

# WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES



## 2012 NEWSLETTER





## DIRECTOR'S DESK

This year marked two key moments of transition for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at West Chester University.

In June 2012, Dr. William Hewitt, our specialist in genocide and Native American history, retired after twenty years as a professor. An innovative and popular teacher, Dr. Hewitt published a number of articles and reviews on the subject of genocide, and in 2003, he released *Defining the Horrific: Readings on Genocide and the Holocaust in the 20th Century*. I was fortunate to learn from him in the decade we overlapped as instructors. Our journey to sites of Navajo and Apache history in New Mexico and Arizona in 2010 was, and will remain, a transformational one.

Only a few months after Dr. Hewitt's retirement, longtime professor of German history, Dr. Claude Foster, who retired in 2008, passed away after a long battle with lymphoma. Dr. Foster was at once as generous as well as a brilliant soul. His imposing mastery of German history was matched only by his passion for theology (and Latin!) His body of work includes biographies of two spiritual opponents of the Nazi regime—Lutheran pastor Paul Schneider, who died in Buchenwald concentration camp, and St. Maximilian Kolbe, who lost his life in Auschwitz.

In our current age of pervasive anxiety and violence, we need the guidance of teachers like Bill Hewitt and Claude Foster more than ever. Our MA program owes much of its existence to these two extraordinary individuals, and they will be missed terribly.

Jonathan Friedman  
Director

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# THE HOLOCAUST IN EUROPE - FIELD STUDIES

In May, 2012, over 30 West Chester University students embarked on a two week field studies trip that took them through parts of Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic. Organizing through EF Tours, History professor, Dr. Brenda Gaydosch, led the group consisting of half undergraduates and half graduate students. Flying from Philadelphia to London to Berlin, the West Chester group met with the EF tour guide, Wesley, and about 20 others from a college in South Dakota, as well as a Holocaust survivor and her daughter-in-law from New York, who were to form our larger tour group. After arriving in Berlin, the group took a walking tour that included the Rosenstrasse protest memorial. Throughout the tour, one would notice small markers in front of former homes of Jews murdered during the Holocaust, each bearing a name and date of deportation to one of the concentration camps. The great number of these markers throughout the city provided a solemn glimpse of the magnitude of the Holocaust. The next two days were a mixture of large and small group activities, with plenty of free time for students to explore the city on their own. Some of the attractions and memorials visited included the Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Checkpoint Charlie, the Reichstag, the Topography of Terror museum, Memorial to Homosexuals Persecuted Under Nazism, Jewish Museum Berlin, and the Wannsee villa. Some of the students visited their first concentration camp outside of Berlin, taking an S-Bahn train to Sachsenhausen. Second year graduate student Ryan Woodward (Louisville, KY) notes, "Eleven of us visited Sachsenhausen on a quiet and empty Friday afternoon and stayed for a few hours touring the grounds of the former camp. It was not only a highly emotional experience, but also an academically enlightening one to share with other history students, seeing how the site and memorial had been preserved for the past 70 years."

The trip continued after a nearly six-hour train ride to Warsaw, Poland, which definitely had a different feel than Berlin. Nevertheless, students adjusted to the new language, currency, and customs and took in several museums and Warsaw's Old Town. The next day, the group split with half touring the city by bus and the rest walking through the former Warsaw ghetto on their own.



Holocaust and Genocide Studies graduate students at the former site of the Nazi Party rally grounds in Nuremberg.

Top (left to right): Patricia Norman, Ryan Woodward, Hadassah DeJack, Katie Brennan, Ali Kramen, Dale Mervine, Rob Battista.

Bottom (left to right): Hilary Bentman, Brittany Grim, Alicia Wolf, Pamela McMahon.



“It was alarming to walk for blocks and blocks and realize you never left the former ghetto’s boundaries,” said Patricia Norman, a second year graduate student from Las Cruces, NM, attesting to its immense size. Here, students toured the Jewish Cemetery, the infamous Umschlagplatz from which Jews were deported to death camps, and the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes. In the afternoon, 20 students, along with WCU history professor, Dr. William Hewitt, took a small bus to the Treblinka memorial, site of one of the six extermination camps operated by the Nazis. The entire group traveled the next day by bus to Kraków, stopping first in Oświęcim, site of the Auschwitz concentration camp. Emotions were heavy as the group toured the museum portion of Auschwitz, viewing artifacts from the prisoners, the execution area between Blocks 10 and 11, as well as the original gas chamber and crematorium just outside of the main camp’s fence. From there, the tour continued at nearby Birkenau, the extermination center of Auschwitz beginning in 1942. Students walked along the ramp built in 1944 from the main gate to the rear of the camp, pausing to examine a railcar left as a memorial on the tracks. At the rear of the camp, students sat near the



Main Gate:  
Sachsenhausen  
Concentration Camp

memorial situated between the remains of Crematoria II and III, while the tour guide explained the process in which many victims disembarked from the trains and walked directly to the gas chambers. The tour concluded with a walk through of the women’s camp, including a block where prisoners slept and the camp latrines. It was here that June, the Holocaust survivor on our tour, shared some painful, yet poignant memories of some of her family who did not survive the Holocaust. Students gathered together at the end of the tour to say Kaddish and the Lord’s Prayer before leaving the camp, overwhelmed and emotionally exhausted. The following day, some students elected to return to Auschwitz to explore on their own, while others toured Kraków either by bus or in small groups. Popular destinations included Kraków’s Main Square, the nearby Salt Mines, the Kazimierz Jewish district, Wawel Castle,

the Oskar Schindler Factory, and the Płaszów Concentration Camp Memorial. Only a couple of blocks from the Kraków Ghetto Memorial stands a remnant from the original ghetto wall – a stark reminder of the area’s once notorious purpose.

The following day, the entire group traveled by bus to the neighboring Czech Republic and upon arriving in Prague, took a walking tour of the historic parts of the city. The next day was a free day to which students devoted exploring Prague, visiting the numerous synagogues



Memorial:  
Treblinka  
Extermination  
Camp





Top: Auschwitz-Birkenau

Bottom: Terezin river memorial

throughout the city, and touring the nearby ghetto camp at Theresienstadt. Our South Dakota and New York counterparts returned to the U.S. early in the morning, while the WCU contingent opted for the extended tour, lasting an additional two days in Germany. En route to Munich the next day, the bus stopped in Nuremberg for a quick lunch and some shopping as well as a brief tour of the former Nazi Party rally grounds. Once in Munich, a bus tour throughout the city highlighted many castles, churches, and sites significant to World War II. A brief stop at the University of Munich allowed students to view The Monument to the White Rose, a series of replicated pamphlets were embedded into the sidewalk in front of the university, similar to those issued by the White Rose resistance movement during World War II. The last group event was a tour of nearby Dachau, the first concentration camp built by the Nazis in 1933 and liberated by American troops in 1945. The 2012 West Chester field studies group returned to Philadelphia the next day, via Munich and a layover at London's Heathrow Airport.

While schedules were tight and time always at a premium throughout the trip, the lasting impact of the field studies experience proved invaluable, especially to graduate students of the Holocaust and Genocide Studies program. Many students noted that this was a "trip of a lifetime." First year graduate student Pam McMahon (Broomall, PA) maintains, "Learning in the classroom through lecture or reading a book cannot compare to learning through field studies. The experience was limitless as far as academic enrichment."



This summer's World War II and The Western Front trip, also led by Dr. Gaydosh, runs from May 21 to June 5. The tour be visiting London, Portsmouth, Normandy, Paris, Bastogne, Berlin, and Munich. For more information, please contact Brenda Gaydosh at [bgaydosh@wcupa.edu](mailto:bgaydosh@wcupa.edu).



# THE END OF AN ERA: THE RETIREMENT OF DR. HEWITT

The completion of the 2012 Summer Session I saw the end of an era for the Holocaust and Genocide Studies program at West Chester with the retirement of Dr. William Hewitt, beloved professor and one of the program's founders.

Dr. Hewitt began his career in 1973, with a class on World War II and Genocide History at Hoehne High School near Trinidad, Colorado. One of the first of its kind, the course was met with mixed reviews— while the students engaged in tolerance awareness exercises like "Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes," some of their parents wondered why it was necessary to teach the Holocaust. "Teaching the Holocaust was new and innovative, and I thought it was necessary to introduce it," said Hewitt. He also counted on community interest: POW and Japanese relocation camps had been located near Trinidad, many local males had served in the Second World War, and the notion of war and its consequences was still fresh in America's collective mind at the end of the Vietnam era. "I was a pacifist and these were important issues to me, and students really responded to the course."

After that first class in Colorado Hewitt focused on the subfield of European history, and then Dr. Irene Shur contacted him about teaching Holocaust and Genocide studies at West Chester. She told him of her dream to start the program and they developed it together, admitting the first students in 2000.

He credits his difficult background and childhood with having a hand in his entrance into teaching about genocide. "Growing up in a tough situation, I became interested in those who experience trauma, and my best friend was Jewish, so we could both relate."

Dr. Hewitt pictured with Holocaust and Genocide Studies students in his final class, Summer 2012.

Left to right: Ali Kramen, Ryan Woodward, Alicia Moore, Brittany Grim, Patricia Norman, Meghan Davy, Jennifer Pioch.





Hewitt taught in the WCU History program from 1992 until his retirement in 2012. In that time he received the Bayard Rustin Award for Courage and Compassion in 2008, and taught twenty-nine different courses, including History of the American West, Native American History, Gay and Lesbian History in America, Latin American History, and Genocide History. Ultimately he taught more courses than any other professor since West Chester's founding. If there was a need for a course, he would develop it to ensure that students' graduation requirements were met.

"It perplexes me that human beings still engage in this horrific behavior. It saddens me that we haven't learned how to prevent genocide," said Hewitt. "Every year I'm really happy to see a new generation of students enthusiastic to learn about genocide, because that is the hope for the future."

After twenty years at West Chester, Hewitt was most proud of the high academic standards set by students in the program, many of whom have completed theses and have gone on to pursue doctorates. "Every class I had was really encouraging. I loved teaching the graduate students. They kept me going—it wasn't work, it was fun. I think we've turned out a really fantastic caliber and number of graduate students—scholars, real scholars of Holocaust and Genocide Studies. I think it is phenomenal, for our little program. These are really good minds, and I'm very proud of that."

## Spring 2013 Courses:

**HIS 603 Representing the "Other" in the Performing Arts** Dr. Friedman  
This course will examine how feature films and music have represented issues of race, religion, class, and gender over time.

**HIS 512 Independent Africa** Dr. Jones  
The post-war experience of Sub-Saharan Africa, viewed in the light of the end of European colonial administration and the growth of an independent African society.

**ENG 573 Literature of the Holocaust** Dr. Green  
Poetry, drama, short stories, novels, discursive essays, journals, diaries, and letters will be used to illustrate the horrors of the holocaust and provide a voice for its victims.

**PHI 570 Bioethics** Dr. Woolfrey  
Philosophical analysis of ethical issues in medicine, research, and biotechnology.

**PSY 540 Multicultural Psychology** Dr. Clarke  
An examination of cross-cultural perspectives in psychology. Sources of intercultural impediments to mutual understanding and successful psychotherapy are also examined.

**CRJ 505 Criminological Theory** Dr. O'Neill  
This course is a survey of the historical and contemporary attempts to explain the phenomena of crime.



## **UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES: WCU'S GUEST SPEAKERS OF 2012**

Each semester, guest speakers to West Chester University add a unique perspective to topics relevant to the course work of Holocaust and Genocide Studies students. Two exceptional scholars visited our campus in 2012, presenting very different, but equally intriguing topics of research.

On April 18, 2012, the WCU Holocaust and Genocide Program hosted a presentation by Dr. Michael Berenbaum, formerly of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. He is currently the director of the Sigi Ziering Institute at the American Jewish University. Dr. Berenbaum's lecture on rescue and resistance, the theme of this year's Yom HaShoah ceremonies, focused on the moral responsibilities required to prevent future genocides. He also touched on the history of Yom HaShoah and answered several student questions at the end of his presentation.

Berenbaum began with the origins of Yom HaShoah, explaining the full title of the memorial as Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day, thus setting up the majority of his discussion on Holocaust resistance. He explained the historical significance of the date, both for the Hebrew and Gregorian calendars, and delved into the controversy surrounding its origins, which mirrors an ongoing debate on the origins of the Holocaust. Noting that International Holocaust Remembrance Day occurs on January 27th, the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945 focuses on an ending, Berenbaum drew the distinction of Yom HaShoah's focus on a beginning, occurring between the anniversaries of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and Israeli Independence Day. Using the Uprising as an example of resistance, Berenbaum relayed stories from his own career and focused on the idea of two types of freedom: one in which one escapes oppression, and the other in which one refuses to allow his oppressor to define him. These themes would occur later in other contexts within Dr. Berenbaum's presentation.

Berenbaum further elaborated on his past professional experiences, ranging from the honest tedium he felt in museum administrative work to the more exciting creativity involved in developing documentaries and advising new museum projects. Such anecdotes from a professional are extremely valuable to a room full of history students. His broad, impressive career was as fascinating to learn about as the rest of his talk was inspirational. Berenbaum relayed tales of budget meetings for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accumulating and reviewing thousands of survivor testimonies with the Shoah Foundation, and his advising for the creation of a Holocaust museum in Macedonia.

Berenbaum used the fate of Macedonian Jews as an example of Holocaust atrocities and rescue, but placed importance on proper research, remembrance, and moral understanding when looking at historical events. Explaining how entire populations could be both perpetrators and rescuers at times, he highlighted the imperative of personal moral responsibility. By first understanding various types of resistance (symbolic, polemical, self-help, and armed), he argued one can develop the moral responsibility to make future genocides unacceptable and also never passively allow them to occur.



Citing historical research, his own shocking experiences in the aftermath of Rwanda, and theories of how human decency can prevent atrocities, Dr. Berenbaum exhibited the very prescription he believes is required to combat genocide. From testimony, we learn of many rescuers' unwillingness to label their actions as heroic. Most accounts reveal an unquestioning motivation to act solely in the spirit of helping another person. Dr. Berenbaum highlighted this very sentiment in explaining how ordinary people can combat extraordinary atrocities.

## Dr. Robert Miller

On Tuesday, September 10, 2012, West Chester University students had the opportunity to attend a lecture on Biblical archaeology by Dr. Robert D. Miller. Dr. Miller is the author of *Chieftains of the Highland Clans: A History of Israel in the 12th and 11th Centuries, B.C.* and presented a brief lecture on archaeological efforts to verify historical events found in the Bible. About ninety students attended the presentation, which was followed by a short question and answer session.

Dr. Miller began the lecture by establishing definitions of the minimalist and maximalist approaches he sees to recent archaeological studies of the Bible. Citing little evidence of Biblical history from late 20th century archaeological sites in Israel, Dr. Miller added how Exodus contains many inaccuracies and other archaeological efforts, while finding ancient cities said to be destroyed in Joshua, have resulted in sparse evidence otherwise. From the archaeological standpoint, Dr. Miller suggests the Book of Judges serves as some of the most verifiable parts of the Bible. He used the common American Thanksgiving story as a metaphor for Exodus. While they may be fraught with historical inaccuracies, both illustrate a mainstream, chosen experience; maintaining its memory throughout generations.

Dr. Miller expanded on his examples of minimalism and maximalism in regards to archaeological Biblical research. Minimalism, which grew in the 1990s, essentially takes the miracles out of the Bible. The remnants, therefore, constitute Israel's history. Maximalism assumes the Bible story to be true unless it can be proven otherwise, thereby continuing the story of the Old Testament to be the true history of Israel. After reviewing what some archaeological projects have and have not found in regards to Biblical locations, Dr. Miller concluded that minimalists ultimately have too strict of a definition on what constitutes a state or city or village. He maintains that the size of a state is highly variable from one culture to the next and no population or geographic size should necessarily be required when researching Biblical areas; hence, why archaeological projects have found varying degrees of evidence of civilization. Instead, Dr. Miller defined a state as being a social system under some sort of specialized control. This control apparatus regulates the movement of people and goods. When seeking to find a state within 10th century Juda, Dr. Miller suggested the use of several other indicators. First, he cited Central Place Theory, whereby a populated location serves the smaller areas around it. He also mentioned rising trends in urbanization and the development of a capital. Finally, he suggested states will exhibit what he calls symbols of legitimization, such as remaining arts and architecture, most of which cannot be currently proven by archaeological means alone. To fully argue for statehood, an area must have additional characteristics, such as evidence of trade, mass production, official stamps and seals, and a residential hierarchy in which the population lives separately and accordingly to class.



Following his presentation, Dr. Miller entertained questions from the audience. When asked if some Biblical stories should just serve as metaphors, Dr. Miller addressed the importance of looking for context when trying to understand a particular genre and also charged all historians to be open to all that is plausible when doing research before stopping at first signs of validating proof. This was perhaps the most poignant bit of advice he could give to a room of young students of history. His presentation was thorough to address both sides of the Biblical archaeology debate and offered new perspectives on not on the subject, but for examining that debate as well.



## D.C. EXCURSION PROVIDES POWERFUL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

On Saturday, October 20, 2012, 30 WCU students traveled via charter bus to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Dr. Brenda Gaydosch accompanied the students, some of whom had never visited the museum before. Having several hours to spend in Washington, some students spent the entire time within the permanent exhibit, while others split time between the exhibit and the museum's library, archives, and bookstore. "I spent hours in the main exhibit and could have stayed even longer," said Sara Eckhoff. She added, "One part that proved extremely moving and effective for me was the section of floor to ceiling photos of shtetl life. These pictures offered me the opportunity to see both a community and way of life that were completely decimated by the Holocaust, like a glimpse into a past that was forever lost." Several students also explored other museums within walking distance and visited the National World War II Memorial as well as the Library of Congress.



Holocaust and Genocide students visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Top (left to right): Sara Eckhoff, Meggan Gray, Ryan Woodward, Patricia Norman, Hadassah DeJack, Jordan Lapetz, Dr. Brenda Gaydosch, Michael Eisinger

Bottom (left to right): Ali Kramen, Pamela McMahon, Dorothy Steiger, Jared Montano



# LOCAL ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Numerous Holocaust-related educational opportunities arose in the West Chester area during 2012 in the form of lectures, films, and exhibits. With no shortage of events offered, WCU graduate students took advantage to attend as many as possible. Beginning in April, Theater N (Wilmington, DE) hosted a weekend screening of the Oscar-nominated film *In Darkness*, directed by Agnieszka Holland. Based on a true story, the film details the hiding and rescue of several Jews in the sewers of Lvov. The Halina Wind Preston Holocaust Education Committee, whose founder (Preston) survived the Holocaust by hiding in the Lvov sewers for 14 months, was partially responsible for bringing to the film to Wilmington.

In September, the Philadelphia Holocaust Remembrance Foundation sponsored the exhibit *Transcending Their Boundaries: The Children of Terezin*. An exhibit of children's drawings, toys, and games from the Terezin ghetto/camp was hosted at the Free Library of Philadelphia. Additional events included multiple cabaret performances throughout the Philadelphia area of songs written in Terezin as well as a screening and discussion of the documentary *Liga Terezin*. The film highlights the Jewish soccer league organized in Terezin and addresses the extreme racism still found at many European soccer matches today. Several WCU graduate students met with the film's director, Oded Breda, who spoke before the film not only about the Terezin soccer league, but also about his work at the Beit Theresienstadt museum in Israel.

On October 14th, Holocaust survivor Judith Meisel presented a documentary about her life, *Tak for Alt (Thanks for Everything)*, and followed with a question and answer session at Wilmington's Siegel Jewish Community Center. The film's introduction briefly chronicled Meisel's witnessing of the integration of a Civil Rights era Philadelphia neighborhood, causing her to reflect on her own experiences with persecution. First year graduate student Sara Eckhoff (Providence, RI) adds, "Meeting Judith Meisel was the highlight of my experience at WCU thus far."



Graduate students meet with a Holocaust survivor at the Siegel Jewish Community Center in Wilmington, DE.

Left to right: Ryan Woodward, Judith Meisel, Hadassah DeJack, Michael Eisinger, Sara Eckhoff, Rob Battista, Patricia Norman



Learning about her experiences in her film *Tak For Alt* left me feeling both profoundly moved and completely validated in my choice of studies.” Several students returned to the Siegel JCC on October 24th for a lecture by Judy Shepard, whose son Matthew’s murder in 1998 sparked renewed discussion on hate crimes and LGBT rights. Shepard spoke at length on both topics and allowed time for several questions from the audience.

In November, the Holocaust and Genocide Studies program co-sponsored the lecture “Turning Away from Hate” given by reformed neo-Nazi T. J. Leyden. Leyden spoke about his upbringing in California, entrance into the white supremacist movement, and detailed the movement’s existence and involvement in many institutions, from video game production to the armed services. Since leaving the movement, Ledyen has worked with the Simon Wiesenthal Center and toured the country speaking to school groups. Several hundred students attended the event in WCU’s Emilie K. Asplundh Concert Hall.

Also in November, Holocaust and Genocide Studies Director, Dr. Jonathan Friedman, spoke at Keshet Israel Congregation on the topic of the Holocaust in Greece; specifically the destruction of the Jews of Thessaloniki. The lecture preceded a presentation of Dr. Saul Friedman’s documentary, *Ash and Smoke: The Holocaust in Salonika*. Following the film, Dr. Friedman answered questions from the audience, including both graduate and undergraduate students, and spoke of general Holocaust themes and events specific to Greek Holocaust victims and survivors. The lecture and film were full of often-overlooked research directed at the Greek Jewish experience.

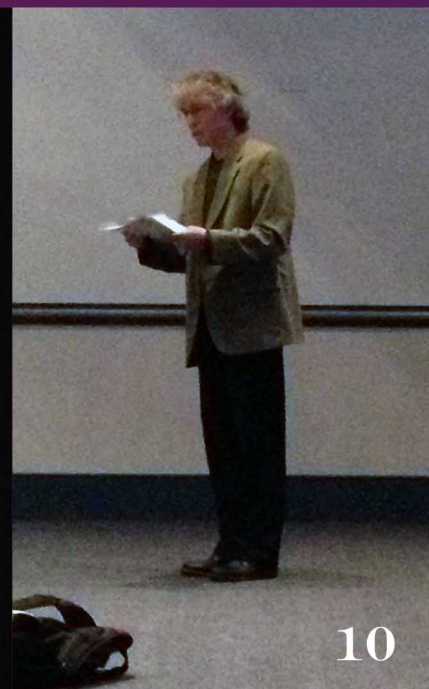
The presentation began by establishing Thessaloniki as a center of Jewish life, not only in Greece, but in the world. After the Spanish expulsion of Jews in 1492, so many settled in Thessaloniki, Greece’s second largest city, that it became known as the “Greek Jerusalem.” Anti-Semitic actions began after 1941, including the banning of Jewish newspapers and the display of the Star of David on clothing and businesses. Forced labor and public humiliation were common, including an infamous event in which every Jewish man, aged 18-45 and numbering around 7,000, reported to the city’s Liberty Square and were subjected to beatings and forced exercise in the summer heat.

Left to  
right:

Judith  
Meisel,

Judy  
Shepard,

Jonathan  
Friedman





By 1943, the Germans occupied all of Greece and a ghetto near the Thessaloniki train station housed an overcrowded Jewish population of 10,000. Jurgen Stroop oversaw deportation operations to Auschwitz just months after commanding the forces that fought the resistance uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. Ultimately, 96% of Thessaloniki's Jews perished, many before reaching the camps on the long train journeys from Greece to Poland. Those who survived deportation and an initial selection then battled a language barrier with other inmates, disease, and a much harsher climate than they had been accustomed. Jewish life in Thessaloniki today is understandably a shadow of its former self. Only a couple of Synagogues serve the small Jewish population. The Aristotelian University, built upon the Jewish Cemetery demolished in 1941, still stands today. Beyond a monument to the victims, very little institutional memory exists of the Jews of Thessaloniki murdered in the Holocaust.

The proximity to excellent museums and research centers make West Chester University's Holocaust and Genocide Studies program even more appealing to its graduate students. These additional events, hosted on or near WCU's campus, however, add an even more enriching level of perspective in addition to the already rigorous demands of academic study inside the classroom.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **WCU Holocaust Remembrance Day**

**Monday, April 8, 2013**

Dr. Brenda Gaydosh, who holds her Ph.D. in German history from American University, will be speaking on the fate of pastor Bernhard Lichtenberg, the Canon of the Cathedral of St. Hedwig in Berlin, who spoke out against Nazi antisemitism, was arrested by the Nazis, and died during his transit to Dachau concentration camp. The event is free and open to the public and will take place at 7:30pm in Main Hall Room 168.

### **WWII & The Western Front (Field Studies Trip)**

**May 21 - June 5 2013**

This trip will allow students a chance to gain insight into the effects of World War II as they visit the Cabinet War Rooms in London and stand where the Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy. They will witness the outcome of German occupation in Rouen and Paris, and see how conflict shaped the landscape of Bastogne and Cologne. Their final stop will be in Berlin and will shed light on the aftermath of World War II. For more information contact Dr. Brenda Gaydosh at [bgaydosh@wcupa.edu](mailto:bgaydosh@wcupa.edu).

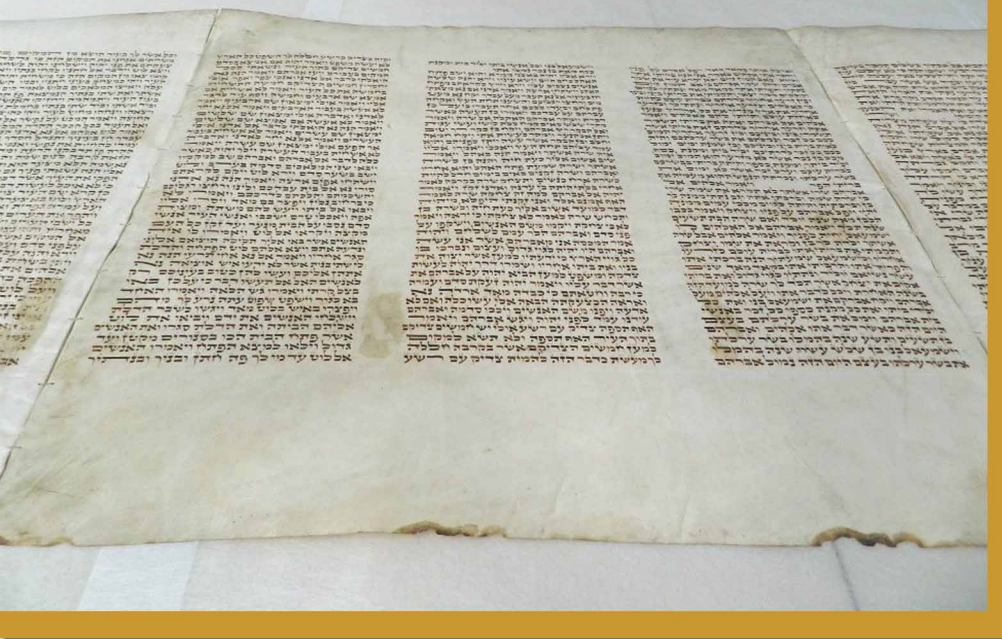
### **International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) 10th Biennial Conference:**

**June 19 - June 22 2013**

Representations and interpretations shape the way societies perceive their past, which impacts on their attitudes and behaviors. In an age where the role of communication is increasing, representations (narratives, images, arts, especially spread by popular culture) often constitute the standard way of becoming aware of the past, especially for new generations. Students and faculty from West Chester University will be attending and presenting at this conference. For more information, contact Dr. Brenda Gaydosh at [bgaydosh@wcupa.edu](mailto:bgaydosh@wcupa.edu).



During the May 2012 field studies trip to Europe, members of the Holocaust and Genocide Studies program discovered a Torah scroll while browsing a Warsaw antique shop. More than a century old, the Torah had previously been hidden inside the wall of a private residence in Poland. Pooling their resources together, students purchased the Torah with the intent of bringing it back to West Chester University to be displayed on campus. Placed in a cardboard box obtained at the antique shop, the Torah never left



the side of 2012 graduate Hadassah DeJack, who carried the box for the remainder of the trip through Poland, Czech Republic, and Germany. The Torah is currently undergoing restoration at The Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia. The CCAHA specializes in treating works of art and paper artifacts such as maps, rare books, manuscripts and other historical documents. DeJack and 2011 graduate Hilary Bentman have organized the Warsaw Torah Project to help fund the restoration of the Torah and secure its display within West Chester University's F.H. Green Library. Please visit the link below to see how you may help in this effort: <http://www.gofundme.com/26am34>





# SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENTS

Holocaust and Genocide Studies students had the opportunity to attend a number of regional conferences during the Fall 2012 semester. Held at various universities, the conferences varied in their lengths and topics, but all proved beneficial to the students who attended them.

The Ethel LeFrak Holocaust Education Conference, hosted at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, PA, focused primarily on the role of the Christian churches during the Holocaust and how this role differed in various European countries. Other topics covered during the two-day conference included Dr. Eva Fogelman discussing the motivation of rescuers during the Holocaust and more on the relationship between the Catholic Church and Judaism. The largest session focused on the Rwandan genocide and Carl Wilkens, an American pastor who stayed for the duration of the genocide and saved a number of Tutsi orphans.

For second year graduate student Robert Battista (Rising Sun, MD), meeting Holocaust survivor Shulamit Bastacky was an emotional highlight that left a lasting impression (see photo below). Though most of Bastacky's family lost their lives, she survived, hidden in a convent just outside of Vilna.

During the same weekend, other Holocaust and Genocide Studies students attended Yeshiva University's Out of the Ashes: Jewish Approaches to Medical Dilemmas Born Out of the Holocaust in New York City. Hosted by Yeshiva University's Student Medical Ethics Society, the conference focused on the topics of human experimentation, trans-generational trauma, and attitudes towards the mentally disabled. The conference featured a number of medical and Jewish law scholars, including Dr. Michael Berenbaum, former Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Research Institute and current Director of the Zigi Zeiring Institute at American Jewish University. "Getting to hear Dr. Berenbaum talk about the T4 experiments and their role in the creation of the Nazi death machine offered great insight into the arguments for and against the use of Nazi medical materials in modern science," said Michael Eisinger, a first year graduate student from Ann Arbor, MI. "Dr. Berenbaum also took time to discuss the importance of the T4 experiments and the fact that the perfection of the

killing process of German 'undesireables' was mainly perpetrated by average German citizens and not the same doctors that were made famous by their roles within the Nazi camp system, offering a new perspective on the progression of mass murder within the early days of the Third Reich."



In November, several Holocaust and Genocide Studies students attended the Esther Tuzman Memorial Holocaust Teach-In at Gratz College in Melrose Park, PA. Noted Holocaust scholar and psychiatrist, Dr. Robert J. Lifton, gave the keynote address entitled



"The Genocidal Mind." Following the main lecture, attendees had several break-out sessions from which to choose, including lectures on the Armenian genocide, contemporary Jewish Poland, and the Pennsylvania Holocaust education mandate, among others. Second year graduate student Meghan Davy (Minnetonka, MN) attended a discussion with Tova Friedman, believed to be the youngest person liberated from Auschwitz. Friedman remembered the woman who tattooed her arm saying, "you are such a small child, I am going to make yours as small as possible," these being the only kind words she could recall from anyone besides her own mother while in the camp. This and other sessions proved highly beneficial to all students in attendance. The conference also featured an exhibit area where attendees could purchase books and educational materials, network with other students and educators, and meet with Holocaust survivors.



Irene Hizme, Holocaust survivor, speaks at the *Out of the Ashes* Medical Ethics Conference.

## SUMMER & FALL 2013 COURSE OFFERINGS

**Summer I:** HIS 660 Field Studies to Europe

Dr. Brenda Gaydosh

**Summer II:** HIS 603 Nazi Germany MW 6-10 pm

Dr. Brenda Gaydosh

**Fall:** HIS 545 The Holocaust M 7:15-10 pm

Dr. Friedman

The study of steps leading to the Holocaust (1933-1945), the Holocaust itself, and the aftermath. The rise of Nazism is included.

PSY 540 Multicultural Psychology T 4:25-7:10

Dr. Tahmaseb-McConatha

An examination of cross-cultural perspectives in psychology. Sources of intercultural impediments to mutual understanding and successful psychotherapy are also examined.

PHI 512 Ethical Theories M 4:25-7:10 pm

Dr. Woolfrey

Examination of various ethical theories with practical applications to such problems as authority, punishment, rights, marriage, and race.

For more information on Holocaust and Genocide Studies programs visit us on our newly redesigned website: [http://www.wcupa.edu/\\_academics/holocaust/](http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/holocaust/)



# CURRENT STUDENT RESEARCH

For many students seeking an M.A., Master's theses and seminar papers are an anticipated opportunity to delve into a topic of particular interest, producing a document reflective of the issues that inspired them to pursue a graduate degree within their chosen field. The West Chester handbook for thesis guidelines describes the process as offering "an excellent research opportunity and experience, " in which students hone valuable skills "identifying and defining a problem, locating and evaluating relevant information, executing ways of getting clear answers to good questions, and mastering the conventions of research writing that are the essence of scholarship."

Under the new graduation requirements for the Holocaust and Genocide Studies M.A. program, implemented in the fall of 2011, students can substitute a thesis for two elective courses and comprehensive examinations (the alternative option being completion of six electives in addition to the four required courses, and passage of comprehensive examinations during the spring of the intended graduation year). General procedure for successful completion of a thesis at West Chester University states that the interested students must obtain their advisor's approval on their selected research topic and assemble a committee of three to four faculty members prepared to read and evaluate the work presented, prepare an outline of their topic and their intended research and writing plans, submit the outline to their advisor and confer with this faculty member throughout the writing and research process, and obtain approval of each committee member on the completed final draft.

Below is a sampling of Holocaust and Genocide Studies works-in-progress:

My topic is life and community in the Fohrenwald Displaced Persons Camp, which was in existence from 1945 through 1957. It was the longest running displaced persons camp, and basically meant that the Jewish refugees that lived there had to live in a former concentration camp for an additional twelve years after the end of the war. So in a way, it extended their Holocaust experience far beyond the time people generally identify with the end of the Holocaust. – Ali Kramen

My topic is about the long-term physical and medical effects of trauma inflicted on inmates in the camps. Instead of examining the psychological ramifications of the survivor's experience I have chosen to study the physical remnants of their incarceration. The abuse suffered would have a permanent effect on the health of the individual; from broken bones to malnutrition induced organ weakness. Though many survived, it was not without scars of their experience—both literally and figuratively. Many still suffer health issues related to their time spent in camps. Torture inflicted on these individuals is still used on prisoners of war around the world, and leads to a life-long struggle of survival long after rescue or release. – Alicia Wolf

I have always been interested in the history and culture of Ireland, and wanted to explore its policies during the Second World War, particularly toward Jewish refugees from continental Europe. My topic is an examination of the neutrality maintained by Eamon de Valera and his administration, and the detrimental effects of a policy that sought protection solely for Irish Jews and an extremely small percentage of immigrants. I have focused particularly on the tension between the neutral Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (aligned with the Allies throughout the war as part of the United Kingdom), and two Kindertransports which proved the rare positive aspects of Irish wartime refugee policy. – Meghan Davy



## *Beauty Weeps*

*Sleep of the Forest,  
Dark Sleep, Deep Sleep.  
With dirt between my fingers  
I collapse.*

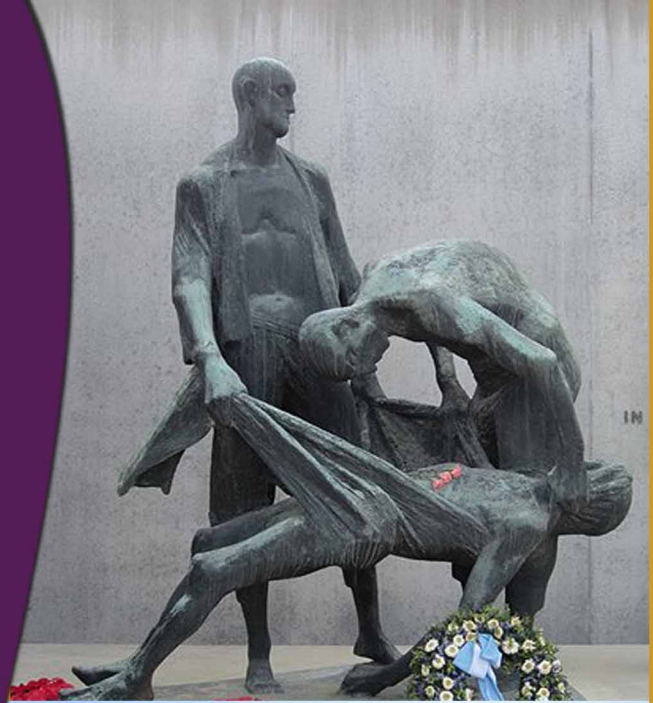
*Beauty weeps, wasted and doomed.  
My eyes blinded,  
Beauty drips to the stone  
where I sit, waiting  
for what will not come,  
but is already here.*

*And now, it is  
my turn to moan, or  
will I wail in the pale pastel  
of the passing gloom?*

*My chin is on my chest.  
The warmth of my last breath  
bathes my nakedness.  
This bright promise of day  
grows dim.*

*The Dark Sleep silently,  
silently creeps.  
The sleep of the dark forest silently creeps  
until I breathe no more.*

*Pamela Wilson McMahon  
10 March 2013*





Below: After visiting the the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's traveling exhibit, *Deadly Medicine*, at the Philadelphia Free Library, several students walked to the nearby memorial to the Armenian Genocide at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Created by sculptor Khren Der Harootian, the memorial was dedicated April 24, 1976.



**Holocaust, 1975**  
Cast glass

**Henry Halem**  
American, born 1938

Gift of Drs. Joan and Bernard Chodorkoff for  
the David Jacob Chodorkoff Collection  
DIA NO. 1993.125

Above: On a recent trip to Michigan, Jordan Lapetz & Michael Eisinger visited the Detroit Institute of Arts. One of the exhibits included the glass sculpture entitled "Holocaust" by artist Henry Halem.





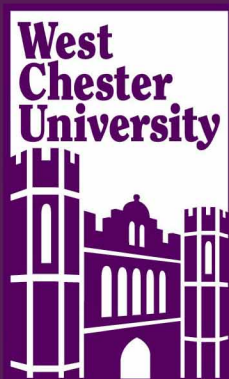
Recent student outings  
have included:

Battleship New Jersey  
(Camden, NJ)

WWII Watchtowers  
(Rehoboth Beach, DE)

National WWII Memorial  
(Washington, D.C.)





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