/classes.html>

Support services

If at any time during the semester you are having difficulty with the work, or even if you just have a question, please let me know right away. Other resources you might want to turn to include:

- ↪ The Queens College “Sociology Write” website, which offers tips for writing and research in sociology as well as a link to the Queens College writing center. Remember that even good writers can benefit from additional practice and from help with editing and focusing their writing assignments. <http://www.soc.qc.edu/robin/writesoc/index.html>
- ↪ If you have personal or academic concerns that are keeping you from doing your best, you may wish to consider taking advantage of the services of the Peer Advisement Center. <http://qcpages.qc.edu/peeradvisement/home.html>
- ↪ The library offers online tutorials (<http://qcpages.qc.edu/Library/olstutorial/index.html>) as well as informational tours (<http://qcpages.qc.edu/Library/info/instructional.html>) to help you get acquainted with library services and with doing research.
- ↪ The subject material we cover in this class can be very emotional and disturbing. I encourage you to come speak to me if you are having emotional difficulties with the material. If you would like to speak with a professional, please seek the services of the QC Counseling Center. Information is available at <http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/Stuserv/counsel.htm>

Disability Accommodations:

If you have a disability for which you will need accommodations during this course, such as extra time on assignments or exams, please let me know as soon as possible during the semester so that all appropriate arrangements can be made.

Students New to the English Language:

I understand that the students in my class come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, and while this is not an English or writing class, I do require that papers and exams be grammatically correct and show attention to writing style and format. If you believe that this may be difficult for you, please come speak to me early in the semester so that we can work out appropriate arrangements. Written communication is important in sociology, but I do not want this to be a stumbling block for anyone to do well.

Some strategies for improving your writing including taking advantages of the services listed above, scheduling meetings to talk with me about your writing, exchanging drafts with peers for proofreading, and reading your papers aloud to yourself as part of the editing process. Remember that even the best writers need practice with editing, and don't be over-critical of yourself.

Extra Credit

There is one opportunity to earn extra credit in this course. In order to earn extra credit, you must choose one of the following memoirs and read it prior to the final exam. (You may substitute an alternative text, but you must ask for permission by May 9th to do so.) These books are generally available at libraries, bookstores, and on Amazon.com. There will be an extra credit question on the final exam relying on this text.

Wiesel, *Night*

Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*

Levi, *If This is a Man*

Koren and Negev, *In our Hearts we Were Giants*

Buber-Newmann, *Milena*

Szpilman, *The Pianist*

Sonneman, *Shared Sorrows*

Fenelon, *Playing for Time*