

**KUMA
HIS 179**

**The Dr. Marcia Robbins-Wilf Hadassah/Young Judaea Holocaust Studies Program
American Jewish University Campus in Israel
Young Judaea Year Course**

Course Summary:

The *Kuma Poland Journey* is an introduction to the historical development of the Holocaust with a focus on the Jewish experience in Poland during World War II. Course study will include an in-depth look at the development of Polish Jewry during the 1,000 years of Jewish residency in Poland, including the rise of Zionism and the Zionist Youth Movements, as well as its ultimate destruction. In addition we will discuss aspects of general Polish history in order to understand the changes and shifts in Jewish society. We will further study the history of Hitler's Nazi Germany, the conquest of Europe and the ominous ramifications for European Jewry. The class will consider the moral implications of the Holocaust as well as the lessons for the Jewish People and all of humanity in the 21st century. Finally we will consider the role of memory and our responsibility towards the victims of the Holocaust and future generations.

The course will primarily be a field study. We will visit sites during the *Journey* in Poland where significant events took place in history and Holocaust memorials have been erected and museums have been dedicated to educate about Jewish life in Poland and the demise during the Holocaust. A combination of lectures, discussions, student presentations, all of which require a high degree of participation and motivation from the individual student will be used throughout the course. Through primary sources, secondary sources, personal testimonies, still and moving images, internet sites, and class discussions, we will struggle to understand the incomprehensible. At the end of the course the student will have a clearer understanding of Polish Jewish history, the events of the Shoah, and the historical narrative, but may be left with more questions than answers.

Course Requirements:

- 1) Due to the extraordinary nature of the topic and the intensive nature of study each student will be required to keep a written journal. The journal will be marked pass/fail. (20%)
- 2) Class Participation: including attendance, class participation and general motivation is an important factor in a successful learning experience. (10%)
- 3) On site oral presentation: Each student will choose a topic to present to the class at one of the sites to be determined along with the instructor. The presentation will be between 10-15 minutes on any topic relating to Polish history, Jewish history in Poland, the Holocaust, or any of the many topics or questions related to the above. Students who would rather submit an extra writing assignment instead of an oral presentation must have approval from the instructor prior to the beginning of the course. (35%)
- 4) Final: Take home essay exam approximately 6-8 pages in length. All finals are due by Thursday March 31, 2011. Late exams will not be accepted without prior written permission from the instructor. (35%)

Syllabus:

Classes 1-2 Warsaw

Overview of the History of Jewish Warsaw, Ideologies of 19th & 20th Century Polish Jewry, Understanding the Jewish Tombstone

Site: *Opokowa Street Jewish Cemetery*

Readings: *If Not Higher* I.L. Peretz pp. 38-40

Timeline: "A Thousand Years of Polish Jewish History" David Behrman and Alan Goldman

Time of Stones Monika Kajewska

Nazi Invasion, Ghettoization of Warsaw, Ringlebaum Archives, Liquidation, Deportation, Janusz Korczak's Final Journey

Sites: *Jewish Historical Society Museum Exhibition on Warsaw Ghetto, Janusz Korczak Pre-War Orphanage, Umschlagplatz,*

Reading: *Brave and Desperate* pp. 58- 65.

Selected scenes from the film *The Pianist*

Classes 3-4 Tykocin- Eastern European Shtetl from Birth to Destruction

16th-19th Century: Role of the Synagogue, Market Place, relations with Christians, WWII and Final Solution: Operation Barbarossa, Einsatzgruppen, Killing Pits

Sites: *Tykocin Jewish Museum: Great Synagogue and Beit Midrash, Jewish Market Square, Church Courtyard of Tykocin, Mass Graves/Killing Pits Lapuchowo Forest*

Readings: *Jewish Bialystok* pp. 7-33

There Once was a World pp. 63-89

Babylonian Talmud Tractate Brachot pg. 61

Testimony from Eichman Trial- Eyewitness account to the Massacre

Classes 5-6 Treblinka Death Camp

Chelmno Precedes Wannsee Conference, Operation Reinhold, Why Poland?, History of Treblinka, Rebellion at Treblinka, Plowing the Camp, Memorial Ceremony

Site: *Treblinka State Memorial*

Readings: *The Holocaust* (Gilbert) pp. 458-462

Map of Treblinka (Gilbert)

A Year in Treblinka Horror Camp Wiernik pp. 178-185

"*The Little Station Treblinka*" (Hebrew)

"*Go to Treblinka*" (Hebrew)

Class 7 Review Session- facilitated by educational staff

Writing Exercise- 5 Questions that come to mind- share questions with review group

Class 8 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Life in the Ghetto, Resistance: The Nature of Resistance, History of the Uprising, The Leading Role of the Zionist Youth Groups

Sites: Remnant of the Ghetto Wall, Ghetto Heroes Walk including Mila 18 and Rappaport Memorial

Readings: Brave and Desperate pp. 60-200 (selections)

Class 9- 10 Majdanek Death Camp

The Structure of a Death Camp, Where was the world?, Memorial Ceremony

Site: Majdanek State Memorial

Readings: Map of Majdanek, Gilbert, Martin 1997

The Holocaust Kingdom, Donat, Alexander

Class 11 Review Session- facilitated by educational staff

Compare your impressions of the Majdanek Memorial to that of the Treblinka Memorial

Class 12 Lezajsk- World of the Hasidic Masters

Galicia, The Birth of the Tzaddik in Hasidic tradition

Site: Grave and Mikve of Rabbi Elimelech of Lezajsk

Readings: The Road to the Shtetl

Chassidic Masters

Elimelech of Lyzhansk (EJ)

Where the Poet Was a Tailor pp. 246-249

View the Film *Fiddler on the Roof*

Class 13 Tarnow- Remnants of the Past

Galicia, A Bimah Stands Alone

Site: The Tarnow Great Synagogue

Readings: Where the Poet Was a Tailor pp. 222-228

Class 14 Zblitowska Gora- Jews and non-Jews Lay side by Side

The Massacre of Jewish children and Adults and Polish Non-Jews

Site: Mass Graves/Killing Pits Zblitowska Gora

Readings: The Holocaust (Gilbert)

Class 15-16 Krakow-

Jewish Renaissance in the Early Modern Period, Krakow–Tzfat: Shulhan Aruch and the Printing Press, Feudal System and the Jews,

Sites: Kazimierz District- Alte-Shul, Rema Shul, Isaak's Shul, Kupa Shul, Tall Shul, The Temple, Vavel Hill and Castle, Cathedral, Sukiniza Market Square

Readings: A Journey Between Worlds: East European Jewish Culture from the Partitions of Poland to the Holocaust (Excerpts)

Shulhan Aruch Yoreh De'ah Chapter 157

Where the Poet Was a Tailor pp. 196-212

Class 17 Faith After the Holocaust- facilitated by educational staff

Discussion of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' article

Reading: *On G-d and Auschwitz*

Classes 18-21 Auschwitz The Nazi Killing Machine

Final Solution: Structural or Intentional from the lens of the Extermination of Hungarian Jewry, Life in Hell, Memorial Ceremony

Site: *Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Memorial*

Readings: *Auschwitz Album* (selected pictures)

Film: *The Liberation of Auschwitz*

Map of Auschwitz, Auschwitz National Museum Guide

Map of Auschwitz II-Birkenau, Auschwitz National Museum Guide

Man's Search for Meaning pp. 96-97

Night pp. 40-45

The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps. pp. 53-71

Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity pp. 17-19

Class 22 Review Session- facilitated by educational staff

Discussion: Was the final Solution "intentional" or "structural"?

Class 23 Slawkow

Eastern Europe Zionism before the Shoah

Site: *Slawkow Zionist Training Farm*

Reading: *Slawkow-* Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland

Chajka Grossman

Classes 24-26 Memory and Meaning

Cemetery is a tribute to life, Responsibility to the Past and the Future, Hollywood and the Holocaust, Memorial Ceremony

Sites: *Rema Cemetery, Schindler's Factory, Plaszow Concentration Camp,*

Readings: *The Holocaust and Collective Memory* pp. 208-220

Krakow-Plaszow Camp Remembered pp. 1-8

Selected Scenes from the Film *Schindler's List*

Site: *Clean Up Project Wieliczka Cemetery*

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Babylonian Talmud Tractate Brachot pg. 61b Soncino.

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Film: *Schindler's List*, Steven Spielberg, 1993.

Film: *The Liberation of Auschwitz*, Soviet Red Army, 1945.

Film: *The Pianist*, Roman Polanski, 2002.

Film: *The Uprising*, Jon Avnet, 2001.

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Sacks, Rabbi Jonathan. "On G-d and Auschwitz" from *Faith in the Future*

Shulhan Aruch Yoreh De'ah Chapter 157 Traditional Hebrew

Testimony from Eichman Trial, Eyewitness account to the Massacre

Wiernik, Yankel. "A Year in Treblinka Horror Camp"

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