

The Holocaust: History, Memory, Narrative

HIST 419/619
Fall 2021
T/F, 12:55pm-2:10pm
Battelle-Tompkins 148

Dr. Kathryn Huether
155 Battelle-Tompkins Hall
huether@american.edu
Office Hours: T/F by appointment

“An die Nachgeborenen” (To Those Born After) by Bertolt Brecht

I. To the cities I came in a time of disorder
That was ruled by hunger.
I sheltered with the people in a time of uproar
And then I joined in their rebellion.
That's how I passed my time that was given to me on
this Earth.

I ate my dinners between the battles,
I lay down to sleep among the murderers,
I didn't care for much for love
And for nature's beauties I had little patience.
That's how I passed my time that was given to me on
this Earth.

The city streets all led to foul swamps in my time,
My speech betrayed me to the butchers.
I could do only little
But without me those that ruled could not sleep so
easily:
That's what I hoped.
That's how I passed my time that was given to me on
this Earth.

Our forces were slight and small,
Our goal lay in the far distance
Clearly in our sights,
If for me myself beyond my reaching.
That's how I passed my time that was given to me on
this Earth.

II. You who will come to the surface
From the flood that's overwhelmed us and drowned us all
Must think, when you speak of our weakness in times of
darkness
That you've not had to face:

Days when we were used to changing countries
More often than shoes,
Through the war of the classes despairing
That there was only injustice and no outrage.

Even so we realized
Hatred of oppression still distorts the features,
Anger at injustice still makes voices raised and ugly.
Oh we, who wished to lay for the foundations for peace
and friendliness,
Could never be friendly ourselves.

And in the future when no longer
Do human beings still treat themselves as animals,
Look back on us with indulgence.

Course Description

The annihilation of six million Jews in the Holocaust continues, more than seventy years later, to challenge our understanding. What were the circumstances and conditions that were cultivated by Nazi Germany's policies and ideologies, and how did these lead to the Final Solution? Who, aside from the executioners, shares culpability for the genocide? What kind of legacy did the Holocaust bequeath to the world? How were attempts at representing and understanding the Holocaust challenged and received? There are just a few of the questions we will grapple with this semester.

Seventy-five years after the end of the Second World War, the Holocaust continues to play a formative role in public discourse about the past not only in Germany and Austria, but in the U.S. as well. As the event itself recedes into the past, our knowledge about the Holocaust has become increasingly shaped by literary and filmic representations of it. This course has several objectives: first, to deepen students' historical knowledge of the events and experiences of the Holocaust, and at the same time to introduce critical models for examining the relationship between personal experience, historical events, and forms of representation. This class will introduce students to the debates about the politics of memory and the artistic representation of the Holocaust, with special focus on public debates about the complex ways in which Holocaust memory surfaces in contemporary Germany, Austria, and the U.S., and by the accrual of layers of text and discourse about the Holocaust. We will explore the controversies and debates about public Holocaust memorialization in Germany, Austria, and the U.S. We will also explore the complex interplay between documentary and fictional accounts of the Holocaust, with attention paid to literature and films that challenge and "remediate" the limits of Holocaust representation.

Learning Objectives

HIST 419 engages three of American University's History undergraduate program learning objectives:

1. **Historical Literacy:** Students will demonstrate that they have gained an understanding of the scope, breadth, and richness of historical studies.
2. **Critical Thinking:** Students will learn to apply historical methods to evaluate critically the record of the past and how historians and others have interpreted it.
3. **Communication Skills:** Students will learn to organize and express their thoughts clearly and coherently in writing and in class discussions.

HIST 619 meets two of American University's History graduate learning objectives program:

1. *Students will be able to explain and critique the historical schools of thought that have shaped scholarly understanding of their field of study.*
2. *Students will be able to deploy skills of critical analysis, including formulating persuasive arguments, evaluating evidence and critiquing claims in the literature, and interpreting a variety of primary sources.*

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation	15%
▪ 2 Reading Introduction (5% each)	
▪ General Class Engagement (5%)	
Eight Reading Response Papers	20%
Paper One	20%
Paper Two	20%
Paper Three	25%

Grades will not be consistently updated on Canvas. Please keep your own records or reach out to Dr. Huether via email.

Expectations for Course Participation

- *Reading Introductions:* Students are required to introduce two reading assignments over the course of the semester. Students will sign up for their chosen days the first week of class. These introductions are informal but require the students to demonstrate basic background knowledge and relevant context of the primary or secondary sources.
- *NO Screens:* Any technology aside from what is directly required for our daily meetings is not allowed. Please keep all phones and laptops stored during the course. Note taking by hand is strongly encouraged; however, special accommodations will be considered on a case-to-case basis.
- *Cell Phone Policy:* If a student is seen interacting with their phone during class, they will be asked to put it away. If the student is seen interacting again in the same period, they will be politely asked to excuse themselves from that day's meeting. Your colleagues deserve your full attention and respect, which is not possible when engaging on personal technology.

Attendance

This course covers an extensive amount of subject matter. You cannot succeed without regular attendance and a commitment to finish the assigned readings. Our class meetings are primarily discussion of the readings, thus, your absence 1) takes away your personal contribution and 2) limits your engagement and learning trajectory. Meetings will start on time, therefore, please join us on time. Frequent tardiness will impact your attendance grade.

There are two forms of absences:

- 1) **Excused Absences:** American University's Undergraduate Regulations state, "Excused absences include major religious holidays (<https://www.american.edu/ocl/kay/major-religious-holy-days.cfm>), medical or mental health events, approved disability-accommodation-related absences, and approved varsity athletic team events."

*Students **must** notify Dr. Huether via email at least **48** hours in advance for an absence to be counted as excused. The email is essential for record-keeping.*

- 2) **Unexcused Absences:** Students are allowed to miss two class meetings “no questions asked.” Any absences beyond these two, or any documented excused absences, will reflect in a student’s grade. Please note that **six or more** absences are considered excessive absences that may result in, as AU’s Undergraduate Academic Regulations stipulates, “withdrawal, medical leave, or course failure.”

Reading Response Papers

Students are required to submit eight reading response papers over the course of the semester. These papers may be on the week of the students’ choosing but must place at least two of their selected week’s readings in conversation. Responses should be between 300-500 words, present a clear and concise discussion of the key points, and conclude with some questions for class discussion and further review. Reading responses **must** be submitted to Dr. Huether at the beginning of the selected class period that the readings correspond to.

Paper Assignments—HIST 419, Undergraduates

***Papers one and two are due in hard copy format and stapled at the start of class. ***

- Paper One due **October 8**
- Paper Two due **November 12**
- Paper Three due **December 15 by 11 am EST** (via email submission to Dr. Huether)

Paper Assignments—HIST 619, Graduate

Graduate students are expected to consult with Dr. Huether individual at the start of the semester to determine additional coursework and/or substitutions that will best serve your area of study.

Graduate students are required to write a 15–20-page original research paper over the course of the semester. Instead of the three different papers required at the undergraduate level, the three deadlines will enable graduate students to plan and thoroughly research their submission.

- Research Proposal and an annotated bibliography due **October 8**
- At least a full introduction and five pages of the paper should be submitted on **November 12**. Dr. Huether will provide feedback on this submission, so the more written, the better.
- The final 15–20-page paper (the page limit excludes the bibliography, should be 12-point font with footnotes and Times New Roman) is due via email to Dr. Huether in word form by **11:00 am on December 15**.

Late Work Policy

Submission and acceptance of late work raises questions of fairness because if late papers are accepted without penalty, those students have extra time to complete the assignment. Consequently, late submissions will be penalized. For each day that the paper is late, the final grade of that paper will drop one-third of a letter grade, e.g., from an A to an A-. Penalties begin when papers are due.

Exceptions to the late paper policy will be made at Dr. Huether's discretion to students presenting valid excuses related to health, family, or professional responsibilities. Unless there is a last-minute emergency it is expected for students who are confronted with time submission issues to consult with Dr. Huether prior to the due date so that an alternative solution may be found.

Required Texts

(All of the required reading is available through the AU Bookstore or on a platform of the students' choosing)

- Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), Third Edition
- Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (and edition)
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
- Art Spiegelman, *Maus*

Please purchase the texts if you are able. All books are available via Course Reserves in the Library for two-hour checkout. You will need these books for your papers and reading responses, thus purchasing the books is the best option.

Week 1		Introduction, Terms, and Origins
August 31	Overview of Syllabus	
September 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doris Bergen, <i>War and Genocide</i>, Intro (pp. 1- 12) ▪ Jacob Katz, “Anti-Semitism Through the Ages,” in <i>The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretations</i> (3rd ed.), ed. Donald L. Niewyk (pp.12-23), on Canvas 	
Week 2		The Long History of Antisemitism
September 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doris Bergen, <i>War and Genocide</i>, Ch. 1(pp. 13-44) ▪ Martin Luther, “The Jews and Their Lies,” (1543) On Canvas ▪ St. John Chrysostom, “Homily 1,” <i>Eight Homilies Against the Jews</i> (c. 347-348 CE), on Canvas 	
September 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helmut Walser Smith, <i>The Butcher’s Tale</i>, Prologue (pp. 16-23) on Canvas ▪ Richard Wagner, <i>Das Judentum in der Musik</i> (Jewishness in Music) (1850), on Canvas ▪ Heinrich von Treitschke, “The Jews are our Misfortune” (1879), on Canvas 	
Week 3		The Weimar Republic and the Origins and Damages of World War I
September 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Robert S. Wistrich, “From Weimar to Hitler,” in <i>The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation</i>, on Canvas ▪ Michael Brenner, “A CNN Host Apologized for Comparing Trump to Nazis: But are there legitimate analogies?.” on Canvas 	
September 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doris Bergen, <i>War and Genocide</i>, Ch. 2 (pp. 45-68) ▪ Ernst Hiemer, <i>The Poisonous Mushroom</i> (1938), access on the Jewish Virtual Library, on Canvas ▪ Adolf Hitler, “Nation and Race,” on Canvas ▪ <i>Nuremberg Law for the Protection of the German Blood and of the German Honor of 15 September 1935</i>, on Canvas 	
Week 4		Germany and the Racial State
September 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doris Bergen, <i>War and Genocide</i>, Ch. 3 (pp. 69-100) ▪ Adolf Hitler, “The Discovery of Antisemitism in Vienna,” <i>Mein Kampf</i> (1925) ▪ Nuremberg Laws on Reich Citizenship (1935), on Canvas ▪ Regulation for the Elimination of the Jews from Economic Life of Germany (November 12, 1938), on Canvas 	
September 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marion Kaplan, <i>Between Dignity and Despair</i> (pp. 1-150), on Canvas 	
Week 5		The Ghettos
September 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laurence Powell, <i>Troubled Memory</i>, chs. 3 & 4, on Canvas 	

October 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doris Bergen, <i>War and Genocide</i>, Chs. 5 and 6 (pp. 129-206) ▪ Yitzhak Arad, <i>Ghetto in Flames: The Struggle and Destruction of the Jews in Vilna in the Holocaust</i>, pp. 20-23, 27-38, 461-470, on Canvas ▪ <i>The Trial of Adolf Eichmann: Record of Proceedings in the District Court of Jerusalem</i>, vol. 1, pp. 447-466, on Canvas
Week 6	Occupied Europe and the Final Solution
October 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doris Bergen, <i>War and Genocide</i>, Ch. 7 (pp. 207-274) ▪ “The Wannsee Protocol,” <i>Minutes from the Wannsee Conference, January 20, 1942</i>, on Canvas
October 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doris Bergen, <i>War and Genocide</i>, Ch. 8 (pp.) ▪ Berel Lang, “Intentions and the “Final Solution,” on Canvas <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Paper One Due</i></p>
Week 7	Perpetrators
October 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Ordinary Men</i>—All
October 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Class—Fall Break
PART II	
Week 8	Documentation and Remediation
October 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doris Bergen, <i>War and Genocide</i>, Ch. 9 & Conclusion (pp. 275-310) ▪ Theodor Adorno, “What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?” on Canvas ▪ Paul Celan, “Death Fugue” (Both Translations) on Canvas
October 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sylvie Lindeperg, “Eisler’s Neverending Chant,” on Canvas ▪ Abby Anderton, “The Sound of Atrocity Propaganda: Listening to the Concentration Camp in Allied Cultural Memory,” on Canvas <p style="text-align: center;">Watch <i>Night and Fog</i> in class</p>
Week 9	
October 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primo Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i> (All) ▪ Michael Rothberg and Jonathan Druker, “A Secular Alternative: Primo Levi’s Place in American Holocaust Discourse”
October 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Naomi Seidman, “Elie Wiesel and the Scandal of Jewish Rage” on Canvas ▪ Elie Wiesel, “Without Conscience” on Canvas ▪ Elie Wiesel and Michael de Saint Cheron, “Evil and Love” on Canvas
Week 10	Memorial Museums
November 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History,” on Canvas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen to a USHMM First Person testimony program or interact/research online USC’s “New Dimensions in Testimony” Program <p style="text-align: center;"><i>150-word paper three proposal due</i></p>
Week 13	Postmemory Narrative
November 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stephen Frosh, “Postmemory” on Canvas ▪ Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i> (All)
November 26	<i>No Class—Thanksgiving Break</i>
Week 14	Memory and Postmemory: Art and Musical Remembrance
November 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elie Wiesel, “Does the Holocaust Lie Beyond the Reach of Art?” on Canvas <p><i>Art:</i> Marian Kołodziej—Prisoner NO. 432, “The Labyrinth”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Watch—Marian Kołodziej No. 432, Auschwitz Survivor ▪ Read and interact with the “Labyrinth” website, documentary preview, and art gallery ▪ Josh Dawson, “Staging Literature: Using Words to Draw the Traumatic Past” on Canvas
December 3	<p><i>Music:</i> Steve Reich’s “Different Trains”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Listen to—“Different Trains” ▪ Naomi Cumming, “The Horrors of Identification: Reich’s “Different Trains” on Canvas ▪ Stephen Frosh, “Different Trains: An Essay in Memorializing” on Canvas ▪ Amy Wlodarski, “The Composer as Witness: Steve Reich’s Different Trains” on Canvas
Week 15	Popular Culture and the Holocaust
December 7	Alvin Rosenfeld, <i>Hi Hitler! How the Nazi Past is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture</i> , Selections TBD
December 10	<i>Media Viewing and Discussion in Class</i>
December 15	<i>Paper Three Due</i>

University Policies and Resources

Academic Integrity Code:

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the university's Academic Integrity Code: <https://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/>. By registering for this course, students have acknowledged their awareness of the Academic Integrity Code and they are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should violations occur. This includes cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to requirements for this course.

Students who have problems with academic misconduct often cite stress, putting off projects, illness, or being overwhelmed with multiple assignments all due at the same time. If you cannot submit your assignments on time, notify me ASAP and we can work out alternative due dates in accordance with the late work policy.

Defining and Reporting Discrimination and Harassment:

American University expressly prohibits any form of discrimination and discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. AU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information, or any other bases under federal or local laws in its programs and activities.

As a faculty member, I am required to report discriminatory or harassing conduct to the university if I witness it or become aware of it – regardless of the location of the incident. There are four confidential resource on campus if you wish to speak to someone who is not required to report: Counseling Center, victim advocates in OASIS, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center. If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with [University Police](#) (202-885-2527), the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) (dos@american.edu or 202-885-3300), or the [Title IX Office](#) (202-885-3373 or TitleIX@american.edu). For more information, including a list of supportive resources on and off-campus, contact [OASIS](#) (oasis@american.edu or 202-885-7070) or check out the [Support Guide on the Title IX webpage](#).

Emergency Preparedness:

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the University be required to close

for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or the use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU email and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any emergency-related absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU email regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the AU website, and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college specific information.

Student Code of Conduct:

The central commitment of American University is the development of thoughtful, responsible human beings in the context of a challenging yet supportive academic community. The Student Code of Conduct is designed to benefit the American University community and to assist in forming the highest standards of ethics and morals among its members. By registering for this course, students have acknowledged their awareness of the Student Code of Conduct and they are obliged to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. View the Code here: <https://www.american.edu/ocl/scrs/>

Religious Observances:

Students will be provided the 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. Please send this notification through email to the professor. For additional information, see American University's religious observances policy: <https://www.american.edu/ocl/kay/major-religious-holy-days.cfm>

Academic Support Services:

Academic Success Coaching is a free one-on-one meeting between a student and a professional academic coach to build or enhance time management, organizational, reading, notetaking, test taking and study skills. Students can work with an academic coach to develop an academic action plan, better understand how to break down large assignments, and discuss overcoming procrastination. Coaching services are open to all students. Schedule appointments on the Academic Coaching You Can Book Me registration page for Zoom sessions (<https://auacademiccoaching.youcanbook.me>) or email academiccoaching@american.edu.

International Student & Scholar Services has resources to support academic success and participation in campus life including academic counseling, support for second language learners, response to questions about visas, immigration status and employment and intercultural

programs, clubs and other campus resources. Call 202-885-3350, or visit: <https://www.american.edu/ocl/iss/>

The *Writing Center* offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. There are online sessions. Schedule tutoring appointments on WC Online or call 202-885-2991. For more information visit: <https://www.american.edu/provost/academic-access/writing-center.cfm>

Student Support Services:

The *Center for Diversity and Inclusion* is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, multicultural, first-generation, and women's experiences on campus and to advancing AU's commitment to respecting and valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy. It is located on the 2nd floor of Mary Graydon Center (202-885-3651, MGC 201 & 202). Email cdi@american.edu or visit: <https://www.american.edu/ocl/cdi/>

The *Counseling Center* offers a variety of psychological services, online resources, and referrals to off-campus mental health care. Please visit the Center's website for more information: www.american.edu/counseling

The *Office of the Dean of Students* offers individual meetings to discuss issues that impact the student experience including academic, social, and personal matters. Staff work with students and make referrals to appropriate campus resources for resolution. Call 202-885-3300 or visit: www.american.edu/dos.

Food and Housing Insecurity: Students facing challenges securing food or housing should be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students (www.american.edu/dos or 202-885-3300) for support and referral to resources.

The *Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence*, which is housed within the Health Promotion & Advocacy Center (HPAC), provides free and confidential advocacy services for students who have experienced sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, sexual harassment, and/or stalking. These services are available during office hours, Monday through Friday to all students and to friends and family members of survivors. To schedule an appointment with one of the two confidential victim advocates, book via <http://auhpac.youcanbook.me>. The advocates are also available via email (oasis@american.edu) or by phone (202-885-7070). HPAC/OASIS is located in Hughes Hall, Suite 105.

Students with Disabilities:

If you wish to receive accommodations for a disability, please notify me with a memo from the Academic Support and Access Center. To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at 202-885-3360 or asac@american.edu. For more information, visit AU's Disability Accommodations web page: <https://www.american.edu/provost/academic-access/documentation-and-eligibility.cfm>

Respect for Diversity:

As stated in the American University Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy:

“American University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy or parenting, age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under applicable federal and local laws and regulations (collectively “Protected Bases”) in its programs and activities. The University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation and stalking.”

The website <https://www.american.edu/policies/au-community/upload/discrimination-and-sexual-harassment-policy-09-05-19-final.pdf> includes further details, including how to report instances of discrimination and your responsibilities as a member of the campus community in relation to the policy; you are strongly encouraged to familiarize yourself further with this policy.

Class rosters and University data systems are provided to faculty with the student's legal name and legal gender marker. As a student, you are able to change how your name shows up through email and on your AU ID Card. This option is helpful for various student populations, including but not limited to: students who abbreviate their first name; students who use their middle name; international students; and transgender students.

As a faculty member, I am committed to using your name and pronouns. We will take time during our first class together to do introductions, at which point you can share with all members of our learning community what name and pronouns you use, as you are comfortable. Additionally, if these change at any point during the semester, please let me know and we can develop a plan to share this information with others in a way that is safe for you. Should you want to update your name, you can do so by looking at the guidelines and frequently asked questions from the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.