

JEWS in Poland and Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust and its Aftermath

Goals and description of the course

The course presents the history of Polish Jews during the Holocaust and post-Holocaust period. Showing various aspects of Holocaust, its history but also sociological and psychological aspects (human behaviour in different situations and various countries) will be the background to understand the postwar history of the Jews not only in Poland but also in the Central-Eastern part of Europe. Topics of the post-Holocaust history include migrations, political issues, Jewish cultural and religious life, social life of the Jewish communities in Poland, antisemitism, Holocaust memory and revival of Jewish culture. The contemporary history of Jews in most of Poland is included, but special attention is given to Jews of Krakow - by visiting the local places important for Jewish history and meeting people involved in the contemporary Jewish life there.

Time

Fall semester 2009/2010:
Tuesdays 10.00 - 11.30
Thursdays 10.00 - 11.30
Deadline for papers/essays: Dec. ..., 2009
Final exam: Dec. ..., 2009

Grading

Grading will be based on the following:

- **Exam (50%)** In class. It will test your basic knowledge of events, individuals, chronology. The knowledge of the most important material from the lectures, discussions and readings is required.
- **Presentation in Class OR Take-Home Essay (40%)** – presentation or the essay – both based on the recommended reading and the literature chosen by the student. The aim of the presentation is to provide to the group the main facts and ideas for the discussion and show individual understanding of the material read. You may also write an essay on one of the suggested topics, or chose your own (with the approval of Dr Edyta Gawron). The presentation should take 20-30 min., the papers should be 2.500-3.000 words.
- **Participation (10%)** Regular presence and activity in the classes. Active participation of the student at every seminar is expected, including reading all assigned literature

Course Outline

1. Jewish population of Poland before 1939 – Centers of Jewish life

Reading: Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*, Indiana University Press Bloomington 1987, chapter 1: *Poland*, pp.11-84

Film: *Po-lan-yah. Here Dwelled God. One Thousand Years of Jewish Life in Poland*, a series by Amnon Teitelbaum, Episode 7: *Between World Wars*. [Film screening in class]

2. Relations between Jews and Christians in the interwar independent Poland.

Antisemitism.

Reading: Michael C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead. Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*, Syracuse University Press, 1997, chapter 1: *Poles and Jews before the Holocaust*, pp.1-22.

3. Nazi Germany's influence on the situation of Jews in Poland. Expulsion of Polish Jews from Germany - Zbaszyn Case, Kristallnacht

Reading: Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*, , chapter 1: *Poland*, Indiana University Press Bloomington 1987, pp.11-84

Ezra Mendelsohn, *Interwar Poland: good for the Jews or bad for the Jews?* [in] *The Jews in Poland* ed. By Ch. Abramsky, M. Jachimczyk & A. Polonsky, Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford 1986, pp.130-139;

4. Beginning of the War and Nazi occupation of Poland. Soviet occupation of East part of Poland. Situation of the Jews in both of the occupied parts.

Reading: *Excluding 'racially inferior', War and the Beginning of Genocide, 1939-1941'* (Historical Overview), [in:] *The Columbia Guide to The Holocaust*, Columbia University Press 2000, pp.3-23

5. Anti-Jewish Policy in the General Government. The ghettos (structure, location, life and resistance in the ghettos).

Reading: Arieh L. Bauminger, *The Fighters of the Cracow Ghetto*, Jerusalem 1986, pp. 22-29;

Film: '*Schindler's List*', Steven Spielberg

6. Concentration and death camps as part of the Nazi German policy in the occupied Poland. "Final solution" . "Reinhard Action".

Reading: D. Niewyk and F. Nicosia, *The Victims' Reactions to Persecution*, [in:] *The Columbia Guide to The Holocaust*, Columbia University Press 2000, pp.97-107; C. Lanzman, *Shoah*;

Film: '*Schindler's List*' Steven Spielberg

7. Visit to the area of the former ghetto in Krakow/Podgorze

Reading: Exerpts from memories by Tadeusz Pankiewicz, Natan Gross, Miriam Akavia, Stella Muller-Madej, Roma Ligocka, Roman Polanski

8. Jewish religious life during the Holocaust.

Reading: Rabbi Shimon Huberband, *Kiddush haShem. Jewish Religious Life in Poland During the Holocaust*, New York 1987, chapter 3, pp. 175-243.

9. Perpetrators, victims and bystanders in Poland - Polish reactions to Nazi antisemitic policy and restrictions.

Reading: W. Bartoszewski, *Polish-Jewish relations in occupied Poland, 1939-1945*, [in:] *The Jews in Poland*, ed. By Ch. Abramsky, M. Jachimczyk & A. Polonsky, Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford 1986, pp.147-160

10-11. Life and death in the concentration camps. The structure of work-, concentration- and death- camp. Study visit to the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (... date to be decided...)

Reading: T. Iwaszko, *The daily life of prisoners*, [in:] *Auschwitz.Nazi Death Camp*, The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oswiecim 1996, pp. 70-87.

12. The liberation time and the post-Holocaust migrations of Polish Jews. Jewish Displaced Persons camps.

Reading: B. Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora. The Jews in Europe since 1945*, Harvard University Press 1996, chapter: *Displaced Persons*, p.1-35

13. Post-Holocaust Status of Jews in Poland (in the context of selected Central European countries) (1945-1950)

Reading: M.C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead. Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*, Syracuse University Press 1997; Chapter: *Memory's Wounds 1944- 1948*, p. 43-61

14. Postwar antisemitism – how/why was it possible? Case of Krakow and Kielce pogroms.

Reading: S. Meducki, The Pogrom in Kielce on 4 July 1946, [in] POLIN. Studies in Polish Jewry, Volume Nine, Jews Poles, Socialists. The Failure of an Ideal, Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1996, p. 158-169.

A. Cichopek, *Pogrom in Cracow, August 11, 1945*, [in]: *Contested memories. Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and its Aftermath*, ed. J. D. Zimmerman, Rutgers University Press 2003, pp.221-238

15. Postwar Zionism and proclamation of the State of Israel. Waves of Jewish emigration from Poland.

Reading: B. Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora. The Jews in Europe since 1945*, Harvard University Press 1996, chapter: *The Impact of Israel*, pp.85-102

16. Attempts of rebuilding Jewish institutions in Poland. Jewish religious and cultural life in postwar Poland.

Reading: Michael C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead. Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*, Syracuse University Press, 1997, chapter 3: *Memory's Wounds, 1944-1948*, pp.43-61

Stanisław Krajewski, *Poland and the Jews. Reflections of a Polish Jewish Jew*, Kraków, 2005, pp. 141-163;

17. Antisemitic/Anti-zionist Campaign – March 1968 in Poland

Reading: Lukasz Hirszwicz, *The Jewish issue in post-war communist politics*, [in:] *The Jews in Poland*, ed. By Ch. Abramsky, M. Jachimczyk & A. Polonsky, Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford 1986, pp. 199-208.

18. Various aspects of contemporary Jewish life in Poland. Visiting one of the contemporary Jewish institutions in Krakow.

Reading: M. Niezabitowska, T. Tomaszewski, *Remnants. The last Jews of Poland*, Friendly Press, Inc. New York 1986, Chapter Five - *The Community*, pp. 155-199;

Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish. Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe*, University of California Press 2002, chapter: *A Virtual Jewish World*, pp.25-71;

Konstanty Gebert, *Jewish Identities in Poland: New, Old, and Imaginary*, [in] *Jewish Identities in the New Europe*, edited by Jonathan Webber, Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization 1994, pp. 161-167

19. Poland and the memory of Jewish history and the Holocaust. Contemporary discussions.

Reading: M.C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead. Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*, Syracuse University Press 1997; Chapters: *Memory Repressed: 1948-1968*, pp. 62-74, *Memory Reconstructed: 1970-1989*, p.89-121

J. Blonski, *The Poor Poles look at the ghetto* [in] Polonsky, Antony, ed. *My Brother's Keeper? Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*. London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 34-52

20. The film presentation : “Hiding and Seeking. Faith and Tolerance after the Holocaust” by Menachem Daum and Oren Rudavsky. The film explores the Polish-Jewish relations during and after the Holocaust. Discussion.

For more information about the film see: <http://www.hidingandseeking.com/> .

Recommended further reading:

- Bernard Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora. The Jews in Europe since 1945*, Harvard University Press 1996
- *Contested memories. Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and its Aftermath*, ed. J. D. Zimmerman, Rutgers University Press 2003
- Eva Hoffman, *Lost in translation. A Life in a New Language*, Londyn 1998
- Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*, , Indiana University Press Bloomington 1987
- Jan T. Gross, *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz. An Essay in Historical Interpretation*, Princeton University Press 2006
- Jan T. Gross, *Neighbours, The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*
- *Kielce - July 4, 1946: Background, Context and Events*, a Collective Work. Toronto and Chicago: Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1996
- Eva Hoffman, *Shtetl. The life and death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews*
- Michael C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead. Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*, Syracuse University Press, 1997
- *My Brother's Keeper? Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*, ed. by A. Polonsky, London: Routledge, 1990
- Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe*, An S. Mark Taper Foundation Book in Jewish Studies, January 2002
- *The Neighbors Respond. The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*, ed. by A. Polonsky & J.B. Michlic, Princeton University Press 2004.

Recommended websites:

www.jewish.org.pl - Jewish Community in Poland

www.ushmm.org - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum , Washington DC

www.yadvashem.org - Yad Vashem , Jerusalem

www.centropa.org - Centropa – The Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation

www.ipn.gov.pl - The Institute of National Remembrance