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The articles in this issue address teaching about the Holocaust in the context of a religious studies curriculum. Royal Rhodes's essay, "Memory and Silence: Teaching the Holocaust in a Liberal Arts College," places the religious studies approach into an interdisciplinary context at a small liberal arts college. In his article, "Film and the Teaching of the Holocaust," Jay Geller specifically addresses the use of film in a religious studies course in a university setting that includes undergraduate, graduate, and divinity students. Marilyn Salmon's essay, "Interpreting the Bible after the Holocaust," describes how a course on anti-Semitism in the New Testament became an opportunity to teach about the Holocaust in a Christian seminary. A fourth article by Peter Haas, "A Holocaust Curriculum for the Twenty-first Century," offers a model for cooperation between university professors and high-school teachers. Each essay offers thoughtful reflection on the complexities of teaching a course on the Holocaust.

The motivations for teaching a course on this subject vary from person to person and from institution to institution. For some historians it may "simply" be a matter of offering a course on an historical event at the center of the twentieth century. Yet no one who has taught a course on this subject approaches it without some reservations. Jay Geller articulates this well when he describes his teaching of the Holocaust as being "guided by problems of identification and representation, with a particular focus on trauma and memory, history, and witness, *and, perhaps, above all, on a question that is fundamental to all teachers (and scholars) of the Holocaust, 'Who can speak about it?'*"

" (emphasis mine). He rightly points out the dilemma all of us face: we did not participate in this horrific event; how can we speak of it? And, yet, speak we must.

It is difficult to say exactly when courses on the Holocaust began to appear in the curriculum of American colleges and universities. The timing was inevitably linked to the availability of resources. The publication of Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Yale University Press, 1961), Arthur Morse's

While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy

(Random House, 1968), and Lucy Dawidowicz's

The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945

(Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975), made possible the treatment of the subject in college classrooms in the 1960s and 1970s. Early on, the topic was covered in departments of history. As Jewish studies positions and programs, many of which were rooted in religion departments, were created, it became more common to find courses on the Holocaust as regular offerings in religious studies. Whether such a course belonged in history or religious studies was frequently a matter of debate. My own institution is a case in point. Kenyon College created a Jewish studies position in the religion department in 1967. But it was not until 1978 that the holder of that position, a refugee from Germany whose background was in philosophy of religion, felt

sufficiently prepared through a rigorous program of reading and study to offer a course on the Holocaust. My colleague, Royal Rhodes, describes the development of the interdisciplinary course which grew out of the initial religious studies offering. In many ways this course still has its home in religious studies, since that department is the only one which consistently supplies faculty to teach in the course.

The question of the relevance of a course on the Holocaust to a religious studies curriculum may still be debated by some, yet the number of colleges where such a course is taught in the context of the study of religion has grown over the years. Those who argue that the course belongs in a history curriculum may have a point. While the subject matter certainly focuses primarily on the suffering of European Jewry, I regularly remind my students that a study of the Holocaust is not a study of Judaism. Indeed, all too often American students will be attracted to a course on the Holocaust but not be equally interested in a course that addresses Jewish life and thought. Indicative of this is the fact that in religious studies we have decided to count the interdisciplinary course on the Holocaust toward a concentration in Judaism within the major in religious studies only if the student has had a basic course on the Jewish tradition. The history department, on the other hand, will allow a student to count the interdisciplinary course toward the major.

Every course on the Holocaust must give attention to the historical factors leading up to the devastation of European Jewry: anti-Semitism, German nationalism and the rise of Nazism and Nazi tactics (ghettoization, Einsatzgruppen, concentration camps). Recommended texts that introduce these subjects include *The Holocaust in History* (Brandeis, 1987) by Michael R. Marrus, *Witness to the Holocaust* (William Morrow, 1997) edited by Michael Berenbaum, and Lucy Dawidowicz's *The War Against the Jews*. Ideally, there will also be time to examine the role of the United States in the Holocaust using either David Wyman's study, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941–1945* (Pantheon, 1984), or Deborah Lipstadt's *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933–1945* (Free Press, 1985). Individuals will decide how much time to allot to each of these issues. These topics will be covered as well in a course taught in a history department.

So how, then, does the religious studies approach to the study of the Holocaust differ from that of others who teach a course on this subject? The answer lies in what issues are brought to bear in a religious studies course on the Holocaust that might not be given attention in a strictly historical treatment of the subject. Religious studies courses address religious responses to the Holocaust. Both Elie Wiesel's *Night* (Bantam, 1982) and Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz* (Touchstone, 1996) are, in my opinion, essential to any course on the Holocaust. Both Wiesel

and Levi offer perspectives about the role of faith in the context of their distinctly different reflections on their own suffering and the suffering of those who did not live to speak or write. If students do not raise questions about faith in the context of the Shoah, it is the task of the instructor to draw out these questions. Wiesel and Levi's writings are appropriate sources for discussion on this topic. Emil Fackenheim's "The 614th Commandment" and Richard Rubenstein's "The Dean and the Chosen People" are excellent short readings, which give students an exposure to the work of two prominent post-Holocaust Jewish thinkers.

In addition to treating Jewish responses, religious studies courses offer students opportunities to explore the role of Christianity in the Holocaust. As Peter Haas points out in his essay, "the Holocaust, was, after all, in many ways a war of German Christians (or people who thought of themselves as Christians) against at first German Jews and then against all Jews." The seminary context of Marilyn Salmon's course is an ideal setting to raise the issue of anti-Semitism in the New Testament but it is riot the only place where consciousness-raising is appropriate. At Kenyon, students in the course on the Holocaust hear lectures on the persecution perpetrated by the Roman Catholic Church in the middle ages: libels; crusades; inquisition. Class discussion focuses on the role of Pope Pius XII and his failure to intercede on behalf of European Jews. The various responses of the Protestant denominations — resistance, silence, collaboration — are addressed as well. Peter Haas reflects in his article on the challenges facing those who wish to incorporate ethical and theological issues into the nonsectarian secondary public school. In my opinion, this is a challenge that all of us who teach the course face, whether in public or private, secondary or post-secondary institutions.

Recent developments in the Roman Catholic Church give all discussions about the Holocaust a contemporary context. In March 1998 the Church issued a document written over eleven years by the Commission on Jewish Relations with the Jews, accompanied by a letter by Pope John Paul II. The document, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* was not the apology many have awaited but it was the beginning of public recognition of the Church's role in medieval persecution and its failure to act during the Holocaust. This past March Pope John Paul II took an even bolder step when, against the wishes of some of his cardinals and bishops, he offered a public apology for the errors of the Church over the last 2,000 years. The apology came in the midst of Sunday Mass at St. Peter's Basilica just ten days before the Pope's visit to Israel. There he visited Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, and stood for a long period of silence before the granite slab that symbolizes the millions murdered by the Nazis. Later, he asserted that silence was the only response because no words could be strong enough to express one's abhorrence of the Holocaust. Rabbis and other Jewish leaders have responded to these gestures. One of our tasks as teachers of religious studies is to direct students to current developments in the dialogue between Jews and Christians. This can be made all the more relevant when current events are brought into discussion in the context of academic courses on the Holocaust.

Each of these essays demonstrates the complexities of teaching a course on the Holocaust. Above all, thoughtful planning and consultation, either with a team of colleagues preparing to teach the course, or with others who have already taught it, are recommended. The variety of material includes print matter, films, videos, artwork, and eyewitness accounts (either by a survivor willing to come speak to the class or through taped interviews now being collected in archives). Every year new books are available, and while some texts are now in some manner canonized in the study of the Holocaust, newly-published material must be considered and included when it offers a new perspective. The course should always be taught in the context of current events. Students should be pointed toward articles directly relevant to the Holocaust, such as war crimes trials or reparations for victims of slave labor, so that they can learn how the ramifications of such a cataclysmic event can be discerned more than 50 years after the end of World War II. Finally, as Peter Haas points out in his article, in the decades to come our Holocaust pedagogy must take into consideration what "generational change means for the classroom." This is always the case in the various aspects of religious studies that we teach. For a course that focuses precisely on an event that tragically defines the twentieth century, it will become increasingly important to keep in mind the gap that is growing between this event and the twenty-first century students we will be teaching.