

Holocaust Memory, Antisemitism, and Political Contestation

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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. Against this background, we examine the challenges that have been posed to this dominant Holocaust memory from Eastern European governments and right-wing movements, on the one hand, and from scholars and activists identified with the left, on the other.

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 (if you do not submit a final paper, three), 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 2024. Seminar papers are to be submitted by the end of February 2025. 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 (starting from the second class, the first class is introduction):

1. Holocaust memory in a global world

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

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."

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.

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

2. Holocaust memory in Germany

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).

3. Holocaust memory in Britain and the US

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

Peter Novick, 1999. *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston and New York: HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY, pp. 1-15.

Additional reading:

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.

4. Holocaust memory in Post-Communist States

Subotic, Jelena. 2019. *Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance after Communism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, chap. 1.

Additional reading:

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

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.

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

5. Holocaust memory in Israel

Ofer, Dalia. 2009. "The Past That Does Not Pass: Israelis and Holocaust Memory." *Israel Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 1-35.

Additional reading:

Dalia Ofer, "We Israelis remember, but how? The memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli experience," *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (2013): 70-85.

6. Holocaust memory after October 7 and the war in Gaza

INSS Podcast: How to Preserve Holocaust Memory in the Shadow of the October 7 Massacre? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11zXhxBIV-g>