

HISTORY 224 / JEWISH STUDIES 231

The Holocaust

Spring 2018

Prof. Amos Bitzan

MWF 1:20-2:10 PM in Humanities 1651

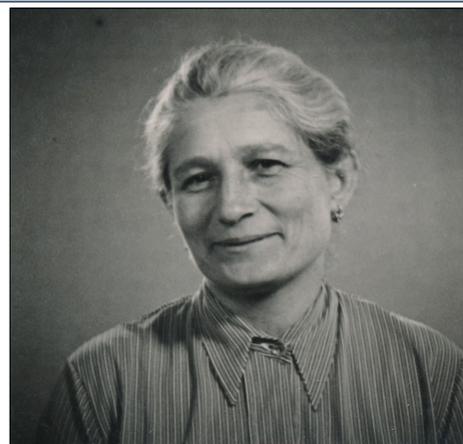
References to the Holocaust abound in contemporary political debates and in our popular culture. But most people know very little about the history of the Holocaust, despite the mountains of superb historical scholarship that experts in the field have produced over decades of dedicated research.

Through concentrated reading, analysis of major issues, and explaining your insights in writing, this course will help you build in-depth knowledge of the Nazi genocide of European Jewry during WWII. You will learn how and why the Nazis and their collaborators were able to carry out a program of persecution and ultimately extermination against the Jewish communities of Europe, leading to the murder of an estimated 6 million Jews. After taking this course, you will know the events, processes, ideas, organizations, and

individuals behind these crimes. You will also gain an understanding of the everyday experiences of victims of the Holocaust in order to appreciate the options for survival (often limited) available to them.

To learn about the confrontations with the Holocaust of ordinary people, you will read and research using a collection of postcards sent from Nazi-occupied Poland to Racine, Wisconsin from 1940-1941. The letter-writer was Sara Spira, the grandmother of a Wisconsin alum, Michael Stern '65, who has generously shared her postcards with us.

Together, we will use the postcards and our study of the larger events around her to reconstruct the experience of one person swept up in the Holocaust. We will supplement these readings with other primary sources, including another series of postcards.



Sara Spira (1887—?)

Requirements

PAPER 1 1400-2100 words March 9 (Canvas)	20%
PAPER 2 1400-2100 words May 11 (Canvas)	20%
WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE 1000-1700 words April 20 (Wikipedia)	20%
PANEL REPORTS 1 page max Printed copy due in class on indicated days	20%
MINI-RESPONSES 3-5 sentences. Pass/Fail Printed copy due in class on indicated days	10%
PANEL & PARTICIPATION	10%

Assignments in Detail

Paper 1 (20%)

Thesis-driven paper of 1,400-2,100 words due on Friday, March 9 at 9 pm on Canvas.

What overarching explanation does Saul Friedländer present in *Nazi Germany and the Jews* for anti-Jewish persecution under Nazi rule from 1933-1939? In the body of your paper, analyze how Friedländer explains three instances of anti-Jewish persecution to illustrate this overarching explanation.

Paper 2 (20%)

Thesis-driven paper of 1,400-2,100 words due on Friday, May 11 at 9 pm on Canvas.

How and why, according to Saul Friedländer's *The Years of Extermination*, did the Holocaust take place? In the body of your paper, be sure to analyze how Friedländer explains the genocidal turn of Nazi anti-Jewish policies and the Nazis' success in implementing the "Final Solution."

Wikipedia Article (20%)

Wikipedia article of 1,000-1,700 words due on Friday, April 20 at 9 pm on Wikipedia.

Write a historical annotation related to the Sara Spira postcards in the form of a Wikipedia article, using at least three high-quality secondary sources. You will be assigned a topic and will receive a link to enroll in the WikiEdu course module.

Eight Panel Reports (20%)

Printed copy due in class on the following Fridays: February 2, 9, 16, 23; March 2, 16, 23; April 13.

Briefly summarize how each panelist answered the question posted in the syllabus for that week. Be sure to distill their remarks down to a focused response to the question; do not simply list everything they said. Then, drawing on your reading of Friedländer, the weekly panel discussion, professor's response to panel, and weekly lecture, formulate your own response. Be sure to explain your reasoning.

Each panel report must fit on one page. You may use diagrams or flow charts.

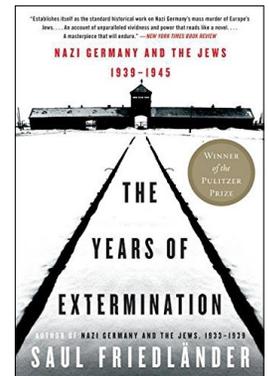
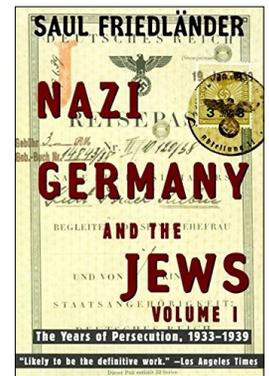
Eight Mini-Responses (10%)

Printed copy due in class on the following Fridays: February 2, 9, 16, 23; March 2, 16, 23; April 13.

In 3-5 sentences, describe one significant historical insight that you gained from the document(s) you read this week. Graded pass/fail.

Panel and Participation (10%)

Every week, we will discuss the weekly question (posted in the syllabus) as a class, led by 4 or 5 students chosen as panelists. To prepare for the panel discussion, you should read the selection from Saul Friedländer's *Nazi Germany and the Jews* or *The Years of Extermination* critically to see how he answers this question and whether his argument makes sense. Each panelist will offer a response and the rest of the class will then have the opportunity to ask further questions or offer other interpretations. Take notes on the arguments presented by the panelists and ask for clarification if necessary, so that you can produce a high-quality panel report.



<p>Week 1</p> <p>W 1/24 F 1/26</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Course Overview: Studying the History of the Holocaust The Sara Spira Correspondence: An Introduction</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>M 1/29 W 1/31 F 2/2</p>	<p>The Nazis' Rise to Power (1918-1933)</p> <p>Panel. <i>Nazi Germany and the Jews</i>: Chapter 3, pp. 73-112. Lecture. How did the Nazis come to power? Sara Spira, Documents 1-3 (Canvas). PANEL REPORT & MINI RESPONSE 1</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>M 2/5 W 2/7 F 2/9</p>	<p>The Nazis' First Steps in Power (1933)</p> <p>Panel. <i>Nazi Germany and the Jews</i>: Chapter 1-2, pp. 9-72. Lecture. What were the Nazis' first steps in power and why? Sara Spira, Documents 4-6 (Canvas). PANEL REPORT & MINI RESPONSE 2</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p>M 2/12 W 2/14 F 2/16</p>	<p>Exclusion Enshrined in Law (1933-1935)</p> <p>Panel. <i>Nazi Germany and the Jews</i>: Chapter 4-5, pp. 113-173. Lecture. What forces drove the anti-Jewish policies of 1933-35? Sara Spira, Documents 7-10 (Canvas). PANEL REPORT & MINI RESPONSE 3</p>
<p>Week 5</p> <p>M 2/19 W 2/21 F 2/23</p>	<p>Radicalization in Peacetime (1935-1938)</p> <p>Panel. <i>Nazi Germany and the Jews</i>: Chapter 6-7, pp. 177-240. Lecture. How and why did Nazi policies radicalize from 1935-1938? Michael Stern. Family Story (Canvas). PANEL REPORT & MINI RESPONSE 4</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>M 2/26 W 2/28 F 3/2</p>	<p>Expropriation & Emigration (1938-1939)</p> <p>Panel. <i>Nazi Germany and the Jews</i>: Chapter 8-10, pp. 241-333. Lecture. Were anti-Jewish policies driven from the top or grassroots? Sara Spira, Documents 11-14 (Canvas). PANEL REPORT & MINI RESPONSE 5</p>
<p>Week 7</p> <p>M 3/5 W 3/7 F 3/9</p>	<p>Racial Policy and Terror (1939-1940)</p> <p>Panel. <i>The Years of Extermination</i>: Chapter 1, pp. 3-64. Lecture. What did Heydrich mean by "end goal" in his 1939 order? "Gorlice," USHMM Encyclopedia of Camps & Ghettos (Canvas). PAPER 1</p>

<p>Week 8</p> <p>M 3/12 W 3/14 F 3/16</p>	<p>Expulsion as "Final Solution" (1940)</p> <p>Panel. <i>The Years of Extermination</i>: Chapter 2, pp. 65-128.</p> <p>Lecture. How were Oct 22 expulsions representative of Nazi policy?</p> <p>Goldin Letters, Documents 1-4 (Canvas). PANEL REPORT & MINI RESPONSE 6</p>
<p>Week 9</p> <p>M 3/19 W 3/21 F 3/23</p>	<p>The Ghettos (1940-1941)</p> <p>Panel. <i>The Years of Extermination</i>: Chapter 3, pp. 129-194.</p> <p>Lecture. Were ghettos and expulsions preparation for genocide?</p> <p>Goldin Letters, Documents 5-8 (Canvas). PANEL REPORT & MINI RESPONSE 7</p>
<p>Week 10</p>	<p>Spring Break</p>
<p>Week 11</p> <p>M 4/2 W 4/4 F 4/6</p>	<p>Invasion of Soviet Union (1941)</p> <p>Panel. <i>The Years of Extermination</i>: Chapter 4, pp. 197-260.</p> <p>Lecture: If no final solution Aug '41, why mass murder of Jews?</p> <p>NO CLASS</p>
<p>Week 12</p> <p>M 4/9 W 4/11 F 4/13</p>	<p>Mass Killing on the Eastern Front (1941)</p> <p>Panel. <i>The Years of Extermination</i>: Chapter 5, pp. 261-328.</p> <p>Lecture: How did mass murder of Jews in East become policy?</p> <p>Wisconsin Survivors Oral History. PANEL REPORT & MINI RESPONSE 8</p>
<p>Week 13</p> <p>M 4/16 W 4/18 F 4/20</p>	<p>The Final Solution Formulated (1941-1942)</p> <p>Panel. <i>The Years of Extermination</i>: Chapter 6, pp. 329-395.</p> <p>Lecture: What vectors shaped the formulation of the "Final Solution"?</p> <p>USHMM Oral History Interview with Mark Stern (Canvas). WIKIPEDIA</p>
<p>Week 14</p> <p>M 4/23 W 4/25 F 4/26</p>	<p>The Extermination Camps (1942-1943)</p> <p>Holocaust Postal History Presentation.</p> <p>Lecture: What drove implementation of systematized mass murder?</p> <p>Panel. <i>The Years of Extermination</i>: Chapter 7-8, pp. 399-538.</p>
<p>Week 15</p> <p>M 4/30 W 5/2 F 5/4</p>	<p>Relentless Destruction (1944-1945)</p> <p>Leon Broder Documents (Canvas). PAPER 2 DUE FRIDAY, MAY 11</p> <p>Lecture: 1) Role of the Churches? 2) Why did Germans follow Hitler?</p> <p>Panel. <i>The Years of Extermination</i>: Chapter 9-10, pp. 539-663.</p>

Required Books and Reading

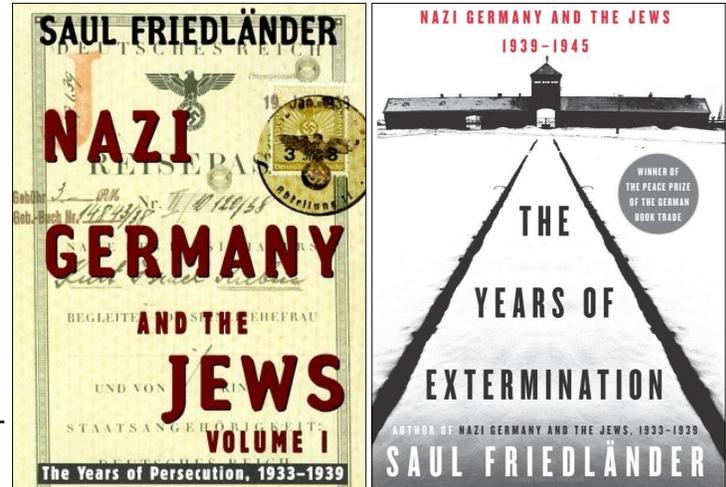
Please purchase the following two required books:

- Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, Vol. 1: *The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939* (Harper Perennial, 1998). <http://a.co/14q91U7>.
- Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination* (Harper Perennial 2008). <http://a.co/gdsPXnm>.

Hardcover or paperback are fine. I encourage you to buy an inexpensive used edition. Do NOT purchase the abridged edition.

Other readings will be available on Canvas.

Complete all readings in advance of the session for which they are listed. For example, readings from Friedländer should be done before Monday's panel discussion class.



Learning Objectives

After rigorous participation in this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain key events and causes of the Holocaust
2. Extract a scholar's historical interpretation about the causes of an event from a historical narrative
3. Analyze a historian's use of evidence
4. Research and write an accurate, documented historical annotation about a primary source
5. Orally present complex insights gained from reading, writing, and thinking about historical events

Credit Hours and Workload

This class meets for three 50-minute class periods each week over the spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, researching, and writing) for about 2 hours out of classroom for every class period. The syllabus includes additional information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Late Policy

Please contact me in advance if you believe that you might need an extension for an assignment. Unless you have previously arranged an extension with me, grades for late submissions will be lowered by one grade category for each day they are late.

I will usually not accept late submissions of the panel reports and mini-responses, which must be handed in as printed copies in class.

Laptops

Not allowed in class.

Office Hours and Contact Information

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3-4 PM in 4134 Humanities

Email: abitzan@wisc.edu

Phone: 608-263-1812

Mailbox: 4012 Humanities

Grading Scheme	
A	≥93%
AB	87-92%
B	80-86%
BC	75-79%
C	70-74%
D	60-69%
F	≤59

Goals of the History Major

The goal of the history major is to offer students the knowledge and skills they need to gain a critical perspective on the past. Students will learn to define important historical questions, analyze relevant evidence with rigor and creativity, and present convincing arguments and conclusions based on original research in a manner that contributes to academic and public discussions. In History, as in other humanistic disciplines, students will practice resourceful inquiry and careful reading. They will advance their writing and public speaking skills to engage historical and contemporary issues.

To ensure that students gain exposure to some of the great diversity of topics, methodologies, and philosophical concerns that inform the study of history, the department requires a combination of courses that offers breadth, depth, and variety of exposition. Through those courses, students should develop:

1. Broad acquaintance with several geographic areas of the world and with both the pre-modern and modern eras.
2. Familiarity with the range of sources and modes through which historical information can be found and expressed. Sources may include textual, oral, physical, and visual materials. The data within them may be qualitative or quantitative, and they may be available in printed, digital, or other formats. Modes of expression may include textbooks, monographs, scholarly articles, essays, literary works, or digital presentations.
3. In-depth understanding of a topic of their choice through original or creative research.
4. The ability to identify the skills developed in the history major and to articulate the applicability of those skills to a variety of endeavors and career paths beyond the professional practice of history.

Skills Developed in the History Major

DEFINE IMPORTANT HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

1. Pose a historical question and explain its academic and public implications.
2. Using appropriate research procedures and aids, find the secondary resources in history and other disciplines available to answer a historical question.
3. Evaluate the evidentiary and theoretical bases of pertinent historical conversations in order to highlight opportunities for further investigation.

COLLECT AND ANALYZE EVIDENCE

1. Identify the range and limitations of primary sources available to engage the historical problem under investigation.
2. Examine the context in which sources were created, search for chronological and other relationships among them, and assess the sources in light of that knowledge.
3. Employ and, if necessary, modify appropriate theoretical frameworks to examine sources and develop arguments.

PRESENT ORIGINAL CONCLUSIONS

1. Present original and coherent findings through clearly written, persuasive arguments and narratives.
2. Orally convey persuasive arguments, whether in formal presentations or informal discussions.
3. Use appropriate presentation formats and platforms to share information with academic and public audiences.

CONTRIBUTE TO ONGOING DISCUSSIONS

1. Extend insights from research to analysis of other historical problems.
2. Demonstrate the relevance of a historical perspective to contemporary issues.
3. Recognize, challenge, and avoid false analogies, overgeneralizations, anachronisms, and other logical fallacies.