



History of the Jews in 20th Century Europe

Course Number

HBRJD-UA 9200 F01

Instruction Mode:

In-person + with class at NYU NY

Brightspace course site<https://brightspace.nyu.edu/d2l/home/164410>**Spring 2022**

If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Study Away student for NYU Florence, please make sure that you've completed the online academic orientation via Brightspace so you are aware of site specific support structure, policies and procedures. Please contact florence.academicssupport@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

Syllabus last updated on: 25 January 2022

Lecturer Contact Information

TBA

Units earned

4

Course Details

- Monday from 3:30pm to 6:15pm
- All times are Central European Time (CET) Please note that there is a gap in when Daylight Savings Time (DST) begins in Europe and the U.S. In the U.S., DST begins on Sunday, 13 March 2022 when clocks will be set 1 hour forward. In Europe, DST begins Sunday, 27 March 2022.
- Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class.
- Remote Participants: Your instructor will provide you with the Zoom link via NYU Brightspace.
- COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU Florence community, we are closely following CDC guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our



recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being is our top priority.

Course Description

This course explores the interactions of Jews and other Western Europeans before and after World War II, noting their interlocking histories and memories. Students will learn about Western European Jewish life from Emancipation in the 19th century through the early 20th century, the Holocaust and the immediate postwar turmoil especially in Germany, Italy and France. They will analyze how Italians, Germans -- East and West -- and French non-Jewish citizens did or did not come to terms with their Fascist and Nazi pasts. They will study Jewish perspectives on their own lives in Europe through the 20th century, including those of the Displaced Persons (DPs) after the Holocaust, but also those of Jews who chose to stay in their European homelands. The class will learn why Jews remained, how they experienced their citizenship, and how they interacted with non-Jews.

Readings will also analyze comparative Jewish memories and memory cultures as well as those among non-Jews in these and several other countries. Assignments look at conflicting European and Jewish historical memories, including the general silence about the Holocaust of the early postwar years, the Jewish demand for reparations, the attractions of Israel for some Jews, and the growing acknowledgement of the Holocaust in western European political cultures as well as the building of museums and monuments about Jewish history and the Holocaust.

Assessment Components

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Participation in Class 15%

Presentations 20% (each presentation is 10%)

Midterm 25%

Essays: 15% (7,5% each)

Written Final: 25 %

Attendance Policy

In order to keep each other safe, if you are not feeling well, we encourage you to remain in your residence and, if possible, attend class remotely.

Please make sure to inform your professor in advance so that they can turn on Zoom. Remote attendance is counted as regular attendance. You will not be marked absent.

For a detailed explanation of the global attendance policy, see the NYU Florence [Present vs. Absent Flowchart](#).

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation.

The Global Attendance Policy is posted in the Academic Policies tab in [Brightspace](#), on the [NYU Florence Student Portal](#) website, and is posted around campus.

After you have read and reviewed the policies, if there is anything that still needs further clarification or raises a question, please reach out to florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu.

**Final exams**

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

Late Submission of Work

Please refer to Academic Policies in [Brightspace](#).

Required Text(s)

All readings are available online on the NYU Brightspace course site. Hard copies of some textbooks are available for consultation and semester-long loans in the [Villa Ulivi Library](#). Please email florence.library@nyu.edu to reserve a copy. To request scans from books on reserve please fill out the [Ulivi Library Book Scan Form](#).

Session 1 – NY/FLR – Jan 31 - ONLINE

Introductions

- How does this course work
- What is comparative history?
- Italian and German Jews as the main focus of this course with comparative approaches to other Western Jewries

Intro Lecture:

Jews “at home” in Early 20th Century Western Europe: Emancipated, Integrated and Looking Forward

- Watch trailer of movie *J'accuse* (2019); watch the rest at home at: [J'accuse \(2019\).mp4](#)

Session 2 – NY/FLR – Feb 7 - ONLINE

Rise of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany

- Intro on development of Fascism in Italy (MS)
- Intro on rise of Nazism and Racial State (MK)
- Watch in class one of the following videos, or more than one:

[The Path to Nazi Genocide, Chapter 1](#)

[The Path to Nazi Genocide, Chapter 3](#)

Assigned readings for class:



- Francis Nicosia, "Introduction," *Jewish Life in Nazi Germany: Dilemmas and Responses*, ed. by Francis R. Nicosia and David Scrase (2010), pp. 1-14.
- Marion Kaplan, "Changing Roles in Jewish Families," in *Jewish Life*, ed. by Nicosia and Scrase, pp. 15-37.

Students will choose the books they intend to read and present for class # 6. Presentations should be prepared by groups across the two classes using skype, facetime etc.

Session 3 – NY/FLR – Feb 14

Identity & discrimination (Italy, and France)

First part of class:

- Lecture: Europe in the 1930s
- Watch in class "[A Night at the Garden](#)" (Feb. 1939) (7 minutes)

"Jews will not replace us" (August 2017- Nazis in the USA)

Second part of class:

Prompt for class: Raise two or three comparisons between the situations of Jews in Germany, France and Italy, referring to your readings.

Assigned readings for class

- Paula Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, ch. 9 ("The Holocaust in France"), pp. 161-214.
- Alexander Stille, *Benevolence and Betrayal: Five Italian Jewish Families* (chap.: "Fatherland, Faith and Family"), pp. 17-90.

Session 4 – FLR- Feb 21

Visit to the synagogue of Florence and Museum

Please meet in Via Farini 6 at the entrance of the synagogue at 330pm

During and after the visit we will discuss readings, and we will study the Racial laws in colonial and fascist Italy at the Jewish Museum (or in the garden of the synagogue if it is not too cold/raining).

Session 5 – NY/FLR – Feb 28

The Churches and the Jews (Germany, France, Italy)

- Lectures:
Churches in Germany and France (MK)
Church in Italy (MS)



- Watch in class clips from “Amen” (2002) and “Rome: Open City” (1945)
- Prompt for class: Discuss the reaction of the Vatican in general to the Holocaust and of the local priests more specifically (Genoa) combining the film with this week’s readings.
- Assigned readings for class
- Zuccotti, *Under his Very Windows: the Vatican and the Holocaust*, chaps. 11,13
- Stille, *Five Italian Jewish Families* (chapter: “The Rabbi, the Priest and the Aviator: A Story of Rescue in Genoa)

Reminder: Make an appointment with the Writing Center to prepare your paper due on March 9.

Session 6 – NY/FLR – Mar 7 – Presentations & MIDTERM

First part of class: book presentations

Presentation: Students will have chosen one book among these 4, although we will need to have volunteers for *every* book. Each group presentation should last around 15-20 minutes

- (Italy) Primo Levi, *If this is a Man* (also known as *Survival in Auschwitz*)
- (Austria) Ruth Kluger, *Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered*
- (France) H el ene Berr, *The Journal of H el ene Berr*.
- (Prague/France) Saul Friedlander, *When Memory Comes*.

Prompt for presentations: contextualizing the memoir *with previous reading assignments*. Please include whether or not you think that this text lives up to the reputation of being a “classic” of Holocaust testimonies. Why or why not? Presentations and discussion in class.

Second part: MIDTERM.

Reply to the following question in a 3-4 pages essay:

Discuss the ways in which German/French or German/Italian Jews reacted to the rise of Fascism in their respective countries. [Remember, this would have been 1922 for Italy, 1933 for Germany, and 1940 for France.]

Go home, watch one of the movies and write back about it by March 9th, 5pm (4 pages)



We prefer that you watch the film of someone whose book you have NOT read, but it's ok if you decide to watch the same person again. We think you will learn from how the authors, themselves, reflect on their memoirs.

Available films.

1. [When memory comes: a film about Saul Friedländer](https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/watch/when-memory-comes-a-film-about-saul-friedlander). Online: <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/watch/when-memory-comes-a-film-about-saul-friedlander> Frank Diamand film director, interviewer; Saul Friedländer 1932- interviewee; René Mendel film producer (65 min.)
2. **The Truce (A film about Primo Levi after Auschwitz)** by Martin Scorsese. At Bobst Library but Offsite [Collection VCA 8734] Francesco Rosi; Primo Levi; Martin Scorsese; John Turturro 1957-; Miramax Films. (ca. 117 min.) On Amazon Prime.
3. **Primo Levi's Journey. At Bobst Main [Collection DVD 15425]**
"In the winter of 1945, Primo Levi, one of the century's greatest writers, was liberated from the Auschwitz concentration camp. Sixty years later, director Davide Ferrario set out to follow in Levi's footsteps. Retracing his historic trip from Auschwitz, the film weaves a path through a modern Europe that has both changed and remained eerily the same-- from democratic rallies in the East to neo-Nazi demonstrations in the West." (92 minutes)
4. **Primo adapted by Antony Sher as well as Sher's diary about this performance.**
Both (will be) available on Brightspace.
5. **Hélène Berr: une jeune fille dans Paris occupé.**
https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C3358396 in English. Log into this site and then enter New York University.
6. **Ruth Kluger on youtube** (58 minutes)
Start at 12:06. *This is a reading.* She reads the highlights of her memoir, skipping between then and her later life. She reflects on *memory*, on what she remembered, what Germans remembered (or forgot), and how the Holocaust shaped her later life as well.

Session 7 – NY/FLR – Mar 21

Daylight saving time in US is on March 13; New York will be one hour ahead of us so this class meets at 245pm and ends at 530pm (TBC)

After the War: Holocaust survivors, Jewish DPs. (Germany, France, Italy)

Guest lecturer: Dr. Chiara Renzo (University of Florence).

Lecture: *Jewish DPs in Italy and beyond.* (CR)

- Prompt for class: discuss the relations among Holocaust survivors, Jewish DPs with the citizens and institutions of France, Germany and Italy



- Watch short film in Class: *Toward the Promised Land* (5 minutes)
- Watch parts of movie by Mark Goldstein and Herbert B. Fredersdorf, *Long is the way*, 1949.

Assigned readings for class

- Maud Mandel, "[Muslims and Jews in France](#)," ch. 1, pp. 15-34. Also online:
- [Jakub Leipzig Interview](#)
- "Victims, Villains, and Survivors. Gendered Perceptions and Self-Perceptions of Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Postwar Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 11 (1/2), (2002). (Brightspace)
- David Nasaw, *The Last Million: Europe's Displaced Persons from World War to Cold War* (2020) Intro and pp. 169- 182 (Brightspace)

Session 8 - NY + FLR – Mar 28

The re-foundation of Jewish life in Europe and the fight for Restitution

- Prompt for class: Discuss the difficulties faced by Jews and non-Jews encountering each other after the war. Describe the institutional and personal obstacles that returning Jews faced as they met former neighbors or friends and as they reclaimed their properties and positions? Did some Jews experience a generation gap in the post-war context?
- Students will choose the books they intend to read and present for class # 14

Assigned readings for class

- Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Life in Postwar Germany*, 1995, pp. 102-6.
- Leora Auslander, "Coming Home? Jews in Postwar Paris," *Journal of Contemporary History* 40/2 (2005), pp. 237-59.
- Anna Koch, "Returning Home? Italian and German Jews Remigration after the Holocaust," in *Migrations in the German Lands, 1500-2000*, ed. by Jason Coy, et.al., pp. 173-82.
- Marcella Simoni, "Young Italian Jews in Israel, and Back: Voices from a Generation, 1945-1953" in *Italian Jewish Networks from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*, pp. 173-200

Optional podcast by Shira Klein: "Italy's Jews" by Shira Klein:
[["Forgetting Fascism," parts 1 and 2](#)]

Session 9 - NY + FLR – Apr 4

Memory and memorialization of the *Shoah* (Italy, Germany, France)



Short lecture: Chronologies – understanding a timeline of memory, politics, and memorialization.

Assigned readings for class

- (Germany and France) Peter Carrier, “The Second World War in the Memory Cultures of France and Germany” in *National Identities*, vol. 8, no. 4 (2006), pp. 349-366.
- (Cold War Italy) Rebecca Clifford, *Commemorating the Holocaust: The Dilemmas of Remembrance in France and Italy* (OUP, 2013), ch. 2, pp. 71-107.
- (Italy) Filippo Focardi, “Antifascism and the Resistance: Public Debate and Politics of Memory in Italy from the 1990s to the Present” in *Rethinking Antifascism. History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present*, ed. by Hugo García, Mercedes Yusta, Xavier Tabet, Cristina Clímaco, Berghahn Books. (2016): 258-275.

Reminder: Make an appointment with the Writing Center to prepare your paper due on April 11 .

Session 10 - NY + FLR – Apr 11

Race and Memory of Evil

2nd **Paper** due in class: How did European countries memorialize the Holocaust and did these memorials change over time? 5 pages.

Assigned readings for class

- Susan Neiman, Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil, pp. 3-80.

Session 11 – FLR – Apr 22

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Europe (1948-73)

Assigned readings for class

- Maud Mandel, *Muslims and Jews in France: History of a Conflict*, chap. 5, pp. 100-124
- Marcella Simoni, “When the conflict spills over. Identities, memories and representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Italy. The 1960s.” in Marcella Simoni and Davide Lombardo (eds), *The Languages of Discrimination and Racism in Italy in the 20th Century*. Palgrave.

Session 12 – FLR – Apr 29 (Asynchronous session)

Post-memory

Watch at home

- Yair Lev, David Deri, *You Only Die Twice* (2018).
- "You Only Die Twice" - Q&A With Filmmaker David Deri, National Library of Israel
- [NationalLibraryofIsrael](#)

Assigned readings

- Marianne Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile", *Poetics Today*, 1996, Vol. 17, No. 4, Creativity and Exile: European/American Perspectives II (Winter, 1996), pp. 659-86.

Write a 5 page report explaining if and how the movie does (or does not) fit the theoretical framework of postmemory and if you think this is a valuable analytical framework to understand Holocaust studies today.

Session 13 – NY + FLR – May 2 (MS in New York? TBC)

Changes in European Jewish communities: the immigration of Jews from Arab countries (Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria) to Europe (Italy, France)

Prompt for class: Describe how the differences and similarities among Jews in various Arab countries impacted their immigration to and integration in France and Italy?

Assigned readings for class

- Lucette Valensi and Nathan Wachtel, *Jewish Memories*, University of California Press, 1991, ch. 5 (Metamorphosis), ch. 7 (Around the Mediterranean).
- Maud Mandel, *Muslims and Jews in France: History of a Conflict*, chap. 2, pp. 35-58

Session 14 – NY/FLR – May 9

Personal Voices in Postwar Europe

Students will choose and present (in groups) one book among these three postwar meditations on memories of the Holocaust or on being Jewish in Europe, although we will need to have volunteers for every book. Each group presentation should last around 15-20 minutes

- (France) Patrick Modiano, *Dora Bruder*
- (Germany) Lynn Rapaport, *Jews in Germany after the Holocaust: Memory, Identity and Jewish-German Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) (on postwar through 1990s), chaps.1- 4
- (Italy) Rosetta Loy, *First Words: A Childhood in Fascist Italy* (available in Villa Ulivi library or in E-Book format: [rosettaloy](#))
- (Italy) Zargani, *For solo violin*, Paul Dry Books, 2002



Collective discussion on Diana Pinto, "I'm a European Jew and, No, I'm not Leaving," *New Republic*, March 26, 2015, pp. 1-3

Session 15 - FLR – May 16 – FINAL

Final written exam – reply to three questions about the subjects and the materials discussed in the second half of the course.

Your Lecturer

Marcella Simoni is Associate Professor of History and Institutions of Asia at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. She holds a Ph.D from the University of London (UCL, 2004) and has been a research fellow at Brown University (1995; 1997), at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles (2001), at the Centre de Recherche Francais à Jerusalem (2009), at INALCO, Paris (2010) and in the same year she received the Alessandro Vaciago Prize for Social and Political Science from the Accademia dei Lincei. At Ca' Foscari, Marcella Simoni teaches "History of Israel and Palestine" and "History of the Jews in Asia". Marcella Simoni is also affiliated with NYU Florence where she teaches "Jews in 20th Century Europe". Marcella Simoni has published two books on health and welfare during the British Mandate in Palestine (*A Healthy Nation* and *At the margins of conflict*, Cafoscarina 2010), has edited various books and has written extensively on peer reviews journals. She is a founding and a board member of the journal «Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History» and a board member of the «Journal of Modern Jewish Studies». Her research interests include Jews in Asia, civil society in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the history of medicine and public health, a focus on history, memory and trauma, cinema in the Middle East.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you **MUST** inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:



[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer and Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#)

[Pronouns and Name Pronunciation \(Albert and Zoom\)](#)

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Brightspace, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the [Personalizing Zoom Display Names website](#).

[Moses Accommodations Statement](#)

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU Florence.

[Bias Response](#)

The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University



school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the [Web Form \(link\)](#)
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- Phone: 212-998-2277
- Local Telephone: 055 5007277