

Course List 2018-2019

[The Holocaust in American Culture](#)

Dr. Hannah Pollin-Galay

Though the Holocaust took place in Europe, it has had a distinctive impact on American culture—in literature, film, television and politics. Likewise, American culture continues to shape what the world thinks and feels about this European catastrophe. In this course, we will read works by authors such as John Hersey, Sylvia Plath, Hannah Arendt, Art Spiegelman, Philip Roth, Isaac Bashevis Singer and Jonathan Safran Foer. Films by Alfred Hitchcock, Fred Zinnemann, Steven Spielberg and Alan Pakula will open up questions about cinematic representation and the politics of Hollywood. Special attention will also be devoted to the analysis of video testimonies created in the United States.

[Jews and Other Others...: A Jewish American Poetics](#)

Prof. Meira Shreiber

Most Western discourse about identity formation depends upon the idea of an “Other” who is not “Us.” This course will take up this formulation and work to complicate it by exploring a range of texts featuring the interactions between Jews and Others –including African Americans, native American, Asians, and Latinos. In the course of discussions, we will seek to learn more about how racial, ethnic, and sexual difference work to shape that complex concept, known as “Americanness.” In addition to reading great novels such as Henry Roth’s *Call It Sleep*, and Tony Kushner’s epic play, *Angels in America*, we will read some poetry, a few short stories, and watch a few great films as we ask:

[Antisemitism: An Academic Study of History and Hate](#)

Dr. Scott Ury

This seminar will focus on the different ways that thinkers, historians and politicians have understood and written about the sources, development and future of antisemitism (hatred of the Jews). In addition to intensive readings and discussions surrounding classic texts like those by Marx, Herzl and Pinsker, we will also read the works of definitive scholars like Arendt and Katz as well as more contemporary works including those by Volkov and Wistrich. Through readings and discussions of different texts that deal with antisemitism we will attempt to understand not only how different authors understood the phenomenon in various points and time but also what these analyses can tell us about their worldviews, the world that we have inherited and the world that we wish to create.

[Critical Race Theory: Perspectives from the United States](#)

Prof. Vinna Dobel

Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in 1989 among legal scholars of color who sought to understand why and how racial inequality was persistent in the United States despite the legal victories of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. Contrary to the traditional view of racial subordination as solely an affront to the liberal legal idea, the growing body of CRT recasts the law as both central and complicit in upholding racial hierarchy, as well as other hierarchies including gender, class, and sexual orientation. CRT focuses on how law both creates and attempts to disrupt patterns of hierarchy and inequality. In this seminar, we focus on the origins of the literature and the contrasts between critical race theory and liberal/conservative analytical frameworks on race and U.S. law and society, as those frameworks are manifested in specific legal doctrines. We will also examine some of the questions and critiques of CRT and the impact of the work on political and legal discourse.

[Made to be Seen: Photography and Race in America](#)

Ms. Ayelet Carmi

This course examines the intersections of photography and race in the United States, focusing primarily on the twentieth-century. Students will be introduced to critical concepts in the field of photography, such as visibility, performativity, the gaze, and the 'scopic regime,' and to a range of historical and contemporary debates about the significance of vision in marking race in the context of the United States. Questions that we will ask throughout the course are: How does photography contribute to the discourse of race? What is the role of visual images in our perception of race and racialized bodies? How does the visual function as evidence of the markings of race? We will approach the subject by examining racialized bodies in photography, and the ways the medium deals with race as subject matter in the public sphere. We will explore a variety of photographic practices and uses, including family photographs; advertisements; "scientific" daguerreotypes of African American slaves in the nineteenth-century; 1940s government photography projects; 1960s photojournalism and documentary work of photographers like Charles Moore and Gordon Parks; activist photography of such groups as the Black Panthers and the Black Lives Matter; and artworks by contemporary photographers, such as Lorna Simpson, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Coco Fusco. The course is organized thematically around a series of case studies and their socio-historical contexts, including but not limited to slavery, abolition, and the Civil Rights movement.

[From Slavery to Freedom? Modern African-American History](#)

Dr. Yael Sternhell

The class will survey African-American history from emancipation to the late twentieth century. We will learn about black society, culture, politics, and gender as particular phenomena while also as integral parts of American history. We will read the writings of African-American intellectual and political leaders like Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, James Baldwin, and Martin Luther King, along with works by major historians.

[African Perspectives on the Holocaust](#)

Dr. Irit Beck

The course will discuss the development of various African views on the Holocaust. It aims to analyze the various discourses, reflections and images about Holocaust-related issues in relation to different national struggles within the continent at the second half of the Twentieth Century. It will focus in cases from Nigeria-Biafra, Rwanda, Sudan and South Sudan and South Africa.

[The Philosophical Structure of Genocide](#)

Dr. Haim Deuel Lusky

In our attempt to understand the phenomenon of genocide (in its basic definition - racial genocide in which other people are murdered because of their national, ethnic, racial or religious), we wish to relate to both aspects of the phenomenon: we will discuss the history of twentieth century that enabled the new phenomenon of genocide that characterizes the modern era. Since genocide crosses the political borders, and it produces its own map, we seek to build comparative discussions of the political, economic, and social conditions that stood behind the events.

We will learn about the Armenian genocide, about the genocide committed in Nazi Germany and in Soviet Russia, in Cambodia and in the American Indians, as in Gypsies and in the victims of the body and soul in Europe of World War II, the Rwanda. We will ask questions about proportionality and quantity: When does the deliberate murder of a population turn into "genocide"? What is the space for maneuvering and flexibility of the concept, what it contains and what it does not contain, and where and how the divisions and definitions are carried out, and mainly - whom do they serve?

[Warsaw and Its Jews During the Holocaust: A Window to Individual and Social Life](#)

Prof. Havi Dreifuss

In Warsaw, the capital of Poland, Nazi Germany established the largest ghetto during the Holocaust. This ghetto, and the Jewish population concentrated in it, is characterized by a multiplicity and varied sources, which allows us to discuss numerous fundamental issues in Holocaust Studies as well as in human history. During the course we will examine selected aspects of public and private life throughout the war years (1939-1945), including: daily life, Jewish understandings and its limitations, Jewish existence under extreme conditions, and more.

[The Holocaust History](#)

Prof. Havi Dreifuss

The Holocaust History course will be based on the online course on Coursera's Massive Open Online Course as well as on six classroom sessions. During the course of the semester, we will discuss the various aspects of the Holocaust, including: the development of the anti-Jewish policy of Nazi Germany, the Jews of Germany and their surroundings in the 1930s, various European societies and their attitude toward Jews, the development of the Final Solution and Jewish and non-Jewish reactions to the murder of the Jews of Europe.

[Polish and Jewish Relations During the Holocaust](#)

Prof. Havi Dreifuss

Polish-Jewish relations have been at the focus of research since the end of the war and even more so in recent years. In this course we will deal with various aspects of these complex relations, while examining the various connections that were created before and during the war. On the basis of a variety of sources, we will examine different issues, including: the place of Polish Jewry in the Polish society and its institutions, "Unequal Victims", between rescue and extradition, memory and commemoration. In this framework, we will also discuss similar and different relations created during the Holocaust between Jews and their surroundings throughout Europe. In addition, during the course we will focus on the basics of academic writing and strive to improve the skills of critical reading and analysis of sources.

[Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought: Before and after the Holocaust](#)

Prof. Ron Margolin

The Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel are two dramatic events that occurred in the mid-20th century and completely changed the situation of the Jewish people and the existential condition of the Jews. This part of the Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought will be devoted to the work of thinkers who dealt with the philosophical and theological significances of these events and with the necessity to re-examine fundamental issues of Jewish existence during this period.

The course will be devoted to Jewish thinkers in the 20th century and to the exploring the conceptual responses to the Holocaust and contemporary issues such as: the purpose of the State of Israel, the future of Jewish existence in the Diaspora, the concept of Judaism as a culture, Jewish feminism and aspirations for the renewal of Jewish life. Among the thinkers that will be discussed in the course are: Emmanuel Levinas, Mordechai Kaplan, Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, Yosef Schechter, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Rabbi Soloveitchik, David Hartman, Hans Jonas, Eliezer Berkowitz, Haim Cohen, Cynthia Ozik, Albert Memmi, Yeshayahu Leibowitz and others.