

# REPRESENTING THE HOLOCAUST

## Summer 2021

Prof. Rachel Baum

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### Your Teacher



Name: Dr. Rachel Baum  
(she/her/hers)

Wants to be called:  
Rachel, Prof. Baum,  
or Dr. Baum

Phone: 414-229-5156

email: rbaum@uwm.edu

Office Hours: Happy to do Teams, chat, phone call, etc.

Currently Reading: Audiobook mysteries

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### Accommodations

I'm here to help and will do whatever I can to support your success!

Students with an Accommodation Plan from the Student Accessibility Center should discuss their needs or concerns with me early in the semester. (Students who may need extra support but haven't checked in with the SAC are encouraged to do so!).

Students will be called by whatever name and gender pronoun they desire. Please include this information in your introduction and/or the notecard you'll fill out for me



Photo Credit: Flickr, "Surreal Name Given" by Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Holocaust remains one of the most horrific events in modern history. It is nearly impossible to comprehend the torture and murder of human beings on such a massive scale. Indeed, some people have said that the complexity and horror of the Holocaust cannot be represented. Yet the only way those of us who weren't there can know about the Holocaust is through books, films, photographs, poems, paintings, and other representations of the history.

Today there are holograms of Holocaust survivors and Virtual Reality experiences at death camps. Holocaust representation changes as technology changes, but also as the world changes. Current events have raised debates about when it is appropriate to compare contemporary events to the Holocaust and what it means to learn from the past. New technologies make it easier to learn about the Holocaust, but also to spread Holocaust denial and racist ideologies.

This class provides a general background to the Holocaust while also looking at the moral responsibility of representation, so important in our image-rich, social-media connected age.

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[www.uwm.edu/canvas](http://www.uwm.edu/canvas)

# THE COURSE

## WHAT TO DO>

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Use Canvas regularly. The hardest part of an online class is keeping up with the work, because you don't have a face-to-face class to remind you.

Think of Canvas as your classroom, and schedule it (and your course work) in your calendar. Go to [www.uwm.edu/canvas](http://www.uwm.edu/canvas).

**Quizzes** (120 points total): There are two quizzes on Holocaust history. Each is worth 60 points.

#### Discussion Posts and Responses

(55 points total per discussion forum (post & responses), 440 points total). Discussions are the online version of in-class discussion. They offer an opportunity to talk to your classmates, to see what others think, to bounce your ideas off of others, and to connect with other students about the material. They are how we will do a lot of our work this semester and should be well thought out explorations of the material.

These can be done in video instead of writing, and I will give 3 points of extra credit for each video post. If you do a video post, I encourage you to write down your thoughts first.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS>

### WHAT TO BUY

Nothing! To bring down costs for my students we will use only materials freely available. Some of you may want to print things off from the course site, however, for easier reading.

**Close Readings:** (75 points each; 300 points total) These posts ask you to look closely at a primary document and analyze what the document tells us about the Holocaust. There are specific guidelines for these assignments. Usually these will be handed in just to me, but sometimes they will be shared as posts in your discussion groups.

**Final Paper:** 130 points. Your final paper asks you to reflect on your learning of the course, drawing on materials we have studied together.

**First week activities:** 10 points (Notecard = 5; Introduction = 5)

I have based the schedule on the face-to-face schedule of 4-week summer courses. I have given you intense Mon – Thurs schedules, and have left the long weekends for you to either relax or to catch up/work ahead. I think this schedule works the best, because it offers you some flexibility depending on your other commitments and involvements. This means we have 16 days of class, but more days in which to get work done.

Be sure to look ahead on the calendar. If you read slowly, for example, you will want to use your weekends to start readings for the following week. If your weekdays are free, but you work weekends, you will want to pack your weekdays with work so that you can take the weekends off from coursework.

Assignments are generally due the day after the unit is over. This is another way that I build flexibility into the schedule. If you need another day or two, I am pretty flexible about deadlines in the summer session, but am very committed to keeping everyone on track. If you procrastinate and fall behind, it is very difficult to catch up, so just keep moving forward! Reach out if you hit a snag. There is no reason why everyone can't do well in this course and I'll do whatever I can to help you succeed.



## Flexible Learning Opportunities (Extra Credit)

Up to 100 points total

I see extra credit as a way for students to take charge of their learning. Having a difficult week and fell behind? Do one or more of the below and get back on track.

Usually I give students credit for attending course-related events and writing a short paper about them. In these covid times, going to a museum isn't necessarily possible, but there may be online opportunities. The Holocaust Education Resource Center of Milwaukee has a number of online lectures and I'll post opportunities on our Canvas site.

There will also be extra credit opportunities on the course site, such as extra discussion posts.



## Taking Care of Yourself This Summer

I have included this part of my syllabus for years, but it is especially important now.

As the days go on, I will often remind you to "Do something life-affirming." It is intended as serious advice - even a requirement for succeeding in this class.

In this class, you will be looking directly at human evil, at how cowardice, group mentality, racism, rationalization, political power, and other human traits lead to mass murder. This is hard work -- especially hard on the heart and spirit. Sometimes you will put down the work for this class feeling depressed, sad, or angry.

This summer, these feelings may be exacerbated by the ongoing stressors of the pandemic, current events, financial and health concerns, etc.

Let's start the session assuming that we are all struggling -- not in the same ways, but this time is difficult for everyone. Let's use this knowledge to be kind and generous with each other, and to be kind and generous with ourselves.

### Covid-19

The University policies around Covid-19 can be found here:  
<https://uwm.edu/cetl/covid-19-syllabus-statements/>

Students who test positive for or who are diagnosed based on symptoms with COVID-19 should complete the Dean of Students form found on our Canvas site.

By doing so, students will get information on resources, help UWM identify individuals they may have come into contact with on campus so that UWM can work with the local health department, and allow UWM to clean campus areas you visited as appropriate.

### Use the Navigate App!

Students are encouraged to use a tool called Navigate. This tool can help you learn about academic resources, set up study groups in your courses, make appointments with your academic advisor, get reminders on important dates, and much more. In addition, Navigate allows instructors to send Progress Reports to students throughout the term, allowing for updates on your academic progress in a course in addition to your grade. You can find the Navigate link under the Current Students tab on the UWM home page. More information on how you can use Navigate and the app, including tutorials, can be found on UWM's Navigate website, and there is information about Navigate on our Canvas site.

## Grades

The grading for this course is based on 1000 points. Your final grade will be computed like this. You can keep track of your grade points on Canvas

950-1000 points = A  
900-949 = A-  
860 - 899 = B+  
821 - 859 = B  
800 - 820 = B-  
760 - 799 = C+

721 - 759 = C  
700 - 720 = C-  
650 - 699 = D+  
600 - 649 = D  
Below 600 points = F

## Plagiarism (Don't cheat)

Plagiarism is claiming someone else's work as your own. The internet has made it easier to plagiarize, and sometimes people don't even realize that they are doing it. For example, if you look up a review of a film that we are studying and someone says something smart, and you take that idea and put it in your paper, you need to credit the source -- even if you are putting it in your own words. It's fine to learn from online sources -- just give those sources credit. If you use their exact words, those words need to be in quotation marks, with the source clearly noted. If you are unclear about how to do this, I'm happy to help.

I expect you to complete quizzes on your own and not to share questions or answers with anyone else in the course.

Students generally plagiarize intentionally when they are stressed and feeling desperate. It's just not worth it. If you find yourself considering plagiarizing, please reach out to me for help. You really don't want a note of academic misconduct in your file.

## Credit Hour Policy

Federal Law requires me to tell you how many hours you will spend on this course. Here is how I think it will break down:

Reading/Watching: 90 hours

Quizzes: 12 hours

Writing/thinking: 30 hours

University Policy about these issues and others (e.g., students called to active military duty, discriminatory conduct, incompletes, etc) can be found at:  
<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>



This dog seems like a good reminder not to cheat, to seek help, and support when you need it, to talk to your professor, and to take breaks for animal videos as needed. There will be no discrimination against cat people in this class, but I'm allergic, and personally prefer dogs.

## More Resources

African American Student Services. 414-229-6657.  
American Indian Student Services. 414-229-5880.  
LGBT Resource Center. 414-229-4116.  
Military & Veterans Resource Center. 414-229-7211.  
Roberto Hernandez Center. 414-229-6156.  
Southeast Asian-American Student Services. 414-229-5282.  
Inclusive Excellence Center. 414-229-7234.  
Student Accessibility Center. 414-29-6287.  
Women's Resource Center. 414-229-2852.

## Help & Resources

If you're having challenges, don't go it alone -- there's help available!

1. If you're having technical issues, contact help at 229-4040 or Canvas help (from Canvas home page)
2. Make an appointment with me.  
We can video meet or chat via Teams, or I can call you on the phone.
3. Use the Writing Center.  
The Writing Center is a free resource for any stage of the writing process, from getting started to revising drafts to polishing a final essay. Online tutoring is available!
4. Check out the resources of the Student Success Center.  
<https://uwm.edu/studentsuccess> They offer a variety of help, from tutoring in certain subjects, to mentoring, to short courses on a variety of subjects. They can help you succeed during this time!
5. Go to Norris Health Center (x4716) for concerns about your physical or mental health. They have virtual & in-person appointments, but call first.
6. If you are going hungry, take advantage of UWM's Food Pantry,
7. The Dean of Students sometimes has emergency grants for students.  
<https://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/resources/emergency-grants/>

## What You'll Learn

A student successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Identify the major events of the Holocaust and describe the historical progression of the Nazi murder of the Jews of Europe
- Describe the major ethical, aesthetic, and representational concerns around representations of the Holocaust
- Recognize, evaluate, and analyze the complex moral context of the Holocaust, with particular attention to the roles of victim, perpetrator, and bystander
- Analyze a Holocaust text (literature or film) with particular attention to the ethical, aesthetic, and representational issues raised by the text.

## Why It Matters

The Holocaust ended over 70 years ago, and yet it is still very much with us today. At the attack on the Capitol on January 6, 2021 some of the rioters were wearing antisemitic and neo-Nazi symbols. The attacks on free elections and the peaceful transfer of power have lead some people to compare 2020 America to 1930s Germany. Are such comparisons and connections appropriate? How can we learn from the past in ways that will contribute to a better future? Learning about the Holocaust and considering the ethical issues of representation can help us to engage more complexly and thoughtfully with these important issues of our time.

## How does this online class work?

The course is broken up into units. In the regular semester, a unit is generally two weeks, but in this one-month session, a unit might be one day, two days, or three days. Each unit is made up of the same general components: Reading and/or watching videos and then handing in assignments (quizzes, close reading writing, discussions with classmates).

Everything is online, of course, and I've tried to make the instructions clear, but I'll clarify at the beginning of every unit and in between if there are questions.

As questions come up, please ask them in our Help! forum, or feel free to email me at [rbaum@uwm.edu](mailto:rbaum@uwm.edu), or via our Canvas site.

