

The Holocaust and Human Rights in Central and Eastern Europe

Dr. Jacob Ari Labendz
jlabendz@ysu.edu / (330) 941-1603
Office: 532 DeBartolo Hall

HIST 4850A / CRN 34153
Summer Session 1, 2019

This for-credit, faculty-led, traveling seminar will take you to the Czech Republic, Poland, and Germany. You will learn the history of the Holocaust and of Jewish life in the region, through visits to sites of memorialization and museums, lectures, and meetings with locals, scholars, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). You will also witness European Jewish life today and discuss the persistence of antisemitism and measures to confront it.

We will use these themes and methods to explore other contemporary issues in human rights and nationality politics. This will include a focus on the history, persecution and integration of Roma, as well as immigrant communities from Turkey, the Middle East, and North Africa. We will learn about antisemitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Roma bias, analyze what they have to do with one another, and how Europeans are working to combat them today. Students interested in memory studies and the politics of memory are encouraged to apply, as we will study how the memory of the Holocaust continues to inform contemporary affairs in Europe and beyond.

This is a hybrid class, combining a traveling seminar with an online course. Dr. Labendz will be available to consult with students remotely or during scheduled “online” office hours.

Learning Outcomes

- Learn about and grow interested in Jewish and Holocaust studies. Appreciate the relevance of Jewish studies and its potential to shed light on a wide range of topics.
- Experience and understand contemporary Jewish life in Europe and study the resurgent threat of antisemitism, through meetings with scholars, NGOs, and locals.
- Become familiar with the history and experiences of Roma, before, during, and after the *Porajmos* (“the devouring,” the Romani Holocaust). Students will learn to approach the persistence of racism and responses thereto through a comparative historical lens.
- Study the history of immigration and immigrant communities from Turkey, the Middle East, and North Africa, and learn to use the history of the Holocaust, the *Porajmos*, and their aftermaths as a basis for evaluating issues of contemporary politics and culture.
- Sharpen analytical and research skills through praxis combining travel, discussion groups and interviews, lectures, assigned readings, independent research, and writing.

Required Readings

This course will begin with site visits and conclude with deeper study and a research project. At the conclusion of the trip, each student will meet with Dr. Labendz to discuss their interests and research-project theme. Dr. Labendz will provide students with individualized reading packets with which to begin their projects. Students may also consult with him during the trip, if they would like access to scholarly materials.

Attendance

Participation in the travel component of this course is mandatory. Unless excused in advance, students may not miss any meetings or scheduled activities. Students will incur a penalty of 50/1,000 possible course points for each activity missed without being excused.

Students will also be required to attend up to three pre-trip meetings and orientations.

Assignments

Participation: 200 / 1,000 Course Points

The success of this study-trip depends upon your participation. This includes arriving on time to all of our activities and participating actively in our discussions and meetings. Students are encouraged to contribute thoughtfully on a regular and ongoing basis. This can mean asking good questions or offering your thoughts in response to one of my questions or to comments made by a classmate. Remember that we are representing YSU as we travel abroad.

Students will earn 25 participation points by writing a brief thank-you note to our funders at the Thomases Family Endowment and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

Travel Journal: 180 / 1,000 Course Points

Students will keep a journal as we travel through the Czech Republic, Poland, and Germany, with no fewer than 12 entries (and at least two for each country). Detailed instructions will be circulated prior to departure. The journal will help you process what you are learning in real time and will also serve as a guide for you as you prepare your final papers.

Each entry will be graded out of 15 points. If you submit more than 12 entries, I will calculate your grade based upon the best ones.

The journals must be submitted by 11:59 pm on Friday, June 7. PDF scans of legibly handwritten journals are acceptable and can be emailed to me. You may also submit your journals in MS-Word format. You will incur a penalty of 30 course points for each day that the journal is late.

Paper Proposal: 50 / 1,000 Course Points

Each student must meet independently with Dr. Labendz by the last day of the trip to discuss their research project. They will earn up to 40 course points for this meeting in Europe.

A detailed paper proposal is due by 11:59 pm on Wednesday, June 12, 2019. Instructions will be provided in advance of departure. You will incur a penalty of 30 course points for each day that the proposal is late. You are encouraged to submit the paper proposal early, so as to maximize your time for research and writing.

Research Paper: 450 / 1,000 Course Points

You will write a research paper on a topic of your choosing, related to the themes that we cover in Europe (after receiving approval from Dr. Labendz). Readings related to the various themes will be made available to you online. Dr. Labendz will be available to work with you in the weeks after the trip to identify primary and secondary sources for you.

The paper must be six to eight double-spaced pages in length. Detailed instructions will be provided in advance of departure. The paper must be submitted by 11:59 pm on Wednesday, June 26, 2019. You will incur a penalty of 30 course points for each day that the paper is late.

Project Summary Presentation: 120 / 1,000 Course Points

You will write a one-page, double-spaced presentation about one or two of the lessons that you have taken away from this course. It should draw from your journal and research paper. It may be a synopsis of your research and findings, with a conclusion about their broader implications. *Please try to include at least one photograph from the trip*, in either digital or paper format. I will also accept posters or power-point presentations. If you are interested in pursuing these alternative formats, please contact me as early as possible.

The Project Summary Presentation is due along with the research paper at 11:59 pm on Wednesday, June 26, 2019. Late penalties will be associated with the research paper.

Contract Option Available

Honors students may contract this course for honors credit. Notify me of your interest to discuss options, complete required paperwork, and submit it to me by the semester deadline.

Schedule of Assignments and Grade Scale

Assignment	Due Date	Value
Participation	N/A	200 course points / 20% of grade
Travel Journal	June 7 at 11:59 pm	180 course points / 18% of grade
Paper Proposal	June 12 at 11:59 pm	50 course points / 5% of grade
Research Paper	June 26 at 11:59 pm	450 course points / 45% of grade
Project Summary Presentation	June 26 at 11:59 pm	120 course points / 12% of grade

A = 1,000 - 900; B = 899 - 800; C = 799 - 700; D = 699 - 650; F = below 650

Notes on the Course

Students Conduct

Our class explores challenging concepts. Our ability to do so depends upon our commitment to maintaining a civil, engaged, and respectful environment. Disagreements are welcome, but they must be conducted in a manner that will lead to better understanding and facilitate the exchange of ideas. Learning to listen is key. At all times, we must show respect for the people who are hosting us. This includes learning to observe local customs and social norms.

For All Assignments

Most assignments ask you to “play historian,” to engage with the past as an historian would but without the expectation of mastery. History is a discipline, a way of thinking about the world, marked by curiosity, integrity, and, above all else, empathy. We ask questions about the world and human affairs and attempt to answer them by seeking evidence in traces of the past.

Content Warning

This course contains content that may impact students who have experienced corresponding traumas in their lives, families, or cultures. If you suspect that specific material[s] is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, please discuss your concerns with me before the material comes up in class. You will not need to disclose any personal information.

If you feel the need to step outside during an activity or meeting you may do so, provided that it is logistically possible. You will be responsible for any material that you miss.

Mandatory Statement of Non-Discrimination from the University

Youngstown State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age, religion or veteran/military status in its programs or activities. Please visit www.yсу.edu/ada-accessibility for contact information for persons designated to handle questions about this policy.”

Statement for students with disabilities

In accordance with University procedures, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course; please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. You must be registered with the Center for Student Progress Disability Services, located at 36 West Wood Street, and provide a letter of accommodation to coordinate reasonable accommodations. You can reach CSP Disability Services at 330-941-1372 or [here](#).

Academic Integrity

As outlined in [The Student Code of Conduct](#), all forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited at Youngstown State. This includes plagiarism, the unauthorized use of tools or notes in taking tests or completing assignments, fabrication of data or information used for an assignment, working with others without permission from the instructor, and more. A student who is believed to have violated the academic integrity policy will meet with the instructor to discuss the allegations. The student may accept responsibility for the violation and any sanctions selected by the instructor, or they have the right to ask for a hearing before a hearing panel. The full Academic Integrity policy can be found in [Article V](#) of The Student Code of Conduct, while further information on University procedures for alleged academic integrity violations can be found in Article V.

Integrity and honesty are fundamental to the learning process. So too is understanding that knowledge is created within a community of scholars and learners. When presenting ideas that originate with others, it is vital to attribute those ideas and words to them. Passing off the work, ideas, or words of others as your own, whether word-for-word or in paraphrase, is plagiarism. The consequences of plagiarism can be failure of the assignment or the course.

Educational Support

Center for Student Progress ([Click Here](#))

YSU is committed to your academic success. As a student, you have access to these learning support programs at no charge:

What: Academic Coaching, Supplemental Instruction, and Tutoring in a variety of courses

When: By appointment. Mon. thru Thurs. 8:00 am – 6:00 pm, and Fr. 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Where: Kilcawley Center West (near Dunkin Donut entrance)

Email: blvarian@ysu.edu

Writing Center ([Click Here](#))

What: Writing consultations for any discipline, Linguistics tutoring, Basic computer literacy

When: Mon. thru Thurs. 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Fri. 10:00 am – 1:00 pm, and Sun. 4:00 – 7:00 pm (appointments or walk-ins)

Where: Maag Library, Lower Level, room 171

Email: wcenter@ysu.edu

The Penguin Service Center ([Click Here](#))

A One Stop for Campus is an enrollment resource established to help students access and manage their academic record and student accounts. Please visit the Penguin Service Center or call (330) 941-6000 for assistance with financial aid, records access, registration processes, and tuition charges/billing. The office is located on the second floor of Meshel Hall.

Non-Academic Assistance

University Counseling Services ([Click Here](#))

This will assist students with emotional and social adjustment issues. Student Counseling Services provides “high quality, short-term, confidential mental health counseling, consultation, outreach (education training), and referral service to currently enrolled YSU students.” Visit Kilcawley Center, room 2082 or call (330) 941-3737.

Material Aid

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Director of Student Outreach and Support at 330-941-4721 (office), 330-717-2613 (cell) or via email at nkentstrollo@ysu.edu.