

**Nursing School (MSN)
Academic Syllabus**

**Course Title: Medicine, Nursing, and Leadership during the Holocaust
Leadership in Clinical Nursing: Here, Now, and in the Future**

Course No.: 600108

Credits: Class: 2 weekly hours; credit points: 2

Course Coordinators

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The Goals of the Course

“Four months after the sealing of the [Warsaw] ghetto, one of the nurses described the ghastly conditions in the hospital in her diary.

...When I come to my ward, it's a real hell. Children, sick with measles, lie in twos or threes to a bed...shaved little heads...covered with lice...My assistant and I have to take care of fifty children. Pressure of work drives us crazy...There are ten children waiting in the reception room...I have no beds, no linens, no blankets nor sheets...The rooms are terribly cold, the children huddle under the blankets and the fever shakes them...In the entrance hall lies a boy of five, swollen with hunger. He is in the last stage, his life ending because of hunger...he utters for the last time “a piece of bread”...Dead for a piece of bread.”

Miriam Offer, *White Coats in the Ghetto*, pp. 273-274, drawing on Joseph Kermish, *To Live with Honor and Die with Honor*, pp. 403-404.

In this course, we discuss the Holocaust in its historical, social, and medical-nursing contexts. We review the way of life and survival inside the Ghetto, while emphasizing the healthcare systems that existed in the Ghetto, Jewish leaders and the way they coped with those hellish conditions. We also examine the role that physicians and nurses played in perpetrating Nazi crimes, at one of the lowest moral points in the history of the medical and nursing professions. We explore the effects of the Holocaust on the current day and age, including current care and treatment of Holocaust survivors. Studying the period of the Holocaust leads us to consider moral, social, and professional dilemmas and challenges, both concurrent and universal, that are relevant to the nursing profession. We also review cases of genocide committed in other places and times, touch on issues related to racism, denial, resistance, and leadership during extreme crises, and reflect on their potential implications for the nursing practice.

Upon completing this course, the student will be able to:

- ✓ Act as a professional leader guided by humanistic and moral values, while operating from a multicultural perspective.
- ✓ Critically examine ethical issues and dilemmas that arise from the study of history.
- ✓ Provide patient and family-centered care while respecting individual patients' uniqueness, their personal beliefs, culture, and personal history.
- ✓ Engage in continuous, deep, and meaningful learning, which produces moral ethics that contribute to the student's society, profession, and field of expertise.
- ✓ Demonstrate community engagement and civic responsibility, promoting humanistic and democratic values, tolerance, and human rights.

The Course Contents

The course includes a wide range of discipline-based and theoretical perspectives, shedding light on different aspects of the issues studied. To this end, the course is comprised of lectures presented by the school's faculty members, Dr. Anat Romem, Dr. Zvika Orr, Dr. Haya Raz, Dr. Laurie Glick, and by guest lecturers, including Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, Prof. Yair Auron, Dr. Miriam Offer, Dr. Shai Feuering, Dr. Tessa Chelouche, and Dr. Sharon Geva, among others.

Furthermore, the course includes two field trips:

1. The course opens with a visit to the history museum at Yad Vashem, emphasizing the development of the "Final Solution."
2. The second field trip is to The Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, located in the Western Galilee. We visit the exhibition titled "Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race," and the "Concentration and Extermination Camps" exhibition. The students participate in a workshop about "Healing by Killing." They also discuss the dilemmas encountered by the healthcare professionals who worked in the Jewish Ghettos.

The course includes the following subjects:

- Law and morality in Nazi Germany – race and racism, dehumanization, eugenics, forced sterilization, and "euthanasia," and their connection to medicine and nursing.
- The role of German doctors and nurses in performing and executing Nazi crimes.
- The Nazi perception of leadership and its inherent dangers.
- Jewish Warsaw – The Jewish aid and rescue organizations: TOZ (Jewish healthcare organization), CENTOS (Jewish organization in Poland for orphan care), the Jewish community's self-help organization, the Joint, the Judenrat (Jewish Ghetto administrative council) and their roles within the Ghetto.
- Jewish doctors and nurses during the holocaust, medical ethical dilemmas encountered while treating patients in the Ghetto, rescue dilemmas.

- The main illnesses during the Holocaust: hunger, typhus, and tuberculosis, controlling pandemic outbreaks.
- Jewish leadership during the Holocaust, Jewish women's leadership.
- Childhood and adolescence in a broken world, children in the Holocaust.
- Morbidity among Holocaust survivors, aspects of treating survivors today.
- The hospital as a total institution.
- Trauma, coping, resilience, and hope.
- Other genocides: Armenia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.
- States of denial and apathy to genocide and extreme human suffering.
- The development of human and civil rights in the aftermath of the Holocaust – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the core international human rights instruments, democratic values and the threat they are under.
- Racism and antisemitism today.
- Personal and collective memory, remembrance, speaking up and silence, forgiveness.

Student performance and assessment measures

1. Mandatory attendance, including lessons and field trips.
2. Handing in a reflective analysis -- 25% of the final grade.
3. A seminar paper – concept analysis -- 50% of the final grade.
4. Presenting the concept analysis in class -- 25% of the final grade.
5. A minimum passing grade for the entire course and on each assignment: 70/100.

Prerequisite courses: none.

Bibliography

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Slovic, P. (2018). The more who die, the less we care: Confronting genocide and the numbing arithmetic of compassion. Speech delivered at TEDxKakumaCamp, Kakuma, Kenya, 9 June 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIt-THEbNIE> Written version: <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/23303/Slovic%20TEDxKakumaCamp.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

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Films

The Karski Report, Director: Claude Lanzmann (France, 2010, English).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQ7Y1dc6sbQ>

Saul fia, Director: László Nemes (Hungary, 2015, Hungarian, Yiddish, and German with Hebrew subtitles).

Au revoir les enfants, Director: Louis Malle (France, 1987, French with Hebrew subtitles). A film review (in Hebrew): <https://www.yadvashem.org/he/education/educational-materials/film-reviews/goodbye-children.html>

Hunger – The Underground Resistance of the Warsaw Ghetto Physicians. Film of Udi Meiron, Dubi Kroytoro, Irit Lechter-Rodoy, and Tal Michael. (Israel, 2020, in Hebrew).
<https://www.kan.org.il/item/?itemid=69606>

On the course's webpage, students can find a collection of about 20 additional articles in Hebrew that were published in the journal *Harefuah*, as well as other articles for students' perusal (optional reading).

Changes to the syllabus may be announced