

Holocaust and Genocide Studies

2015-2016 Newsletter

West Chester University has been a pioneer in Holocaust Studies since 1978 when an undergraduate course on the Holocaust was first offered. The program now includes a Master of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, a certification program, an undergraduate minor, a regional education center, and a library collection.



From the Director's Desk...

2015 marked a number of tragic anniversaries in the history of genocide--the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide and the 20th anniversary of the genocide at Srebrenica in Bosnia. It also saw the slaughter of Yazidis at the hands of ISIS and the continuation of genocide in Sudan. The world of academia lost a major scholar of the Holocaust as well—David Cesarani, whose works on Adolf Eichmann and Arthur Koestler were leading publications in the field. He was still working on two books before his death at the age of 59 in October 2015. Both the *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews 1933-1949*, and *Disraeli: The Novel Politician*, are set to appear later this year.

WCU's Holocaust and Genocide Studies program continues to perform the crucial function of educating students and raising awareness about the Holocaust and other genocides. Six students will receive Masters of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies over the course of the year, and seven more have been admitted for the fall 2016. Students have presented papers at international conferences, published articles, and enrolled in doctoral programs. They are a testament to the high quality of students who have been a part of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at West Chester since its inception.

In addition, this June, the program will be running two field studies experiences to Eastern Europe and Poland so that undergraduate and graduate students can learn about and conduct research at sites of Holocaust history. Next year, we plan to take students to the American west to learn about the experiences of persecution of the Lakota Sioux (visiting the site of Wounded Knee). We also intend to embark on a journey to Cambodia as we commemorate the history of its genocide in the 1970s. As we enter a transition period at West Chester, with the creation of a new College of Arts and Humanities, it is our hope that Holocaust and Genocide Studies will continue to grow and assist in fulfilling the university's mission of advancing diversity and social justice.

Jonathan C. Friedman, Ph.D.
Director

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Jewish and Gay History of Los Angeles: Field Studies 2015

During the first week of August 2015, I and four other students traveled to Los Angeles to study Gay and Jewish history of the area. Our group comprised not only Holocaust and Genocide Studies graduate students but undergraduates and History graduate students as well. The five-day trip allowed students to explore the long history of both Jewish and LGBT history of Los Angeles, which spans over a century.

While in Los Angeles, we visited museums such as The Museum of Tolerance, The Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, and the Skirball Jewish Cultural Center. Each museum presented a new perspective on Jewish history, allowing students to compare the information and design of the museums. This comparison culminated with a museum review paper due for the class.

Paired with the museums were readings that included *An Empire of Their Own* by Neil Gabler and Lillian Faderman's *Gay LA*. Discussion over the books and the day's events took place every night with Dr. Friedman leading seminar sessions. Along with museums, we visited various synagogues and cultural sites in the area such as the Breed Street Synagogue, which is in the process of restoration, the Wilshire Boulevard Synagogue, and the first openly gay synagogue, Beit Chaim Chadashim.

Along with Beit Chaim Chadashim, students also visited other significant sites to gay history and culture in Los Angeles, including The Black Cat, LGBT Center at Ed Gould Plaza, and The ONE National Archives. The ONE National Archives displayed art from LGBTQA+ artists. Many of the pieces came from individuals suffering from AIDS and were extremely emotionally powerful.

The ability to visit the places a student reads about offers a much-needed hands on experience that not all programs offer. Having an active part in one's education helps prepare students for future work outside of the classroom. Students, myself included, will have the same opportunity in May to visit Poland for two weeks with Dr. Friedman. We will be visiting concentration camps and important Jewish history sites all over the country. These field studies trips remain a highlight of the program for many students. I will never forget our trip to Los Angeles and the wonderful experiences we were lucky enough to have.

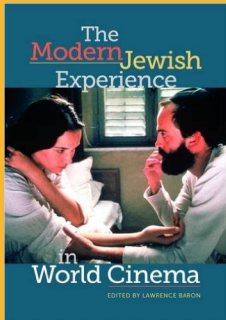
Kaylee Gallagher '16



Annual Lecture Series November 2015



Addressing the controversy recently generated by Ben Urwand's book *Collaboration*, Dr. Lawrence Baron examined the reasons for Hollywood's self-censorship regarding the depiction of Nazi anti-Semitic policies before the outbreak of World War Two and why Warner Brothers became the first major studio to tackle the topic more forthrightly in the late 1930s. He also explored how wartime censorship relegated the persecution of the Jews to a secondary subject in American feature films until 1944. The lecture was illustrated with clips from films like *The House of Rothschild* (1934), *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939), *The Great Dictator* (1940), *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), and *None Shall Escape* (1944).



Lawrence Baron held the Nasatir Chair in Modern Jewish History at San Diego State University from 1988-2012 and taught at St. Lawrence University from 1975-1988. He received his doctorate in history from the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he studied under George L. Mosse. He has authored and edited four books including *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema* (2005) and *The Modern Jewish Experience in World Cinema* (2011). In 2006 he delivered the keynote lecture at Yad Vashem's first symposium on Hollywood and the Holocaust. In the fall 2015, he served as the Ida King Visiting Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the Richard Stockton University of New Jersey.

Course Offerings Summer and Fall 2016

Summer 2 2016

HIS368/601 – Gay America,

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00pm-10:00 pm--Dr. Friedman

An examination of LGBTQ life in the United States from the colonial period to the present day, with extensive analysis of post-1969 history.

Fall 2016

PHI512 – Ethical Theories

Mondays, 4:25pm – 7:10pm--Dr. Porritt

An inquiry into the meaning, interpretations, and function of ethical theory in our lives. The course will explore some combinations of classic, modern, and contemporary ethical theories.

PHI411 – The Problem of War

Wednesdays, 4:25pm – 7:10pm--Dr. Subar

An examination of war and the "war systems" including terrorism. Alternatives to war are considered.

HIS543 – Jews in Modern European History

Thursdays, 7:15pm – 10pm --Dr. Friedman

This course assesses Jewish life and thought in the context of major European historical developments during the 19th and 20th centuries. Special attention is given to the emancipation and acculturation process and the proliferation of anti-Semitism.



Middle Tennessee Holocaust Studies Conference

On October 20-23 2015, I had the opportunity to travel to Murfreesboro, Tennessee for the 12th International MTSU Holocaust Studies Conference. While there, I presented research entitled, "Kerlin, Barr, and the Pennsylvania Training School: Laying the Groundwork for a Nazi Eugenic State." The paper, while not Holocaust specific, was presented on a eugenics studies panel, during the day allotted for genocide research.

I somehow managed to strike gold in my research process. A year into my MA coursework at West Chester in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the history department offered me an internship. Tasked with organizing the archive of one of the oldest schools and institutions for individuals with disability in the United States, I threw myself into the history of disability and specifically the connection between institutional policies and the broader global eugenics movement. The more I organized the archive at Elwyn in Media, PA, the more I realized just how similar the American eugenics movement was to the Weimar and Nazi era eugenic policies towards individuals with disabilities.

The policies of segregating and socially sequestering populations while promoting sterilization of those less than "fit for reproduction" are eerily similar, and international conferences and a flow of intellectual information led to the sharing of ideas and trends. This research is the foundation for the paper I presented at MTSU. After graduating from WCU in the spring of 2015, I was accepted to Lehigh University's Doctoral Program in History, where I am currently continuing my research into the history of disability, focusing on eugenics and institutions in Pennsylvania.

I have had the opportunity to present my work at local symposiums and conferences, including two future conferences, the 2nd Pennsylvania History Coalition Honoring People with Disability Conference in March 2016 at Millersville University, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania Symposium on Small Repositories in April 2016.

The 12th International MTSU Holocaust Studies Conference is a biannual conference, hosted by Middle Tennessee State University. The conference had 2 keynote speakers. Dr. Richard Hovannisian, an expert of the Armenian Genocide, spoke and participated in a roundtable discussion commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Gerhard Weinberg, an authority on all things World War II and Nazi Germany, presented on the historiography of the Holocaust and the importance of preserving documents and artifacts relating to the Holocaust as more survivors pass away every day. The conference also included testimonies from both survivors and liberators. The international and interdisciplinary nature of the conference created an atmosphere of sharing, learning, and appreciation of others. I strongly encourage everyone researching in the broad fields of Holocaust and Genocide Studies to submit a proposal to the next MTSU conference in the fall of 2017. It is an experience you won't want to miss!

Amanda Tuttle '15



Academic Publications

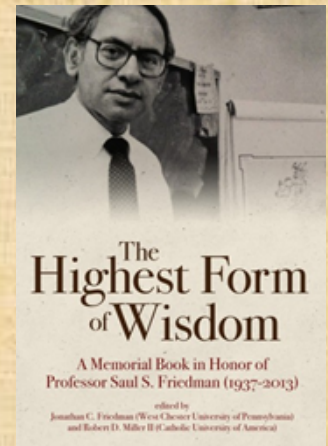


Dr. Jonathan Friedman and Dr. William Hewitt's new edited book, *The History of Genocide in Cinema: Atrocities on Screen*, is forthcoming from I.B. Tauris/Palgrave Macmillan.

The book analyzes fictional and semi-fictional representations of numerous genocides and crimes against humanity, including the repression of indigenous populations in Australia, the genocide of Native Americans in the 19th century, the Herero genocide, Armenian genocide, the Holodomor (Stalin's policy of starvation in Ukraine), the Holocaust, Nanking, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Argentina, Guatemala, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

Comprehensive and unique in its focus on feature films, as opposed to documentaries, *The History of Genocide in Cinema* is an essential resource for students and researchers in the fields of cultural history, Holocaust studies and the history of film.

The book also features an essay by Zachary V. Smith, a student in the MA program, who writes on the cinematic representation of the Guatemalan Genocide.



KTAV, one of the leading Jewish academic presses, has published this compilation of scholarship by internationally known academicians in the fields of Jewish and Holocaust history. It is dedicated to the memory of Saul S. Friedman, who served as professor of Jewish history at Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio and was one of the architects of Holocaust and Genocide education in the United States.

In 1969, Friedman received his Ph.D. in history from Ohio State University, and that year, he began what would become a forty-year tenure as a professor in the history department at Youngstown State. In those forty years, he served his university and community with distinction. He was an enormously popular teacher and prodigious scholar, publishing twelve books, an astonishing feat for any scholar.

For Information about WCU's Master of Arts Program or
the Minor in Holocaust Studies



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