



The Holocaust in the Soviet Union

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Research in archives across the Former Soviet Union in the past two decades has transformed our understanding of the Holocaust in the USSR. This course will introduce students to this cutting-edge scholarship. We will examine topics such as deportation and evacuation, the development of murder techniques, the treatment of Roma people, the expansion of the Holocaust into the Caucasus, interethnic and national conflicts, postwar trials and Soviet responses to genocide. All of these will of course need to be contextualized within the unfolding of the war in Soviet territory.

In addition to trying to make sense of the evolution of the war and the Holocaust in the USSR, students will be encouraged to think about how this knowledge impacts on our comprehension of the Holocaust more broadly. Courses and textbooks on the Holocaust typically begin in Germany with the origins of the Nazi Party and move to Poland as the iconic site of the genocide. Integrating the history of the Holocaust in the USSR requires rethinking this, and other, paradigms.

Course Requirements

The lectures for this course are meant to provide historical and geographic context. Some of you will have encountered some of the material previously. For others it will be largely new. I have endeavored to write the lectures to provide a clear introduction while also challenging earlier scholarly conventions.

This course is divided into fourteen units. Each of these in turn is divided into between three and four brief lectures of ten to twenty minutes. The lectures are each accompanied by an outline and several illustrations.

Students should proceed through the lectures in order according to the outline below. There are no readings assigned for the introductory and concluding lectures (units 0 and 13). Please try to listen to the lectures for unit 0 by our orientation meeting (30 June 18:00) so that we can discuss the themes of the course as well as the expectations.

There are two articles assigned to go with each of the content units. After listening to the lectures and completing the readings, students should log onto the discussion forum or prepare

for one of our remote synchronous discussion sections. Fifty percent of the grade for this course will be based on regular and informed participation in one of these two settings. This will allow us to interact with one another and the assigned readings. Each student will choose ten of the twelve content units (excluding the introduction and conclusion) and either take part in the class discussion or respond to one of the posted questions (at least 200 words) and one of the other students' posts (at least 100 words).

Our 3 remote synchronous discussion sections will be:

Wed. 14 July 18:00 Unit 3 1941

Wed. 28 July 18:00 Unit 6 Holocaust by Bullets

Wed. 11 Aug. 18:00 Unit 9 The Holocaust in Crimea and the Caucasus

These are not required, but it would be wonderful if everyone could attend. If you are unable to attend one of these sessions, you have the options of contributing to the online Forum as usual or counting this as one of your two ungraded sessions.

For those who wish to pursue additional reading, I have appended a list of suggested readings. While you are expected to read and think about the two assigned articles, these latter readings are purely for your interest.

Although one of the advantages of an online course is the flexibility of hours, I have found that we all learn more when we engage with one another. I therefore ask you to complete your responses to units 0-6 by 29 July and all of your responses by 4 September.

The remaining fifty percent of the grade will depend on which option you are taking for this course. Full written guidelines are available for each of these assignments. Students must inform me of their choice by 24 July. All written work for this class should be double-spaced with regular margins and Chicago Manual footnotes. The two response papers (~4-5 pages) are due on 31 July and 28 August. A (~1-2 page) proposal for the *referat* or research paper is due by 7 August with the final papers due 30 September and by 1 March 2022 respectively.

I am aware that Israeli culture takes a casual view of timing and deadlines. However, I am not Israeli! Nor can I afford to spend the entire year chasing down stragglers and re-grading the discussion forum. All written work must be submitted on time for this course.

Forum	Paper Choice	Response Paper	Referat	Research
Units 0-6 29/7	24/7	31/7	Proposal 7/8	Proposal 7/8
Units 7-13 4/9		28/8	Final 30/9	Final 1/3

- Participation (5% for each of 10 units) 50%
- Writing/Research (one of the following) 50%
 - a. Response Papers (25% each)
 - b. *Referat*

c. Research Paper

I am always happy to set up meetings to discuss general questions about the course, paper topics, or other related issues. Email is the best way to reach me.

Course Outline

Unit 0. Themes of the course

- a. Context
- b. Choice
- c. Historiography

We will discuss these themes at our orientation meeting 1/7/21 18:00

Unit 1. Jewish Life in the USSR before the war

- a. Jews in Revolutionary Movements
- b. Revolutions and Wars
- c. NEP and Nationality Policies in the Early Years
- d. The Stalin Years

Joshua Meyers, "A Portrait of Transition: From the Bund to Bolshevism in the Russian Revolution," *Jewish Social Studies* 24:2 (Winter 2019): 107-134.

Jonathan Dekel-Chen, "'New' Jews of the Agricultural Kind: A Case of Soviet Interwar Propaganda," *The Russian Review* 66 (July 2007): 424-450.

Unit 2. 1939

- a. Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Agression Pact
- b. Invasion of Poland
- c. Annexation, Sovietization and Refugees
- d. The Baltic States, Bessarabia and Bukovina

Gennady Estraiikh, "The Missing Years: Yiddish Writers in Soviet Bialystok, 1939-41," *East European Jewish Affairs* 46:2 (2016): 176-191.

Joanna B. Michlic, "Anti-Polish and Pro-Soviet? 1939-1941 and the Stereotyping of the Jews in Polish Historiography," Elazar Barkan, Elizabeth A. Cole and Kai Struve, eds., *Shared History-Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939-1941* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag GMBH, 2007), 67-101.

Unit 3. 1941

- a. Blitzkrieg
- b. Evacuation
- c. Leningrad and Moscow
- d. Stalingrad

Daina S. Eglitis and Didzis Bērziņš, "Mortal Threat: Latvian Jews at the Dawn of Nazi Occupation," *Nationalities Papers* 46:6 (2018): 1063-1080.

Anna Shternshis, "Between Life and Death: Why Some Soviet Jews Decided to Leave and Others to Stay in 1941," *Kritika* 14:3 (Summer 2014): 477-504.

Unit 4. Neighbors

- a. German Advance and Soviet Retreat
- b. Lvov
- c. Jedwabne
- d. Romania and Transnistria

Jeffrey S. Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg, "Beyond Jedwabne," *Intimate Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms on the Eve of the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 57-83.

Diana Dumitru, "Attitudes towards Jews in Odessa: From Soviet Rule through Romanian Occupation, 1921-1944," *Cahiers du monde russe* 52 (2011): 133-162.

Unit 5. Genocide

- a. Commissar Order
- b. Einsatzgruppen
- c. Ordinary Men
- d. Local Participation

David W. Wildermuth, "Who Killed Lida's Jewish Intelligentsia? A Case Study of Wehrmacht Involvement in the Holocaust's 'First Hour'," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 27:1 (Spring 2013): 1-29.

Hannah Pollin-Galay, "Naming the Criminal: Lithuanian Jews Remember Perpetrators," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 30:3 (Winter 2016): 506-531.

Unit 6. Holocaust by Bullets

- a. Vilna
- b. Ukraine
- c. Kiev
- d. Gender

Karel C. Berkhoff, "The Holocaust of the Jews and Roma," *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), 59-88.

Anatoly Podolsky, "The Tragic Fate of Ukrainian Jewish Women under Nazi Occupation, 1941-1944," Sonia M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel, eds., *Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2010), 94-107.

Unit 7. Roma Holocaust

- a. Overview
- b. Soviet Setting
- c. Genocide
- d. Scholarship and Memory

Piotr Wawrzenuk, "'Lwów Saved Us': Roma Survival in Lemberg 1941-44," *Journal of Genocide Research* 20:3 (2018): 327-350.

Michelle Kelso and Daina S. Eglitis, "Holocaust Commemoration in Romania: Roma and the Contested Politics of Memory and Memorialization," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16:4 (2014): 487-511.

Unit 8. Ghettoization and Resistance

- a. Ghettoization
- b. Ghettos and Leadership
- c. Partisans
- d. Hiding

Natalia Aleksiu, "Food, Money and Barter in the Lvov Ghetto, Eastern Galicia," Tatjana Tönsmezer, Peter Haslinger, and Agnes Laba, eds., *Coping with Hunger and Shortage under German Occupation in World War II* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 223-247.

Alexander Gogun, "Indifference, Suspicion, and Exploitation: Soviet Units Behind the Front Lines of the Wehrmacht and Holocaust in Ukraine, 1941-44," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28:2 (2015): 379-400.

Unit 9. The Holocaust in Crimea and the Caucuses

- a. The Karaite Question
- b. Crimean Holocaust
- c. Caucasian Holocaust
- d. Non-Ashkenazi Jews in the USSR

Mikhail Tyaglyy, "Were the 'Chingené' Victims of the Holocaust? Nazi Policy toward the Crimean Roma, 1941-1944," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 23:1 (Spring 2009): 26-53.

Kiril Feferman, "The Food Factor as a Possible Catalyst for Holocaust-Related Decisions: The Crimea and North Caucasus," *War in History* 15:1 (2008): 72-91.

Unit 10. Jews in the Soviet Interior

- a. Soviet Jews
- b. Polish, Baltic and Bessarabian Jews
- c. Local Jews
- d. Rising Antisemitism

Natalie Belsky, "Fraught Friendships: Soviet Jews and Polish Jews on the Soviet Home Front," Mark Edele, Sheila Fitzpatrick, and Atina Grossmann, eds., *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 161-184.

Zeev Levin, "Antisemitism and the Jewish Refugees in Soviet Kirgizia," *Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe* 50:1 (2003): 191-203.

Unit 11. Liberation and Trials

- a. Liberation
- b. Nationalist Forces
- c. Extraordinary Commission
- d. Trials

John-Paul Himka, "Former Ukrainian Policemen in the Ukrainian National Insurgency: Continuing the Holocaust outside German Service," Wendy Lower and Lauren Faulkner Rossi, eds., *Lessons and Legacies XII* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2017): 141-163.

Oleksandr Melnyk, "Stalinist Justice as a Site of Memory: Anti-Jewish Violence in Kyiv's Podil District in September 1941 through the Prism of Soviet Investigative Documents," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 61:2 (2013): 223-248.

Unit 12. Soviet and Jewish Responses to the Holocaust during and after the War

- a. Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee
- b. Jews in the Red Army
- c. Soviet News Outlets
- d. Return (demographics)

Arkadi Zeltser, "Jewish Response to the Non-Jewish Question: 'Where were Jews during the fighting?' 1941-5," *East European Jewish Affairs* 46:1 (2016): 4-25.

Anika Walke, "Split Memory: The Geography of Holocaust Memory and Amnesia in Belarus," *Slavic Review* 77:1 (Spring 2018): 174-197.

Unit 13. Integrating the Soviet Holocaust Experience

- a. Why do we know so little about it?
- b. How does it change our paradigms?

c. What's Next?

Let us know what you think is next? This is not for a grade, as does not count as one of the 10 required discussions. It is just a chance to share our opinions and say goodbyes.