

Lecturer's name: Dr. Miriam Offer

Course name: **Medicine, Nazism and the Holocaust**

Type of course: Lecture

Course Rationale and Aims

The history of medicine during the Holocaust period is a broad, multidisciplinary field, which arouses the keen interest of many researchers worldwide. During the National Socialist period, thousands of physicians and scientists in Germany and Austria committed medical crimes that were unprecedented in their scope and severity. Individual physicians and the institutionalized medical system cooperated with the Nazi regime to an extent that was far greater than any other profession. Their scientific support served to strengthen the Nazis' anti-Semitic biologically racist ideology. They initiated and committed inhumane medical crimes, while crudely trampling the noble principles of the medical profession until they became murderers in white coats. Research that has developed over recent decades sheds light on the actions of the German physicians ("the study of the perpetrators") as well as on the coping of thousands of Jewish physicians who, under their own steam, as persecuted victims, established medical systems in the ghettos and in other areas under Nazi oppression ("the study of the victims").

The physicians' and health systems' decline to rock bottom, on one hand, and the Jewish medical staff's heroic struggle under genocide conditions, on the other, give rise to a multitude of questions about the riddle of human nature and society under extreme circumstances and about the warning signals to be heeded by the medical profession regarding the power and the ability for its wondrous achievements while simultaneously wreaking devastation and destruction.

Throughout the course, we will learn about the historical and social processes that were the background and an influence on these developments, while addressing contemporarily relevant questions. Research literature, film excerpts, documentation and testimonies from the Holocaust period will all be included, encouraging discussion and thinking about the significant of this subject for present-day.

Course Topics

- **Physicians and scientists in service of Nazi ideology:** The development of science and medicine in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century and under the Nazi regime; racial theory; eugenics, racial hygiene; National Socialist legislation for "racial improvement" and the sterilization of hundreds of thousands of "useless" patients; persecution of Jewish physicians and dismissal from their positions; "euthanasia" of hundreds of thousands of "Aryan" mental health patients and people with disabilities including killing by gas poisoning; segregation of the Jews in enclosed ghettos on the recommendation of German physicians based on the racist, anti-Semitic precaution against the spread of epidemics; the physicians' role in the extermination camps—selections, medical experiments; the physicians' decisive impact in implementation of Nazi ideology and in accelerating the racist, anti-Semitic policy and the development of the "Final Solution," which led to the Jewish Holocaust
- **Jewish medicine on the eve of the Holocaust and its challenges in the ghettos and camps under the Nazi regime:** The characteristics of the medical system in Jewish society in Poland during the interwar period; the coping of Jewish medical systems with unprecedented conditions during the Holocaust, in different areas of occupation—organizational and medical aspects; ethical dilemmas in the work of the medical staff in the ghettos and camps; the contribution of Jewish women physicians and nurses to the medical

system during the interwar period and during the Holocaust; medical research carried out by Jewish physicians in the ghettos and camps; the underground study of medicine and professional in-service training; the uniqueness of the Jewish medical system during the Holocaust in broad historical context

- **Challenges facing the medical system and "the patients" after the Holocaust:** central medical and ethical aspects from international and Jewish perspectives: The Nuremberg Doctors' Trial; the Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki following the Nuremberg trials; medical issues among Holocaust survivors after their release in their countries of origin and in the DP camps; challenges and warning signals in the era of accelerated development of science and technology and modern medicine

	Lecture Topic
	A. Physicians and scientists in the service of Nazi ideology
1.	Medicine and physicians in Nazi Germany: How did physicians turn into murderers? The biologically racist vision of Nazism and the central role of German physicians in its realization Murderous science: Racial theory, "racial hygiene" and the system of eugenics in Western countries and in Nazi Germany
2.	Nazi legislation for "racial improvement," forced sterilization for the "useless" in Germany Murderous physicians in white coats: the T4 program—"Euthanasia" of mental health patients, people with disabilities, alcoholism, and other "shortcomings"
3.	From medical murder to the Holocaust: Physicians in the extermination camps—selections, killing by gas poisoning, medical experiments. The functioning and personalities of Nazi physicians (Lifton's theory and other theories of how physicians became murderers)
	B. The Jewish medical system in the ghettos and camps – the struggle for health and the saving of lives under genocide conditions
4.	The medical system in the largest of the ghettos: The Warsaw Ghetto How did the Jews establish medical services under genocide conditions, under their own steam? An underground medical faculty in the ghetto? Academic research on hunger disease? The unrecognized contribution of women at the frontline of the medical services. Director of the Warsaw Ghetto Health Department, Dr. Izrael Milejkowski, his writings and his fate
5.	Ethical dilemmas that faced the medical staff in the Warsaw Ghetto – tragic dilemmas in extreme circumstances following dilemmas recognized as such and documented by medical and health service practitioners during the Holocaust
6.	The medical system in the Lodz Ghetto and in the Theresienstadt Ghetto: Medicine in the Lodz Ghetto – research based on photographs and the album of the health department in the Lodz Ghetto Medicine in the Theresienstadt Ghetto and Dr. Hermann Strauss's writings, which survived the ghetto
7.	"Notes from the Valley of Death:" Medicine in the Shavli Ghetto and births in the Lithuanian ghettos based on the diary of Dr. Aaron Pik. Decrees against the unborn, coping with the impossible
8.	The Jewish hospital in Berlin – the final remnant of Germany Jewry during the Third Reich. The unique fate of the Berlin Jewish Hospital

	Lecture Topic
9.	Jewish physician-prisoners in concentration and extermination camps – conditions, dilemmas, and testimonies
	C. Medicine during and after the Holocaust – implications for after the Holocaust
10.	The Nuremberg Trials and the Nazi Doctors' Trial: the trial proceedings and the claims of the criminal physicians, sentencing, the Nuremberg Code. Attempts at concealment and repression. The inclusion of physicians, who were active under the Nazi regime in Germany and Austria, in key positions in the health care field and in academic teaching after the war. Exploitation of body parts of victims of medical crimes, after the Holocaust and up to the present day
11.	Physicians and nurses who survived the Holocaust – absorption in the State of Israel and their contribution to the formation of the Israeli medical systems
12.	Morbidity among Holocaust survivors and their descendants – physical and mental health treatment of Holocaust survivors. Recent studies on late morbidity among Holocaust survivors and their descendants
13.	Summary: Symposium: Challenges and warning signals in the era of accelerated development of modern medical science and technology

Compulsory requirements

- Active participation in the course including preparation of reading material for lectures and participation in class discussion
- End-of-course examination on the required reading material and lecture content

Final grade components

- Class attendance and participation and required preparatory reading – 10%
- Examination – 90%

Compulsory reading

נדב, ד. (2006). רפואה ונאציזם. תל- אביב: האוניברסיטה המשודרת, משרד הביטחון
 עופר, מ. (2015). חלוק לבן בגטו, מבט על קורות הרפואה היהודית בפולין בתקופת השואה. ירושלים: יד ושם.
 פרקים: ראשון, חמישי, עשירי, סיכום.

Recommended reading (Optional)

1. אלקין, ר. (1992). בית החולים היהודי בברלין- שריד אחרון ליהודי גרמניה בתקופת הרייך השלישי. ילקוט מורשת, ג'ג, 53-92.
2. בלאדי- שוויגר, ע. (1989). בית החולים בגטו ורשה, זיכרונותיה של רופאה בבית החולים על שם ברסון ובאומן 1939-1943. עדות, ג'ד, 17-44.
3. דברוז'צקי, מ. (תשי"ט). אירופה ללא ילדים: תכניות הנאצים להרס ביולוגי. ירושלים: יד- ושם. עמ' 13-24.
4. הרצוג, ר. (2014). ישראל בעיני הרופאים מקרב שארית הפליטה: מרפואה בשואה לרפואה בישראל. בתוך: עופר, ד. (2014), ישראל בעיני שורדי השואה וניצוליה, ירושלים: יד ושם, 2014, עמ' 267-223.
5. וינריב, א'. (תשל"ט). זיכרונות של רופא מגטו וילנה. ילקוט מורשת, כ"ז, 7-61.
6. זנדהאוז, י. (תשנ"ג). רפואה בגיטו לודז': אירגון ומהות. דפים לחקר תקופת השואה, י', 157-169.
7. כהן, נ. (2003). הרפואה בשירות האידיאולוגיה ברייך השלישי וחלקה במדיניות האנטי-יהודית. חיבור לקבלת תואר דוקטור. ירושלים: האוניברסיטה העברית. עמ' 100-85, 532-547.

8. לנסקי, מ. (1983). *חיי היהודים בגטו ורשה: זיכרונות של רופא*. ירושלים: ראובן מס בע"מ. עמ' 69-73, 97-107, 122-133.
9. מילר-היל, ב. (1992). *מדע קטלן; בידולם של יהודים, צוענים וחולי נפש*. ירושלים: מאגנס. עמ' 7-10, 17-19, 35-52.
10. ניסלי, מ. (2004). *הייתי עוזרו של מנגלה באושביץ*. בני ברק: ל. פרידמן.
11. ספיץ, ו. (2008). *רופאים מהגהינום, העדויות המזועזעות על הניסויים הרפואיים בכני אדם*. תל-אביב: ספרית מעריב.
12. פרץ, א. (1960). *במחנות לא בכו, רשימות של רופא*. תל אביב: מסדה. עמ' 9-22, 32-45.
13. פרפל, צ. (2001). *הרלוונטיות של הרפואה בגרמניה הנאצית לסוגיות רפואיות בימנו- תפקידה המכריע בתהליך ההשמדה*. ילקוט מורשת, ע"א, 43-55.
14. פיק, א. (תשנ"ח). "רשימות מגיא ההריגה": *זיכרונות כתובים בגטו השולאי (ליטא), בשנות תש"ב, תש"ג, תש"ד*. תל-אביב: איגוד יוצאי ליטא.
15. שאשא, ש. (2002). *הרפואה בגטאות בתקופת השואה*. הרפואה, 141, 318-328.
16. שאשא, ש. (2005). *הרפואה במחנות הריכוז ברייך השלישי*. הרפואה, 144, 290-295.
17. Franzblau, M. J. (1994). Relevance of Nazi Medical Behavior to the Health Profession Today. In: J. J. Michalczyk (ed.), *Medicine, Ethics, and the third Reich; Historical and Contemporary Issues* (pp.197-199). Kansas City: Sheed and Ward.
18. Hildebrandt, S. (2016). *The Anatomy of Murder, Ethical Transgressions and Anatomical Science during the Third Reich*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016, pp.44-60, 322-326.
19. Lifton, R.J. (1986). *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*. New York: Basic Books
20. Offer, M. (2012). Ethical Dilemmas in the work of Doctors and Nurses in the Warsaw Ghetto. *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, 25, 467-492
21. Offer, M. (2014). Medicine in the Shavli Ghetto in Light of the Diary of Dr. Aaron Pik. In: M. Grodin (ed.), *Jewish Medical Resistance in the Holocaust* (pp.164-172). New York, Oxford: Berghahn
22. Perel, G. (1948). *I was a Doctor In Auschwitz*. New York: Ayer Co
23. Proctor, R. (1994). Racial Hygiene: The Collaboration of Medicine and Nazism. In: J. J. Michalczyk (Ed.), *Medicine, Ethics, and the third Reich; Historical and Contemporary Issues* (pp.41-35). Kansas City: Sheed and Ward.
24. Kater, M. H. (1989). *Doctors under Hitler*. University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill
25. Roland, C.C. (1992). *Courage under Siege; Starvation, Disease and Death in the Warsaw Ghetto*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 3-8, 226-227.
26. Weinreich, M. (1999). *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crime Against the Jewish People*. New Haven : Yale University Press