

People's University Examines Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust

With anti-Semitism and other forms of xenophobia on the rise, the 10th series from the People's University at the Ohio County Public Library will examine this horrific malady within the context of the Holocaust. What are the roots of anti-Semitism? How has it manifested itself? How did people respond to the Holocaust as it unfolded? Instructors who participated in a Classrooms Without Borders study seminar to Poland this past summer will probe these and other significant questions. The series will also feature two panel discussions featuring panel members who also participated in the same study seminar, accompanied by a Holocaust survivor. The new People's University series, "Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust," will begin at the Ohio County Public Library in Wheeling on October 21 and continue to meet for eight consecutive Tuesday evenings at 7 pm, ending December 16. There will be no class on the evening of November 11, as the library will be closed for the Veteran's Day observance. Each class will be approximately 60-90 minutes in length. The library's partners for this program include Classroom Without Borders, Temple Shalom, Wheeling Jesuit University, and the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

The full schedule for People's University: Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, is as follows:

Class 1, Oct. 21:

Framing Genocide and Anti-Semitism

An introduction to theories and the history of genocide, as well as anti-Semitism in the West from past and current perspectives. Instructor Dr. Adam Oberlin of The Linsly School, earned his PhD in Germanic Studies from the University of Minnesota and has published and presented widely on pre-modern Germanic languages, linguistics, and culture.

Class 2, Oct. 28:

Blood Libel and Christ Killers

From the earliest anti-Semitic writings and art in pre-Christian antiquity through the Middle Ages, learn about the religious and cultural dimensions of anti-Semitism among pagans, Christians, and Jews. Instructor: Dr. Adam Oberlin.

Class 3, Nov. 4:

A 'Rational' Turn

In more recent centuries, anti-Semitism has developed alongside ideological changes in both secular and religious life. Learn about these societal shifts and how they contributed to modern forms of anti-Semitism. Instructor: Dr. Adam Oberlin.

Class 4, Nov. 18:

German Anti-Semitism in the Age of Total War, 1900-1941

The development of German anti-Semitism both followed general European trends and differed in specific ways during the era of the First World War, the tumultuous 1920s, and the first eight years of the Third Reich. This presentation will examine German anti-Semitism within the context of European developments. Instructor Dr. Jeff Rutherford is associate history professor at Wheeling Jesuit University, where he teaches classes on the Second World War, the Holocaust, and modern Germany. He co-edited the volume *Nazi Policy on the Eastern Front, 1941* (2012) and wrote *Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front: The German Infantry's War, 1941-1944* (2014).

Class 5, Nov. 25:

The Holocaust

The murder of European Jewry was inseparable from the larger German policies implemented in the occupied territories to the east of the Third Reich. This presentation will analyze the larger context of German population policies and the place Jews occupied in Nazi dreams and nightmares.

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Rutherford.

Class 6, Dec. 2:

Panel Discussion, Part 1

Hear first-hand accounts from Wheeling teachers and students who participated in a Holocaust-related study seminar to Poland, this past summer. These Classrooms Without Borders participants were accompanied by a Holocaust survivor who had been imprisoned in labor camps and concentration camps, including Auschwitz. Dr. Zipora Gur, executive director of Pittsburgh-based Classrooms Without Borders, will also present.

Class 7, Dec. 9:

Righteous Gentiles:

Points of Light in a Dark Era

One of the main "groups" that witnessed the unfolding of the Holocaust were the "by-standers." Most of the people living in Nazi-Occupied Europe reacted with ambivalence to the Nazi's genocidal policies, some with apathy, others with fear and still others collaborated on some level or another. A small minority of non-Jewish people broke with what was normative behavior and went out of their way to save their Jewish neighbors, friends, colleagues or even unknown victims. In most cases these acts of altruism, kindness, religious piety and basic humanity could potentially bring a death sentence on the saviors themselves. After the Holocaust, the State of Israel created a mechanism to pay homage and respect for the "Righteous Gentiles" who had saved Jews. This presentation will attempt to illuminate the historic phenomenon, the difficulties facing saviors, and some of the dilemmas about whether or not to award certain individuals with this (Israeli/Jewish) recognition. Personal stories will be central to the discussion.

Instructor: Avi Ben-Hur, Director of Education, Scholar in Residence, Classrooms Without Borders

Class 8, Dec. 16:

Panel Discussion, Part 2

Hear first-hand accounts from another group of Wheeling teachers and students who participated in a Holocaust-related study seminar to Poland, this past summer. These Classrooms Without Borders (CWB) participants were accompanied by a Holocaust survivor who had been imprisoned in labor camps and concentration camps, including Auschwitz. Lisa Allen, chair of the Wheeling Classrooms Without Borders Advisory Board, will also present.

In keeping with the mission of public libraries as sanctuaries of free learning for all people, the Ohio County Public Library created The People's University, a free program for adults who wish to continue their education in the liberal arts. The People's University features courses (taught by experts in each subject) that enable patrons to pursue their goal of lifelong learning in classic subjects such as history, music appreciation, philosophy, and literature. Patrons may attend as many classes as they wish. There are no tests of other requirements and all programs are free and open to the public. To register for this People's University series, please email the library by visiting the library's web site at www.ohiocountylibray.org and clicking to the "Contact/Email us" page, call 304-232-0244, or visit the Reference Desk.