

Program Description

The Holocaust was the most dominating genocide in history and one of the key events of the 20th century. Students shall learn how the ideological concepts of a holostic and racist anti-Semitism escalated into the extermination of six million Jews through the agencies of the Nazi regime and their political collaborators. The anchor course – the course before departure to Germany and Poland – is an instructor guided distance course. This part of the program focuses on the reading of basic research literature and primary sources by Holocaust survivors. Students get a basic theoretic and factual knowledge about the history and the historiography of the Holocaust. Reading the accounts of Holocaust survivors sensitizes the students for the conditions of physical and spiritual survival and helps to understand the unfathomable dimensions of cruelty and hatred.

A set of guiding questions for journaling helps students to reflect their impressions and feelings while studying the Holocaust. Another set of guiding questions for letters to Holocaust survivors helps them to reflect the conditions of survival and the opportunities and problems of retelling and processing the past.

The instructional activities of the anchor course provide the factual and the intellectual background for a deeper understanding of the Holocaust. The reading of autobiographical sources like Ruth Kluger („Still alive“) and Primo Levi („Ecce Homo“) sensitizes the students for the problems of coping with the experiences of persecution and the problems of an adequate representation of a past that transcends the imaginable and the visually representable. The journaling assignments before departure help students in their mental organization of impressions, feelings and ideas and enhances their consciousness for the Holocaust.

On the trip, in Germany and Poland, students will continue to learn about the history of the Holocaust at places of learning (like museums of the Holocaust) and places of commemoration and mourning (like the former concentration camp sites). The journal keeping prompts the students to reflect their impressions and to monitor their reaction to what they learn and see.

The academic teaching of the pre trip will be continued at the historical museums and commemoration sites in Germany and Poland. Most of the museums and commemoration sites (like former concentration camps) are well equipped as places for academic learning. The visits of these places of learning will contribute to a sound understanding how (and why) the Holocaust became possible in Germany, a nation with no particular high degree of political and popular anti-Semitism before the National Socialists came to power.

When visiting the sites of historical learning and commemoration, the students will learn about the importance of Holocaust learning in the German and the Polish society of today. The students will notice the specific importance of Holocaust representation and Holocaust learning for tolerance education and learn about the shaping of a democratic and anti-racist national identity, particularly in Germany as the former nation of perpetrators. Students will be confronted with the different concepts of an adequate Holocaust representation.

The service activities at the concentration camp site Oswiecim (Auschwitz) help students to understand the importance of the original sites of persecution for the learning and understanding of the Holocaust. Since future generations will not have the opportunity to meet the surviving eyewitnesses of the Holocaust – neither in person nor through one-way communication via audio-visual media – remembrance and commemoration is based on keeping the original places for the future. Through their service work for maintaining the former concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz, students give a personal contribution for the future remembrance of the Holocaust.

Service work at a former concentration camp in Poland enhances the idea of global citizenship. The students will learn that the maintenance of these places for future generations is a global responsibility – like the remembrance of the Holocaust itself.

PROGRAM TEXTBOOKS AND READINGS

Doris Bergen: War and Genocide. A Concise History of the Holocaust

Michael Berenbaum/Raul Hilberg (eds.): Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp

Primo Levy: Survival at Auschwitz : The Nazi Assault on Humanity

Ruth Kluger: Still Alive. A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered

(Optional) Hannah Arendt: The Origins of Totalitarianism

COURSE GRADING GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

Grading:

Your grade will be earned by an even percentage distribution of the following categories:

- 1/3 active participation and effort (including discussions and attendance).
- 1/3 short writing assignments – Reflective journals and letters
- 1/3 research paper

Participation:

The foundation of a successful service-learning program is built on active participation and teamwork. Active participation involves taking a personal stake in the program and your learning experience. With a team of active learners, the sum of the outcomes is greater than the individual contributions. Class participation includes :

- reading the assigned textbooks and autobiographies before departure
- doing the journaling assignments before departure (online)
- active participation in class
- being punctual for classes and activities
- being prepared and willing to contribute to discussions
- functioning as a member of a team of learners.

Journals:

You are expected to keep a specific notebook for this class, which you will turn in from time to time. Bring it to every class for note-taking and periodic writings. Reflection exercises are an important part of service learning, so you will be expected to keep a journal. You will turn in your journal at the end of class, and it is expected that you have at least 25 pages (an 8.5x11 piece of paper's worth) of reflective writing. The reflective writing assignments will be given to you throughout the class sessions and the cultural immersion experience, specifically in relation to how the experience deepens your understanding of the core concepts involved in this course.

Research Paper:

You will complete a 10-12 page (typed, double spaced) research paper on the topic of your choice related to the Holocaust. It would be best to have the topic selected prior to going to Berlin and Poland to maximize on-site resources. Further, the summer schedule dictates that the course must be concluded rather soon after your return from Germany. Therefore, it is optimal that you choose your research topic early. Research papers must be completed one week after return to the US.

Research Paper Grading Rubric:

____/ 10	Is free from grammatical or typographical error.
____/ 30	Demonstrates clear understanding of the research question at hand, as well as ability to utilize library and journal resources to better illuminate the topic.
____/ 40	Demonstrates ability to consider the research question in light of resources available only through the course experience in Germany & Poland.
____/ 20	Develops a considered response to the research question, considers alternatives, is well-organized, and exhausts clear counterarguments before concluding.

TENTATIVE PROGRAM ITINERARY

Day 1 **The Journey Begins**
Departure from US

Day 2 **Arrival and Orientation**
Arrive in Berlin

Day 2 - Day 7

Program in Berlin : Classroom sessions, tours and visits

- Walking tour of the Historical Center of Berlin
- Walking tour of the Jewish Renaissance – The remnants of Jewish Life in Berlin:
- Visit of the Jewish Museum
- Visit of the Holocaust Memorial
- Walking tour through the Turkish immigrant neighborhood of Kreuzberg

- Visit of the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Site (at Oranienburg, within subway distance of Berlin)
- Visit the German Resistance Memorial Center

Accommodation: Sunflower Hostel Berlin, Helsingforser Strasse 17 (<http://www.sunflower-hostel.de/en/english.html>)

Day 8 **The Auschwitz Experience**

- Train trip from Berlin Ostbahnhof to Auschwitz
- dinner and orientation to the Center and the week's schedule

Accommodation: Centrum Dialogu w Modlitwy (Centre for Dialoge and Prayer), Oswiecim (<http://www.centrum-dialogu.oswiecim.pl>)

Day 9 **The Auschwitz Experience**

- visiting the city of Oswiecim (Jewish center, cemetery, market square)
- visit of Auschwitz I (Stammlager)
- dinner and evening meeting

Day 10 **The Auschwitz Experience**

- morning volunteer work at the Stammlager
- afternoon visit of Birkenau
- dinner and evening meeting

Day 11 **The Auschwitz Experience**

- morning volunteer work at Birkenau
- afternoon visit of the national exhibitions in Auschwitz I or visit of Birkenau, library
- dinner and meeting
- discussion with an Auschwitz survivor (tentative)

Day 12 **The Auschwitz Experience**

- morning volunteer work at the Stammlager
- afternoon visit of the Harmeze Monastery (exhibition of paintings from a Auschwitz survivor)
- dinner and meeting

Day 13 **Historical Perspectives and Modern Realities of Poland**

- 9 am - travel to Krakow, Poland for one day visit
- afternoon city tour

Day 14 **Train trip back to Berlin**

Day 15 - Day 20

Program in Berlin: Classroom sessions, tours and visits

Academic summary and reflections

- Tour and visit of the Wannsee Conference Mansion
- Visit of Potsdam and the Castle of the Prussian Kings
- Visit of a former East German Communist prison
- Visit of the German Parliament

Accommodation: Sunflower Hostel Berlin

Day 21 **The Journey Home**

JOURNALING ASSIGNMENTS (to be done before departure):

- What are your expectations of this program?
- When deciding and preparing for this experience, what reactions did you receive from others, and what do you intend to do with them?
- Considering this experience, answer: What am I looking to find and what do I hope to do with it?
- Reflect on your degree of connection to the Holocaust

Writing assignments before departure:

Please e-mail your letters to Ruth Kluger and/or Primo Levy and your answers to the question below to the other group members

- Write a letter to Ruth Kluger and/or Primo Levy. Share your emotions, understandings, and interpretation.
Question: How did the Kluger book revise or support your ideas of the Holocaust?
Was it more interesting to read her life or her reflection on what happened?

Internet Links

- Jewish Museum Berlin:
<http://www.juedisches-museum-berlin.de>
- Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe
<http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en>
- German Resistance Memorial Center
<http://www.gdw-berlin.de/index-e.php>
- House of the Wannsee Conference
<http://www.ghwk.de/engl/kopfengl.htm>

- Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen Memorial:
<http://www.stiftung-bg.de/gums/en/index.htm>
- East German Prison:
<http://en.stiftung-hsh.de>
- German Parliament (Bundestag):
http://www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/parliament/index.html
- Auschwitz Memorial and Museum:
<http://www.auschwitz.org.pl>
- Auschwitz Jewish Center:
<http://www.ajcf.org/center.html>
- Center for Dialogue and Prayer, Oswiecim/Aushwit
<http://www.centrum-dialogu.oswiecim.pl>

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS*

- See out of the box
- Connect history to present
- Come together as a group
- Experience perpetrators and victims
- Understand how hatred comes about and how forgiveness is derived
- Having unique responses to the same experience (i.e. exhaustion)
- Serving each other
- To see a larger world
- Active discussion as individuals and a group
- Not to over think
- Focus on the primary purpose of the program – put 100% in the program
- Have fun
- Be positive
- Respect Opinions
- Get the most out of everything we do
- Expect conflict and demand teamwork
- _____
- _____
- _____

ASPECTS OF TEAMWORK

- Opportunity
- Communication
- Strong, clear leadership
- Common purpose, individual interests
- Conflicts and resolutions

- Accountability
- Honesty
- Constructive Feedback
- Reflection of self (Do unto Others...)
- Interdependence
- Being on Time
- Courtesy
- Observing others
- _____
- _____
- _____