The Holocaust and Western Civilization

Department of History
San Diego State University

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Class time: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45
Office hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:00, or by appointment

Course Scope and Purpose:
The course explores the ways in which the memory of the Holocaust has been shaped since the end of WW2. The course first deals with the ways in which societies shape their shared perceptions of the past through various cultural agents. Next, the course applies key concepts in collective memory studies towards the investigation of the various processes and dynamics that characterize the construction of the memory of the Holocaust in the US, Israel and elsewhere. The course does so via an analysis of representations of the Holocaust featured in historical museums, rituals and various mass media genres.

Course Principals:
- The students are expected to attend all classes, show up on time and to have read the assigned readings for each session.
- Mandatory class readings include articles chosen specifically for the course and all can be accessed online via the blackboard system.
- When in class, students will turn off their cell phones, pagers, text-messagers, etc.
- The use of laptops for any other purpose rather than taking class notes is strictly forbidden. A failure to meet this requirement will result in a reduction of the student's final grade.
- Students' emails to me will be answered in 72 hours.
- Students with disabilities or who need special consideration are requested to contact me as soon as possible.
- The final take-home exam will cover course materials presented in lectures, assigned readings and class discussions.
- Make sure that your take-home exam is based on your original work. Footnote your sources, indicate direct quotes, and avoid closely paraphrasing your sources. Plagiarism will result in failure of the course.

Course Assignments and Grading:
Grades will be calculated based on the following weighting:
- Quiz 1 (scheduled on March 1) = 15%
- Quiz 2 (scheduled on April 14) = 15%
- Attendance and active participation = 10% (You can miss two classes without any consequences. Every missed class not due to a verifiable medical or personal emergency after that will result in reduction of your final grade).
- **Take-home exam** (given to students on April 28; submitted by students on our last meeting, May 10) = 60%

**Class presentations:** students (either on their own, or in couples) are invited to present in class **one additional reading** from the syllabus (see list of additional readings at the bottom), or a different relevant reading dealing with collective recollections and/or the history of the Holocaust. Please note: most additional readings do not appear in Blackboard and you will have to locate them via SDSU’s library.

The students' presentations will present and discuss the research questions guiding the article and its main findings in a thorough manner. The students will also relate the reading to topics and themes discussed in class. The use of handouts and PP presentations is welcomed. Students will email me a summary of their presentation up to three days before their class presentation. A choice of reading that does not appear on the list is welcomed, but it requires my approval. Students will choose their additional readings and inform me about their choice by February 1, 2011.

Grades of students who presented a paper in class will be calculated based on the following weighting:
- Quiz 1 = 15%
- Quiz 2 = 15%
- Attendance and active participation = 10%
- Class presentation = 10%
- Take-home exam = 50%

**Graduate students:**
- Graduate students will present one additional reading in class.
- Graduate students will write a final paper (instead of the take-home exam) that offers an analysis (up to 10 double-spaced pages) of a case-study related to the one of the topic discussed in class. The topics of the papers will be discussed through the semester and they require my approval.

**Grading System:**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>87-93</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>80-86</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>73-79</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>45-51</td>
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<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
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Course topics and mandatory readings

Introduction: The Fundamentals of Collective Memory Research


Zelizer, B. 1995. Reading the past against the grain: The shape of memory studies. Critical studies in mass communication, June, 214-239.

Between Personal and Collective Memories


Changing and Competing Memory Versions


Memory and Historiography


Memory and Trauma


The Holocaust - A Chronology


United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Holocaust Encyclopedia http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/ : What is Genocide?; The Holocaust ; The Holocaust and WW2: Timeline; Ghettos; Einsatzgruppen (Mobile Killing Units); Wannsee Conference and the "Final Solution"; "Final Solution"; Killing Centers; Rescue; Jewish Resistance.

Holocaust Memory in the U.S


**Holocaust Memory in Israel**


**Towards a Cosmopolitan Memory of the Holocaust**


**Additional Readings**

Collective memory research


**Holocaust memory**


