



Holocaust Memory, Antisemitism, and Political Contestation in Contemporary Europe

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Course description:

In this course, we examine how the Holocaust is remembered in contemporary Europe, and the ways it is invoked in relation to antisemitism as well as to other, contested major issues in the European public discourse, such as immigration, treatment of refugees, attitudes towards LGBTQ communities and women's rights, responses to other mass atrocities and crises like Covid-19. More broadly, we explore the way Holocaust memory has become a "site of tension" between Western and Eastern Europe, as well as between the different sides on the political spectrum from the far left to the far right across Europe.

We begin the course by reflecting on the concept of "collective memory," its importance in the context of the emergence of the modern nation-state and the way memory scholars have nuanced, elaborated, and challenged this concept. We then turn to the unique place Holocaust memory came to assume in Western society since the late 20th century, as the basis for a "cosmopolitan" or "global" memory which underpins the commitment to democracy, human rights, tolerance, and anti-racism. We conclude the first part of the course with the challenges that have been posed to this dominant Holocaust memory from Eastern European governments, on the one hand, and from postcolonial scholars and activists, on the other.

The second part of the course will present the findings of the recently concluded international research project Sites of Tension, which examined the way the Holocaust was discussed in public discourse, on social media and in education about the Holocaust in Germany, Poland, Hungary, England and Spain, between 2019 and 2022. The students will hear from the researchers who conducted this research project about their findings and how these findings relate to the historical role the country in question played in the Holocaust, the development of Holocaust memory in this country since WWII, and present contested issues on the country's agenda.

In the third, final part of the course, we will examine the similarities and differences between the countries examined in this research and the extent to which we can identify broader patterns across the countries, and possibly across Europe as a whole. More particularly, we will explore the way Holocaust memory in contemporary Europe has become a "cultural code" that marks one's belonging to a particular camp on the political spectrum from the far left to the far right.

Course Requirements:
Full attendance.

Weekly reading assignments and responses: Students are required to read the assigned items for each week and to post on Moodle weekly responses of 1-2 paragraphs in which they reflect on the assigned reading.

Response papers: Students are required to submit two response papers, each 2-3 pages long. The papers should discuss the way Holocaust memory is mobilized to address a specific issue on the agenda of a country the student is familiar with. The response papers should be submitted by the end of the semester via Moodle. Please use word files, not PDF.

The final grade is determined by attendance, participation in class that reflects engagement with the reading materials (20%), and the response papers (80%).

Final paper: Students may submit a final paper: a short, referat paper or a seminar paper. Referat papers are to be submitted by the end of October 2023. Seminar papers are to be submitted by the end of February 2023. Please send me a research proposal consisting of the research question, a tentative outline of the chapters and preliminary sources you will rely on by the end of the semester. The part of the paper in the final grade will be 70%, participation 15% and response papers 15%. Please use word files, not PDF.

Reading list:

The textbook for this course is *Sites of Tension: Shifts in Holocaust Memory in Relation to Antisemitism and Political Contestation in Europe*, edited by Nurit S. Novis-Deutsch, Shmuel Lederman, Tracy Adams and Arieh J. Kochavi (The University of Haifa: The Weiss-Livnat International Center for Holocaust Research and Education, 2023).

1. Holocaust memory in a global world

Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, "Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(1) (2002): 87–106.

Additional reading:

Assmann, Aleida. 2010. "The Holocaust: A Global Memory? Extensions and Limits of a New Memory Community." In *Memory in a Global Age*, edited by Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad, 97–117. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

2. The Holocaust as Contested Memory

Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), chap. 1: "Introduction: Theorizing Multidirectional Memory in a Transnational Age."

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Additional reading:

Sierp, Aline. 2020. "EU Memory Politics and Europe's Forgotten Colonial Past." *Interventions* 22(6): 686–702.

Subotic, Jelena. 2019. *Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance after Communism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

3. **The Holocaust in Spanish and Polish public discourse** (Guest lectures: Dr. Marta Simo; Prof. Piotr Foresci)

Sites of Tension, chap. 2.6: "The shifting Holocaust memory in Spain"; chap. 2.2: "The Shifting Holocaust Memory in Poland"

Additional reading:

Aragoneses, Alfons. 2015. "Polishing the Past? The Memories of Deportation and the Holocaust in Spanish Law and Society." *Ius fugit. Journal of legal Culture* 18: 125–139.

Baer, Alejandro and Pedro Correa. 2020. "Spain and the Holocaust: Contested Past, Contested Present." In *A Companion to the Holocaust*, edited by Simone Gigliotti and Hilary Earl, 397–412. John Wiley & Sons.

Baer, Alejandro and Natan Sznajder. 2020. "From 'No Pasarán' to 'Nunca Más': The Holocaust and the Revisiting of Spain's Legacy of Mass Violence." In *Spain, World War II, and the Holocaust: History and Representation*, edited by Sara J. Brenneis and Gina Herrmann, 603–619. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Grabowski, Jan. 2016. "The Holocaust and Poland's 'History Policy'." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 10(3): 481–486.

4. **The Holocaust in German public discourse**

Site of Tension, chap. 2.4: "The shifting Holocaust memory in Germany."

A. Dirk Moses, 2021. "[The German Catechism](#)." *The New Fascism Syllabus*, May 23.

Additional reading:

Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Sins of the Fathers: Germany, Memory, Method* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), chap. 1.

Michael Rothberg, "Multidirectional Memory in Migratory Settings: The Case of Post-Holocaust Germany," in *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, edited by Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney, 123–146 (Berlin: Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2014).

5. **The Holocaust in English and Hungarian public discourse** (Guest lectures: Dr. Tracy Adams; Dr. Aniko Felix)

Site of Tension, chap. 2.5: "The shifting Holocaust memory in Britain"; chap. 2.3 "The shifting

Holocaust memory in Hungary"

Additional reading:

Tracy Adams, "Sharing the Same Space: How the Memory of the Holocaust Travels in Political Speech," *The Sociological Quarterly* 63(2) (2022): 247–265.

Critchell, Kara. 2016. "Remembering and Forgetting: The Holocaust in 21st Century Britain." *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 10: 23–59.

Critchell, Kara. 2020. "From Celebrating Diversity to British Values: The Changing Face of Holocaust Memorial Day in Britain." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Britain and the Holocaust*, edited by Tom Lawson and Andy Pearce, 429–448. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tony Kushner, 2017. "The Holocaust in the British Imagination: The Official Mind and Beyond, 1945 to the Present." *Holocaust Studies* 23(3): 364–384.

Kovács, Mónika. 2016. "Global and Local Holocaust Remembrance." In *The Holocaust in Hungary: Seventy Years Later*, edited by Braham R. and A. Kovács, 231–250. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press.

Pető, Andrea. 2014. "'Hungary 70': Non-remembering the Holocaust in Hungary." *Culture and History Digital Journal* 3(2): e016 – e016.

6. Comparing Holocaust memory across Europe

Site of Tension, chap. 2.7: "Beyond Western vs. Eastern Holocaust memory: comparing Holocaust Memory Across the Five Countries."

Additional reading:

Koposov, Nikolay. 2017. *Memory Laws, Memory Wars: The Politics of the Past in Europe and Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kucia, Marek. 2016. "The Europeanization of Holocaust Memory and Eastern Europe." *East European Politics and Societies*, 30

Littoz-Monnet, Annabelle. 2012. "The EU Politics of Remembrance: Can Europeans Remember Together?" *West European Politics* 35(5): 1182–1202.

7. Educating about the Holocaust (Guest lecture: Dr. Nurit S. Novis-Deutsch)

Site of Tension, chap.3: "Educating About the Holocaust in Present-Day Poland, Hungary, Germany, England and Spain," sections 3.4 + 3.5.

Additional reading:

Theodor W. Adorno, "Education After Auschwitz," in *Can One Live after Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, Jolanta. 2020. *Islands of Memory: The Landscape of the (Non)Memory of the Holocaust in Polish Education from 1989 to 2015*. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press.

Chapman, Arthur. 2020. "Learning the Lessons of the Holocaust: A Critical Exploration." In *Holocaust Education: Contemporary Challenges and Controversies*, edited by Stuart Foster, Andy Pearce and Alice Pettigrew, 50–73. London: UCL Press.

Foster, Stuart J., Alice Pettigrew, Andy Pearce, Rebecca Hale, Adrian Burgess, Paul Salmons, and Ruth-Anne Lenga. 2016. *What do Students Know and Understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English Secondary Schools*. London: Centre for Holocaust Education.

Meseth, Wolfgang and Matthias Proske. 2015. "Mind the Gap: Holocaust Education in Germany, between Pedagogical Intentions and Classroom Interactions." In *As the Witnesses Fall Silent: 21st Century Holocaust Education in Curriculum, Policy and Practice*, edited by Zehavit Gross and Doyle E. Stevick, 159–182. Cham: Springer.

8. The Holocaust on social media (Guest lecture: Dr. Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann)

Sites of Tension, chapter 4: "Digital Sites of Tension: The Holocaust on Social Media in Contemporary Europe," sections 4.3-4.6.

Additional reading:

Ebbrecht-Hartmann, Tobias. 2021. "Commemorating from a Distance: The Digital Transformation of Holocaust Memory in Times of Covid-19." *Media, Culture & Society* 43(6): 1095–1112.

Birkner, Thomas and André Donk. 2020. "Collective Memory and Social Media: Fostering a New Historical Consciousness in the Digital Age?" *Memory Studies* 13(4): 367–383.

Commane, Gemma and Rebekah Potton. 2019. "Instagram and Auschwitz: A Critical Assessment of the Impact Social Media has on Holocaust Representation." *Holocaust Studies* 25(1–2): 158–181.

Manca, Stefania. 2021a. "Digital Memory in the Post-Witness Era: How Holocaust Museums Use Social Media as New Memory Ecologies." *Information* 12(1): 31.

9. Conclusion: Holocaust memory in a hyper-modernist age

Sites of Tension, chapter 5: "Integrative discussion."