

**Department of History
Texas A&M, San Antonio
Spring 2025**

**History 4319
The Holocaust**



Instructor: Dr. Edward Westermann

**Class Location/Time:
CAB 219/Tues./Thurs., 12:30-1:45 p.m.**

**Office: CEAC Room 313G
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**Office Hours:
Tuesday: 9:30-12:15 am
Thursday: 9:30 am-12:00 am or by appointment**

Course Purpose and Philosophy:

The purpose of the course is to stimulate a better understanding of the Holocaust in all its ramifications. In pursuing this goal, the course will examine the history of Jewish life and Jewish experience in Europe and Germany. This course also will examine the specific circumstances and historical events that led to the rise of Nazism in the interwar period (1919-1938) as well as the National Socialist seizure of power and the gradual intensification of antisemitic policy.

The course stresses the relationship of Nazi policies and actions regarding Jews to their broader aims of domination, conquest, and subjugation of the whole of Europe. It traces the changes in policy throughout the period from 1933 to 1945 and focuses on the ultimate inauguration of the practice of total annihilation after the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. The course provides insights into how and why these changes occurred when they did, and why those who were victimized by the unfolding disaster were caught unaware.

In dealing with the wartime period, the behavior of three key groups is examined: the perpetrators, the victims, and witnesses. An attempt is made to analyze the action or inaction of all three of these groups in the light of the knowledge available to them at the time, rather than to pass judgment with the benefit of post-Holocaust hindsight. Special attention is given to the types and varieties of resistance manifested by the victims in the face of increasing persecution as well as the issues and problems associated with rescuing the European Jews.

At the conclusion of the course, you will have an understanding of the social, cultural, political, economic, and military developments that led to and shaped the events of the destruction of the European Jews. The quality and depth of intellectual rigor that you bring into the classroom each day will determine the value that you receive from the course and the benefits that accrue to you today and in the future. I look forward to our journey together.

Course Objectives:

- **Identify the circumstances in Central and Eastern Europe that led to the rise of both antisemitism and Nazism.**
- **Identify and evaluate the changes in Nazi policy toward the Jews between 1933 and 1945.**
- **Analyze the scope of the events of the Holocaust and its relation to the military events of World War II.**
- **Analyze the behavior of perpetrators, victims, and bystanders during World War II.**
- **Understand the special attributes and disparate cultures of the various European Jewish communities prior to the start of World War II.**

- Comprehend the events of the Holocaust and the influence of Nazi racial aims and actions with respect to the entire range of victims, including Jews, Slavs, Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, and other persecuted groups.
- Communicate clearly and concisely in written and verbal assignments.

Course Texts:

Bergen, Doris. *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, (3d ed.). Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2009.

Desbois, Patrick. *The Holocaust by Bullets*. New York: St. Martins, 2009.

Lengyel, Olga. *Five Chimneys*. Chicago, IL: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1995.

Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

GRADING

<u>Graded Event</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Book Essay #1	100	10%
Mid-term Exam	250	25%
Quizzes	100	10%
Book Quiz #1	100	10%
Book Quiz #2	100	10%
Final Exam	250	25%
Class Participation	100	10%

CRITICAL BOOK ESSAY:

You will write a critical essay. The assignment may focus on a specific theme or concept in order to allow you to develop an argument concerning a key point in the reading. More specific instructions will be provided in class.

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION:

These points will be based on the quality of your contributions to discussions in the classroom. Learning is a “student-centered” activity that requires your thoughtful participation and analysis of ideas presented during class. You will be graded on the quality of your contributions to the class and your ability to analyze and discuss course concepts in the classroom.

QUIZZES/BOOK QUIZZES:

These points will be based on short assessments of student learning objectives from the readings and classroom lectures.

<u>LESSON</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNED READING</u>
1 (21 Jan)	Course Administration	Review syllabus on BB
2 (23 Jan)	Course Themes	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 1-11)
3 (28 Jan)	Roots of Anti-Semitism	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 13-24)
4 (30 Jan)	The “Pseudo-Science” of Eugenics	Handout: “Life unworthy of Life”
5 (4 Feb)	Germany under Weimar	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 25-44)
6 (6 Feb)	The Rise of National Socialism	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 45-67)
7 (11 Feb)	Hitler in Power	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 69-100)
8 (13 Feb)	Legislating Inequality	Nuremberg Law Handout
9 (18 Feb)	Terror & Intimidation	<i>Kristallnacht</i> Report
10 (20 Feb)	Propaganda & the “Big Lie”	Handout: <i>The Poisonous Mushroom</i>
11 (25 Feb)	Propaganda II	Handout: <i>Mein Kampf</i> excerpt
12 (27 Feb)	Hitler and the Churches	<i>The Concordat</i>
13 (4 Mar)	Racial War: Act I	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 101-127)
14 (6 Mar)	Mid-term Exam	Review previous course materials
15 (18 Mar)	Life and Death in the Ghetto	Ghetto Diary Excerpts
16 (20 Mar)	<i>A Film Unfinished</i>	Ghetto Diary Excerpts
17 (25 Mar)	The Machinery of Destruction	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 167-206)
18 (27 Mar)	Experiencing Auschwitz (Book Quiz)	<i>Survival in Auschwitz</i>
19 (1 Apr)	<i>Vernichtungskrieg I</i>	Handout: “Barbarossa Decree”
20 (3 Apr)	<i>Vernichtungskrieg II</i>	Handout: Wannsee Protocol
21 (8 Apr)	Witnessing Mass Murder (In-class Essay)	<i>The Holocaust by Bullets</i>

22 (10 Apr)	Alcohol & Genocide	Article: "Stone Cold Killers or Drunk on Murder?"
23 (15 Apr)	Film: <i>Zone of Interest</i>	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 207-235)
24 (17 Apr)	Film Discussion	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 237-273)
25 (22 Apr)	Holocaust Remembrance Event	None
26 (24 Apr)	Resistance & Rescue	<i>War and Genocide</i> (pp. 275-295)
27 (29 Apr)	Gender & Mass Murder (Book Quiz)	<i>Five Chimneys</i>
28 (1 May)	Course Review	All Readings

*****Final Exam (8 May at 10:00-11:50 am)*****

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is required. I take attendance at the beginning of class and we conduct community building at the start of class so being on time is important to your learning experience. Early departures from class should be cleared with the instructor before the start of class. As much of the course work happens in class, missing 25% of the classes or more will result in a minimum of a letter grade deduction from the final grade. This includes both excused and unexcused absences. This does not include university-sanctioned absences for which I receive notification from the University. All students (whether present or absent) are responsible for all announcements made in class and all assignments given in class because it is sometimes necessary to make changes to the syllabus.

Cell Phone Policy

Cellular phones and other electronic devices should be turned off during lectures. Laptop computers may be used to take notes during the class.

Make-up Exam Policy

Based on instructor discretion, students may be allowed to take a make-up exam in the event of extraordinary circumstances that prevent the student from taking the exam at the scheduled time. In any event, if a student misses an exam, he/she should notify the instructor within 24 hours of the reason for the absence.

Late Assignments

An assignment is considered to be late if it is not turned in at the start of the class period during which the assignment is due. Late assignments without an acceptable excuse as determined by the instructor will be recorded as a zero or may incur a penalty.

Academic Dishonesty

Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic Dishonesty for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, and ethical misconduct.

This includes holding other students to same standards and reporting any incidents of alleged violation of the honesty policy to the instructor involved or, if necessary, to the appropriate academic department head. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Dishonesty Policy which may be found in the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook.

Academic Integrity and Chat GPT

Written work submitted by students—all process work, drafts, low-stakes writing, final versions, and all other submissions—will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups when permitted. This means that the following would be considered violations of academic integrity: If a student has another person/entity do the writing of any substantive portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write essays and drafts and/or other assignments, research-based or otherwise, and using artificial intelligence affordances like ChatGPT.

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations of their disability. If you have a disability that may require an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dss@tamusa.edu.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center is an appointment based center where appointments are made through the Navigate platform. Students access Navigate through Jagwire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu or calling (210)-784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

Counseling Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health concerns at Texas A&M University – San Antonio, please contact the Student Counseling Center (SCC) located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call 210-784-1331 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5

p.m., Monday – Friday. After-hours crisis support is available by calling 210-784-1331. Please contact UPD at 911 if harm to self or harm to others is imminent.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free, confidential (to the extent permitted by law), and are not part of a student's academic or university record. SCC provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff, and faculty who are registered in JagE Alert, will have the option to receive a text message, email, and/or phone call with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>. More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Mays Center for Experiential Learning and Community Engagement

The Mays Center for Experiential Learning and Community Engagement (Mays Center) provides enhanced learning opportunities and access to resources and relationships in order to develop students into career-ready and community-minded graduates. Programs and services provided by the Mays Center include: Career Services, Career Clothes Closet, Civic Engagement, Community Service, Experience Transcript, Externships, the General's Store, Internships and more. *Science and Technology Building, First Floor | (210)784-1356 | mays@tamusa.edu | <http://www.tamusa.edu/mays>*

Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. In addition, you may notify the instructor if you are comfortable doing so.

Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, about special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots' Casa in-person, Room

202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under A&M System policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, pluralism, and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the university. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and other healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C.

Student Academic Success Center (SASC)

The SASC takes a developmental approach to help students complete their academic goals from orientation through graduation. The Center offers academic and skills workshops, one-on-one appointments, and online resources to help retention efforts at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. The goal of the Center is to help students discover, self-reflect, and become independent learners. Student Academic Success is located in Modular C. Their services are currently offered virtually or by phone. To contact the Center, please call **210-784-1307** or email at Student.Success@tamusa.edu.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions of students' freedoms and responsibilities to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System, including the A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no university rule or procedure that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition, and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the university, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and staff, and the administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted and compliant with the University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and in the University Catalog.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their University email for any updates or official University notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center

The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop

reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://bit.ly/WLDCCenter>.