

HIS 440 THE HOLOCAUST

Kenneth J. Orosz
Spring 2025
Class Meetings: Tech 358
MWF 1:00-1:50

Office Hours: MW 12:00-12:50
And by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

There are few, if any, periods in history which can compare to the horror of the Holocaust. During the course of the Nazi regime and the Second World War, 6 million Jews were murdered. While they were not the only victims of Nazi genocide (others include Communists, homosexuals, Slavs and Gypsies), this course will focus primarily on the unfolding plight of the Jews in Europe between 1933 and 1945. Topics covered will include the personality of Adolf Hitler, the traumas of Weimar Germany, the birth and rise of the Nazi party, persecution of Jews in Europe, the policy of extermination, resistance, and world reaction to Nazi policies.¹

OFFICE HOURS

While I will be available in my office for face to face meetings during office hours, I am also available for virtual meetings. To take advantage of virtual office hours click on the appropriate menu button in Brightspace to reveal the Zoom link. Contact me via email if you cannot make regularly attended office hours so that we can set up an appointment.

TUTORING SERVICES

Buffalo State offers a wide variety of free tutoring services, including a Writing Center. For more information go to the [tutoring website](#).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Academic misconduct (including cheating, plagiarism, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to do your work for you) will not be tolerated. Buffalo State College policies on academic misconduct, including the possible use of textual similarity detection software, are outlined in the college catalog. **Please note that the minimum penalty for cases of academic misconduct will be an F on the assignment.**

Reading assignments are to be completed by the dates given. There will be three exams. Please note that in order to earn more than a B on the essay portion of the exams you must make use of the relevant assigned readings and historical documents. In addition students will write two 5 page analysis papers of assigned texts (Sierakowiak and Lengyel memoirs) and a 12-15 page paper on a topic of their choice. All topics for the research papers must be authorized by me and must conform to the geographic and temporal confines of this course. As part of this process students are required to submit their paper topics in the form of written proposals no later than **March 10**. Failure to submit a passing proposal means that your paper will not be accepted and you will earn an E for that portion of the course. All papers and reviews must conform to the [History Style Sheet](#). Detailed [instructions](#) on

¹ Learning Outcomes: Students will demonstrate mastery of subject matter, knowledge of historiography, appreciation of cultural patterns/behaviors, understanding of cause and effect, and influence of ideas on human behavior. Students will also be able to retrieve/interpret primary sources, write clearly and effectively, document sources and demonstrate logical thought processes.

the writing assignments, including the style sheet, can be found in Brightspace or by clicking the syllabi and course materials links at <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/oroszkj>. Help for Brightspace can be found at <https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/learners/learners.htm>.

Please note that in order to pass this course you must make a good faith attempt to complete all components and requirements. **LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PRIOR ARRANGEMENT**. Incompletes will be granted at the sole discretion of the instructor and require a written application outlining the rationale for granting an incomplete, a list of outstanding assignments and a timetable for their completion. This application must be signed and, if granted, will constitute a formal contract for the completion of the course.

While there is no formal attendance policy, students are responsible for all material covered. How you learn that material is up to you. Experience has shown, however, that students who do not regularly attend class have gaps in their knowledge and tend to earn poor grades.

At the collegiate level grades are based on mastery of content, methodology, and presentation, regardless of how hard you feel you worked on an assignment. Grades will be computed as follows:

First Exam	20%	Second Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%	Lengyel analysis	10%
Sierakowiak analysis	10%	Research Paper	20%

COURSE POLICIES

1. Students must complete all work on their own. There are no group projects other than the online discussions.
2. **The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is strictly forbidden and will be considered cheating since it is a computer, rather than the student, completing assignments. As with other cases of academic misconduct, the minimum penalty will be an F on the assignment.**
3. Except for cases of documented emergencies, I do not accept late work without prior arrangement. It is your responsibility to keep track of what is due each week by checking the syllabus.

RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS

Use of AI to write your paper is cheating and will be dealt with as such. All topics for the research papers must be authorized by me and must conform to the geographic and temporal confines of this course. Proposals must be submitted in writing and should consist of a sentence or two outlining your topic followed by a preliminary bibliography of 8-10 scholarly sources in which you provide complete publication information. The use of encyclopedias and websites beyond those already assigned are not allowed. Do not restrict yourself to what is present in our library, since our collection in history is incomplete and often dated. To find books you will need to make use of the library's Worldcat Discovery database; if we do not own the text, you will then need to order it via interlibrary loan. You can find peer reviewed journal articles by using the library's JSTOR and Project Muse databases.

The bibliography of passed proposals can be amended via a simple email to your instructor. While proposals are due **March 10**, you can change your topic by submitting a new proposal for approval until the day the paper is due. This is the only assignment with this kind of flexibility. Please

note that if I do not have a passed proposal on file when I begin grading, I will not read your paper and you will receive an F on the assignment. If you choose to gamble by turning in your revised proposal with your paper on **May 9** you run the risk that your proposal will fail and your paper will be rejected unread.

SUBMITTING PAPERS

Submitting papers requires a 3 part process:

1. You must pass a quiz confirming that you have read and followed the directions before the Dropbox will appear. This quiz will become under available the Course Activities tab 2 weeks before the assignment is due and can be retaken as needed.
2. If you have successfully completed the quiz, then the Dropbox will appear in the Assignments section of the Course Activities tab. You must upload your paper as a word document (.doc or .docx only) to the Turnitin dropbox by **3:00 PM** on the due date.
3. You must bring a printed and stapled copy and turn it in during class time on the due date. **I will not grade any papers that have not been submitted to the dropbox and for which I do not also have a paper copy.**

Note: You may submit revisions of your paper up until the due date. Among the things you should check is the Turnitin Originality Report to help guard against plagiarism. To see the report click on the colored rectangular icon next to your submission. If the icon is gray, your report is still being processed; check back within the next 24 hours.

BOOKS: The following books are required reading and are available in the Bookstore:

Lucy S. Dawidowicz, <u>The War Against the Jews</u>	ISBN 978-0-553-34532-2 **
Richard Plant, <u>The Pink Triangle</u>	978-0-805-00600-1
Donald Niewyk, <u>The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives</u> , 4 th ed.	978-0-547-18946-8 ***
Israel Gutman, <u>Resistance: The Waraw Ghetto Uprising</u>	978-0-195-90130-4 **
Leni Yahil, <u>The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry</u>	978-0-195-04523-9 **
Dawid Sierakowiak, <u>The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak</u>	978-0-195-12285-5 **
Olda Lengyel, <u>Five Chimneys</u>	978-0-897-33631-4 **

*****Buy only if you can get a cheap used copy; I will put 4 copies on reserve in the library**

**Dawidowicz available as free ebook at [Internet Library](#)

**Gutman available as free ebook at [Internet Library](#)

**Yahil available as free ebook at [Internet Library](#)

**Sierakowiak available as free ebook at [Internet Library](#)

**Lengyel available as free ebook at [Internet Library](#)

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

Any reading listed on the syllabus that does not come from a required textbook is either a website or has been posted to Brightspace. To further help you identify them, supplemental readings are in italics. They can be accessed in one of 3 ways: 1) If it is a website, there will be a link to it from the electronic version of the syllabus available in Brightspace or on my web page at

<http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/oroszkj>. 2) Materials highlighted in blue have been uploaded to weekly folders in the Supplemental Readings section of Brightspace. A) If the item is a PDF, simply click on it to open and read. B) If it is a PowerPoint, click the down arrow next to the file name and select download from the menu (files are large, so do on WiFi only). Navigate to your download folder and open the file. Follow the directions on the first slide to get it to play.

Yehuda Bauer, "Negotiating for Jewish Lives," in The Holocaust 2nd ed., edited by Donald Niewyk (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 269-276.

Jan Brinks "The Dutch, The Germans and the Jews," History Today 49 no. 6 (June 1999): 17-23.

Christopher Browning, "A Product of Euphoria in Victory," in The Holocaust 2nd ed., edited by Donald Niewyk (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 39-49.

Taylor Downing, "Auschwitz: The Forgotten Evidence," History Today 55, no. 2 (February 2005): 26-32.

Richard Evans, "Hitler's Dictatorship," History Review no. 51 (March 2005): 20-25.

Richard Evans, "The Coming of the Third Reich," History Review no. 50 (December 2004): 12-17

Alan Farmer, "Hitler and the Holocaust," History Review no. 58 (September 2007): 4-9

Richard Glazar, "Surviving Extermination Camp Treblinka," in The Holocaust 2nd ed., edited by Donald Niewyk (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 66-82.

Christian Goeschel, "Suicides of German Jews in the Third Reich," German History 25, no. 1 (2007): 22-45.

Daniel Goldhagen, "Hitler's Willing Executioners," in The Holocaust 2nd ed., edited by Donald Niewyk (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 184-197.

Ian Kershaw "The Hitler Myth," History Today 35 no. 11 (November 1985): 23-28

Michael Marrus, "Bystanders," in The Holocaust in History (New York: Meridian, 1987) 156-183.

Jeremy Noakes, "The Rise of the Nazis," History Today 33 no. 1 (January 1983): 8-13

Julian Reed-Purvis, "From Mercy Death to Genocide," History Review no. 45 (March 2003): 36-40.

Rafael Scheck, "The Killing of Black Soldiers from the French Army by the Wehrmacht in 1940," German Studies Review 28, no. 3 (October 2005): 595-606.

Caroline Sharples, "Kindertransport: Terror, Trauma and Triumph" History Today 54 no. 3 (March 2004): 23-29

F. G. Stapleton, "Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust" History Review no. 56 (December 2006): 16-20.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 27 Introduction

Read: *The Nature of History*; *How to Write History Papers*

January 29 **Roots of European Anti-Semitism**

Read: *Timeline*; *Why the Jews: History of Anti-Semitism*

January 31 **The Shift to Modern Anti-Semitism**

Read: *Anti-Semitism & Nationalism*; *Protocols of Elders of Zion*; *Beilis Affair*

February 3	Adolf Hitler: Early Life and Personality
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 1-2; Hitler's Military Career ;
February 5	The Traumas of World War I
Read:	Treaty of Versailles Excerpts ;
February 7	Weimar Germany
Read:	Evans, "Coming of Third Reich" Weimar Constitution Excerpts ; Hitler's first anti-Semitic writings
February 10	Birth and Rise of the Nazi Party
Read:	Plant Prologue and Ch 1-2; Nazi Party Program ; Hitler's 1927 Speech
February 12	The Nazi World View
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 6; Yahil Ch 2
February 14	Ascension to Power
Read:	Noakes, "Rise of the Nazis"
February 17	No Class
February 19	Gleichschaltung
Read:	Evans, "Hitler's Dictatorship;" Enabling Act
February 21	Hitler Myth
Read:	Kershaw, "Hitler Myth"
February 24	Persecution of Jews in Pre-War Germany
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 3-4, 9; Yahil Ch 1 & 3; Nuremberg Decrees
February 26	The Tightening Noose
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 5; Yahil Ch 4; Kristallnacht Order
February 28	First Exam
March 3	Outbreak of War
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 6, 10; Yahil Ch 5; Gutman Ch 1-2
March 5	Deportations
Read:	Yahil Ch 6-8; Gutman Ch 3-5; Goeschel, "Suicides;" Deportations ; Ghettoization part 1 ; part 2 ; part 3 ; part 4 ; part 5
March 7	Life in the Ghettos
Read:	Sierakowiak memoir; Starvation in the Ghetto ; Smuggling ; Lodz Ghetto ; Everyday life in the Ghettos
March 10	Operation Barbarossa
Read:	Yahil Ch 9-10; Research paper proposals due
March 12	Einsatzgruppen
Read:	Reed-Purvis, "From Mercy Death to Genocide;" Einsatzgruppen
March 14	The Lebensborn and Euthanasia Programs
Read:	Yahil Ch 12 Sterilization ; T4 program ; Euthanasia ; Gas Vans ;

March 17	The Wannsee Conference
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 7; Wannsee Conference Minutes ;
March 19	Wartime Persecution of German Jews
Read:	Gutman Ch 6-7; Yahil Ch 11 Sierakowiak analysis due
March 21	Kingdom of Death: The Camp System
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 7, 14; Arrival at Auschwitz
March 24	No Class
March 26	No class
March 28	No Class
March 31	Kingdom of Death: The Extermination Process
Read:	Niewyk part III; Yahil Ch 13, 15; Glazar, "Surviving Treblinka;"
April 2	Kingdom of Death: Life in the Camps
Read:	Yahil Ch 19 ;
April 4	The Holocaust Experience
Read:	Lengyel memoir;
April 7	Second Exam
April 9	Non-Jewish Victims
Read:	Plant Prologue, Intro, Ch 3-5; Non-Jewish Victims ; Gypsies: One ; Two ; Homosexuals: One ; Two ; Jehovah's Witnesses ; Soviet POWs Scheck, "Killing Black Soldiers;" Non-Jewish Victims II
April 11	Perpetrators
Read:	Niewyk part II & V; Irma Grese ; Goldhagen, "Hitler's Willing Executioners"
April 14	Collaborators
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 11, 16
April 16	Resistance I: Passive Resistance
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 12; Niewyk IV; Yahil Ch 17; Improbable Relic
April 18	Resistance II: Armed Resistance
Read:	Dawidowicz Ch 13 and 15; Gutman Ch 8-11; Call to Resistance ; Partisans and Camp Revolts Lengyel analysis due
April 21	The Intentionalist/Functionalist Debate
Read:	Dawidowicz Introduction and Ch 8; Niewyk part I; Browning, "Product;" Madagascar Plan ; Hitler's comments ; Hans Frank's comments
April 23	German Allies: Italy, Hungary, Rumania
Read:	Dawidowicz Appendices; Farmer, "Hitler and the Holocaust,"
April 25	West European Responses: France
Read:	Yahil Ch 14

April 28	West European Responses: Benelux, Denmark
Read:	Yahil Ch 16; Brinks, "Dutch, Germans & Jews"
April 30	Bystanders I: Vatican and Britain
Read:	Sharples, "Kindertransport;" Stapleton, "Pius XII and the Holocaust" Pius XII Kindertransport British Refugee Policy
May 2	Bystanders II: US
Read:	Riegner telegram; Marrus, "Bystanders;" War Refugee Board; Downing, "Auschwitz: Forgotten Evidence;" Bombing Auschwitz;
May 5	Rescue Efforts
Read:	Niewyk part VI; Yahil Ch 20-21; Danish Rescue; Irina Sendler Dutch and Japanese Rescue Efforts; Bauer, "Negotiating;"
May 7	Death Marches and Liberation
Read:	Yahil Ch 18; Dachau Liberation; Bergen-Belsen Liberation
May 9	Coming to Terms with the Holocaust
Read:	International Military Tribunal; Search for Perpetrators; Combating Holocaust Denial; Final Papers Due
May 15	Final Exam 1:40-3:30

Guidelines for Writing Assignments

Students in this course are required to do their own original work, hence **the use of artificial intelligence (AI) constitutes cheating and is strictly forbidden** because it is a computer, rather than the student, doing the assignment. **The minimum penalty for violating this policy is an F for the assignment, but in most cases students will also receive a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Academic Misconduct Committee for possible additional penalties.**

While your papers will be graded primarily on content and the strength of your arguments, grammatical accuracy, style, presentation and organization will also be taken into account. As with a medical diagnosis, your arguments will be stronger if you can offer second opinions, hence your papers should, wherever possible, include supporting evidence drawn from more than one source. All papers are required to adhere to the History Style Sheet which is available in Brightspace and on my web site. Failure to follow the style sheet will result in significant penalties; these consist of at least the loss of a full letter grade for each category of violation (i.e. use of contractions will cost you a letter grade, reducing an A paper to a B). This includes paper length, non-standard fonts, margins and line spacing. Please note that a short paper is not necessarily a bad paper; I am primarily interested in what you have to say, how well you say it and if you have developed your thesis and argument sufficiently.

As you write your papers, you may paraphrase or quote suitable passages that illustrate your points. However, if you do quote or paraphrase, you must cite the relevant passage. You must also cite detailed information (i.e. statistics or items that are not common knowledge). The only exception to this rule is material gleaned from my lectures; you may assume that this is public knowledge and requires no citation. Proper citation formats can be found in the History Style Sheet. Please note that

in addition to enforcing Buffalo State College's policies on academic misconduct, including the possible use of textual similarity detection software, **the minimum penalty for plagiarism is an F on the assignment**. For more information on plagiarism, how to footnote, or how to write a research paper consult the relevant sections of Benjamin's A Student's Guide to History. If you are still unclear about when or how to cite please come see me during my office hours. That is why I am there.

Since much of what is out on the internet is of dubious quality, **the use of web pages as source material is strictly forbidden** unless authorized by me in writing. The only exceptions to this rule are the individual web sites that I have assigned as required reading material. On a similar note, **the use of encyclopedias is also forbidden**. While they may be useful reference tools or for providing an overview of a particular topic, encyclopedias have no place in college level work. Articles in historical encyclopedias (i.e. *The Encyclopedia of European Social History*) may be acceptable, but must first be cleared by me in writing.

I am obviously a firm believer in written assignments since they help develop organizational, analytical and communication skills, all of which are things you will need in the workplace. Consequently, I expect you to treat all graded assignments (in this or any other class) as preparations for your future career. Turning in business reports that are filled with grammatical errors, failures in logic, poor argumentation and lack of evidence portrays a degree of incompetence, even if it is undeserved, and will probably get you fired. Get in the habit now of proofreading your work to catch typos, misspellings and nonsensical statements. Read your papers aloud to see how they sound. Better still, have a friend or roommate read your work since they are more likely to notice any problems. Most of you will be writing your papers on wordprocessors. No matter what program you use, they all have spell checkers. It is silly and self-defeating not to make use of them.

While I do not allow rewrites once papers have been graded, I will read and comment on rough drafts if I am given enough time. Alternatively, you may want to consult either the campus writing center or some of the history tutors for help or advice. Keep your notes and copies of your paper to facilitate rewrites and to safeguard against loss, computer errors, random destruction by pets and similar catastrophes. Finally, and most importantly, if you are having any problems in this course come see me.

Book Analyses

All students will write 2 five page (1500 word) historical analyses of assigned texts (Siearkowiak's *Diary* and Lengyel's *Five Chimneys*). Since these are historical analyses and not "book reports," I am not interested in plot summaries, symbolism, language, or character development. Similarly, I am not interested in whether you liked the book or found it interesting. Your analysis paper should analyze and critique the author's portrayal of some of the historical events or themes covered in this course. As you critique the books use the following questions as a rough guide: How do the authors portray historical events or issues covered elsewhere in the course? Do these works depict typical Holocaust experiences or problems? How accurate are these depictions? You will need to be selective in choosing which elements to include in your reviews since both works are very complex and illustrate many historical trends. Your analysis must draw upon and cite specific examples from the texts being analyzed as well as corroborating historical evidence drawn from other class materials in order to support your points.

As you will discover, 5 pages provides barely enough room to introduce a topic, let alone go

into much detail. Hence, your papers should have a narrowly defined thesis and must be very selective in both their use and presentation of supporting evidence or examples. Since these papers are so short, keep quotations to a minimum so that you will have more room to develop your own thoughts and arguments. To strengthen your argument(s), however, your analyses must draw upon and cite specific examples from the texts being analyzed as well as corroborating evidence from more than one source. **There is ample material on which to base your book analyses papers in assigned course materials (lectures and readings); if you wish to use outside materials, you must first obtain permission from me in writing.**

Research Paper

In addition to the book analyses, all students will write a 12-15 page (3600-4500 word) paper on a topic of their own choosing. While the actual topics for your papers are up to you, they must remain within the geographical and temporal confines of this course. The paper should analyze some facet of the Holocaust in detail. To that end, and to help you identify sources, all paper topics must be cleared with me first in the form of a written paper proposal due no later than **March 10**. Complete proposals will outline your topic, the specific issues you intend to address, and must include a bibliography. Bibliography entries must include author, title, and complete publication information. If, after you have begun researching and writing your paper, you choose to use additional sources, you must submit an amended bibliography to me in writing. **Papers that use unauthorized materials will not be accepted. Similarly, papers that deviate significantly from your research proposal will also not be accepted.** This does not mean, however, that you are permanently locked in to a particular paper topic; if you change your mind and opt to pursue some other topic you must submit a new paper proposal which may or may not be accepted at my discretion. In order to find suitable research materials you will need to go beyond what is in our library catalog by making use of the JSTOR, Project Muse, Worldcat Discovery and Academic Search Complete databases. Other critical library databases to use are ACLS Humanities E-book, E-Book Central, Ebsco eBook Collection, and the Digital Public Library of America. External databases to check for e-books, mostly older editions, are the Hathi Trust Digital Library and the Internet Archive's Open Library for copies of e-books. Completed papers are due in class on **May 9**.

Possible paper topics include:

Pre-war persecution of Jews	Jewish resistance
Collaboration in Occupied Europe	Techniques for survival in the camps
Rescue efforts	American Jews and the Holocaust
Bystanders	The Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal