**Politics 255, Holocaust and Human Rights in Europe**

**Second Block, 2018-2019**

**David Yamanishi**

**Syllabus**

***Contact information***

Office: my room in our hostel, available as needed

Email: [dyamanishi@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:dyamanishi@cornellcollege.edu)

Moodle: moodle.cornellcollege.edu (contains handouts, assignment submission links)

Consulting librarian: Meghan Yamanishi, Cole Library 308, x4143

[myamanishi@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:myamanishi@cornellcollege.edu)

Hours: 8:30-4:30 CST.

***Overview***

Holocaust and Human Rights in Europe addresses the history, politics, sociology, and lived experience of the Holocaust and other significant human rights abuse in Europe, from the points of view of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. We will visit Holocaust and other human rights sites – museums, memorials, and sites of violence – in and near Berlin, Prague, Krakow, and Sarajevo. We will work to understand how and why human rights come to be abused, how and why abuse affects the victims, and how post-conflict communities work to resolve differences and learn from periods of abuse.

This class is intended to advance Cornell’s educational priorities and objectives: knowledge (you will engage with scholarly work and local exhibits on human rights abuse and memorialization), inquiry (you will relate your readings and study of sites to each other and to a substantial additional reading through daily journals and a concluding reflection paper), communication (you will engage in class discussion as well as more formal written and oral presentation of your findings), intercultural literacy (we will work together to understand the emergence of conflict and cooperation between ethnic groups and other lines of division), citizenship (learning about human rights abuse and memorialization elsewhere may contribute to your approach to such issues at home), and vocation (we will discuss academic and career possibilities that could follow upon this class). Specific individual projects may touch upon ethical issues, in addition to the above.

***Feedback***

I am very interested in your suggestions for improvement of this class and my teaching generally. Please email comments to me as you think of them or share them with me at my office, if you would like to see your thoughts have immediate effect. I also pay very close attention to course-end evaluations, especially if you offer detailed, written remarks in addition to the numbers.

***Ambiguity and unknowns, behavior***

Traveling to other countries and moving around every several days can be a challenge. Thus flexibility and living with some degree of ambiguity (and potential unexpected changes) will be crucial coping skills as we move around and encounter new experiences. Please be patient with me and with each other.

For most of the block we will be in large cities. You should always be conscious of your surroundings and safety. Traffic rules and local norms of behavior will be different from country to country. Drinking and drug abuse may compromise your judgment, and therefore your safety.

While I do not intend to restrict your activities outside of common time and I will not enforce a curfew, behavior that’s disruptive to the class or to the experiences of other students may be addressed through campus disciplinary procedures upon our return or even during the trip. It is possible to be sent home, or to have an individual curfew assigned.

We will sometimes meet with survivors of human rights abuse, and we will often be in their presence as we visit sites and organizations. I expect you to be respectful, and failure to do so may affect your course grade.

***Books to buy***

The following books are available at the bookstore in the Commons.

David Cesarani (2017), *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews, 1933-1949*. Picador. ISBN 1250097231. (Also available as an ebook.)

Noel Malcolm (1996), *Bosnia: A Short History*. NYU Press. ISBN 978-0814755617. (Not available as an ebook.)

***Readings and assignments***

The itinerary of class events has been shared with you separately via Google Docs and is subject to change.

You should finish reading Cesarani as soon as possible and Malcolm before we fly to Bosnia.

As part of the course, you should identify an additional substantial reading or readings on a theme of your choice to give you an opportunity to explore a topic of special interest through your journals and reflection paper. Please clear your theme and reading(s) with me before you finalize your decision.

***Assessment***

Participation in class 50% includes oral participation and attendance

Journals 25% email or show to me daily, edit at the end of the

block and submit by Saturday, October 20, at 11pm

Reflection papers 25% due on Saturday, October 20, at 11pm

Each element above is required; failure to attend many events, submit many journals, or submit a reflection paper may result in failing the class regardless of how the numbers work out otherwise. Participation and journals will both be evaluated non-linearly in the event of missing work: each additional event missed or each additional journal skipped will have an increasing impact upon your course grade.

While the particular things I’m looking for vary to some degree by assignment, in general an A on an assignment means that your work is outstanding in terms of:

* addressing the assigned question and avoiding digression,
* having a well-structured argument,
* expressing your argument clearly and effectively,
* making appropriate and properly cited use of material on the syllabus and other well-selected sources,
* and demonstrating thoughtful integration and interpretation of the course material and discussions.

Lower grades mean that you have not done all of these things or have done one or more of them less well that you could have. The order of items on the above list should not be taken to indicate their order of importance in determining your grade on an assignment, nor should you suppose that the items will carry equal weight on an assignment or invariant weight across assignments. Moreover, I expect your work to improve during the course and across courses.

To simplify communication about grades, I grade all assignments using the same marks that appear on your academic transcripts: letter grades. When I combine assignment grades to produce your course grade, I will do so using the same numbers that the college uses to determine your GPA (A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, etc.). I will always round-up from the midpoint between grades (for example, a 3.85 rounds to an A, while a 3.84 does not). I may raise grades from what the raw numbers indicate in deserving cases, but I will never change the rank order of students’ grades in the class in doing so.

***Instructions for assignments***

*Participation*: Participation includes punctual attendance and attentive participation at course activities, and oral participation through conversation with me and each other individually and in small and large group settings. I plan to meet with rotating groups of students in the class during breakfast when feasible.

*Journals*: Each day of the course (except travel days) you should prepare a journal entry of at least 400 words that addresses the sites and activities of the day. You should endeavor to make connections between our activities and the background readings that I’ve assigned, as well as incorporating your own added reading(s) as relevant. There are numerous site guides to many of our sites on Moodle that you may use for reference or to cite. Please try not to get behind on your journals, as that will cause me to get behind on reading them. I may reply to your journal entries in writing with questions that you can address in a later entry.

*Reflection paper*: You should write a paper of at least 2000 words to explain your thinking about a particular theme in light of the readings and activities of the class. You do not need to conduct a thorough literature review, but please be attentive to competing possibilities insofar as possible.

***Attendance, lateness, and 15th day drop policy***

To avoid a penalty on your participation grade for missing class, you must let me know in advance that you will miss class due to illness or emergency. In cases where documentation is available (either from a medical professional or campus official), please provide it.

I will lower the grade on work submitted late by 0.5% of the maximum grade per hour late. However, work submitted late *that meets the minimum expectations of the assignment* will receive at least a D regardless of lateness, so you should submit all assignments even if you are extremely late. I will not accept any work after 3pm on the last day of the block.

To drop on the 15th day, you *must* complete every assignment due by the end of the 14th day of class and meet the attendance condition noted above (that is to say, you must miss no more than one class without a documented excuse). In other words, if you are likely to sleep through class on more than one occasion, you should drop now, because you will not be able to do so later.

***Academic honesty***

“Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College’s requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading ‘Academic Honesty.’”

***Students with disabilities***

“Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>.”