

# Holocaust Course Plan

Yad Vashem visit follow up

Dario Pavić, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Centre for Croatian  
Studies, University of Zagreb

# Course info

- Part of the course „Demography” for MA students in sociology (research and educational path)
- The Holocaust course will be an additional unit to the existing unit exploring the role of human conflict on population dynamics
- The main goal of the course – to go beyond the aggregate statistics and mere description, to discuss the causes and consequences of human conflict through the personal accounts of the victims, perpetrators, bystanders and rescuers of the Holocaust
- Course planned for Summer semester 2016
- Expected duration: 3-4 hours, expected attendance: 40 students

# Course outline

1. An introductory activity introducing students to the subject
  2. An examination of one or more case studies
  3. The chapter on bystanders and rescuers
  4. A concluding group activity/presentation/written pieces
- Based on the recommendation from: How was it humanly possible?  
Pedagogical guidebook, p.5.

# Introductory activity

- Group discussion about the Holocaust. Assessing the students' knowledge about the Holocaust.
- Main goal: to address the misconceptions and misinterpretations of the Holocaust phenomenon.
- Activity: Asking questions about the main events and milestones of the Holocaust.
- Explaining the timeline of the Holocaust and identifying the main „junctions” leading to the extermination of Jews
- Expected time: 1 hour

# Case study - ideology

- The genesis of the Nazi antisemitic ideology and the process of „dehumanization” of Jews
- Nazi propaganda in schools and youth organization
- The scientific justification of the non-human nature of Jews
- The material and case studies: *Poisonous Mushroom*, text from the unit: Prelude to murder: the school in Nazi Germany. How it was Humanly possible?
- Main goal: to emphasize the desensitisation of Germans towards Jews, and the instillation of victim mentality to Jews
- Expected time: 45 minutes

# Victims, perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers

- The role of aforementioned groups in three stages of Holocaust: uprooting, transport and extermination.
- Uprooting: Wuerzburg deportation. (Wuerzburg album, the letters of policemen and bureaucrats, Ida Fink story)
- Transport: Transport to Riga (juxtaposition of Salitter's report and Hilde Sherman's testimony)
- Extermination: Extermination camps reality (Rudolf Hoess, Franz Stangl, the art and human spirit in the camps)
- Four rescuers stories
- Expected time: 1.5 hours

# Concluding activity

- Discussion – wrap up.
- Messages to convey to students:
  - The role of Nazi indoctrination was to deprive Jews of all humanity and thus to make Germans less likely to help Jews, and to instill in Jews the „victim mentality” so the uprising against Nazis to be minimal.
  - The perpetrators were not psychopaths nor they were turned into murderers by some shapeless social force. They were gradually adapting to the new reality, making conscious choices at the „junction points” of the Holocaust process.
  - The same goes for the bystanders.
  - The rescuers were not angels, just as the perpetrators and bystanders were not devils. They all acted from their own morality, but also taking into account the circumstances, and costs and benefits of acting in a certain way.

# Future activities

- To make a more comprehensive program/course on Holocaust, together with Prof Renato Matic (another Yad Vashem alumnus, the lecturer at *Shoah Academy* in Zagreb, colleague at the same department)
- To expand the existing course to include the study of the Holocaust in Croatia
- To offer the course to other departments of the Centre for Croatian Studies
- To visit Jewish community in Zagreb

Thank you very much!

**תודה רבה**