

# **The Program for the Study of Medicine and the Holocaust**

## **Course No, 275316**

The Bruce Rappaport Faculty of Medicine, Technion, Haifa, Israel

Dr Omer Goldstein MD, Dr Tessa Chelouche MD -organizers and lecturers

Guest lecturers

- ❖ 2004 to the present
- ❖ Preclinical undergraduate students
- ❖ 25(some years more) 2<sup>nd</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> year students
- ❖ Elective course
- ❖ 12-13 lessons, 2 hours each
- ❖ Compulsory student participation
- ❖ Students are provided with relevant bibliographical references relevant to each lesson via the institution's Moodle.
- ❖ Film and videoed material are also used.
- ❖ On completion of the course each student has to submit an 8-10-page paper on a subject of his/her choice, which may include the interview of a Holocaust survivor.

### **Aim of the course:**

1. To learn the historical perspective of the involvement of medicine in the events prior to the Holocaust.
2. To learn the historical events that transpired during the Holocaust that are relevant to the connection between Nazi medicine and the Holocaust.
3. To reflect on the importance of these historical events for the medical profession.
4. To reflect on the ethical issues that are relevant from this past and that can be learned for the future.
5. To learn about the stories of the Holocaust survivors who practiced their medicine during the Holocaust.
6. To hear the voices of the Holocaust survivors in general.
7. To increase humanistic skills such as
  - ❖ Self-awareness

- ❖ Reflective capacity
- ❖ Identification and management of personal potential for abuse of power
- ❖ Ethical reasoning & conduct
- ❖ Empathy
- ❖ Cultural competence
- ❖ Conscience development

**Content of the course:**

**1. Overview of the course and the topics to be discussed**

- o Introduction to the topic
- o Explanation of the academic demands of the students
- o Proposal for final paper
- o Each student tells why she/he chose this elective

**2. Historical Overview and Background**

- o The history of Eugenics in Europe and the United States
- o The history of Racial Hygiene in Europe
- o The relationship between Medicine and Racial Hygiene in Nazi Germany
- o The Sterilization Program in Germany
- o The "Euthanasia" Program in Nazi Germany
- o Research on humans: The Nazis and others
- o The connection between Racial Hygiene, Nazi medicine and the Holocaust
- o The Nuremberg Medical Trial
- o The Nuremberg Code and its implications for today

**Selected sources:**

- Cohen MM Jr. 2010. Overview of German, Nazi, and Holocaust Medicine. Am J Med Genet Part A 152A:687–707.
- Film: "Healing by Killing", Nitzan Aviram
- Ethics of Nuremberg Doctor on Trial. Arthur Caplan.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkaqOinw0RQ&t=279s>
- CARING CORRUPTED - The Killing Nurses of The Third Reich  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz8ge4aw8Ws&t=110s>

**3. The ethical implications of the study of Medicine and the Holocaust**

The teaching includes discourse on:

- o Past Eugenics and present Genetics
- o Racism in medicine
- o Medical Education under Nazi Rule
- o Dual loyalty of Physicians: State vs Individual
- o The influence of Economics on Medicine

- o The role of medical press in politics and visa versa
- o Past and present Euthanasia /Physician assisted suicide
- o Abortion and other reproductive issues
- o The Significance of the Hippocratic Oath and other ethical decrees
- o Medical research and codes
- o Informed Consent in Human Experimentation
- o Parental Consent in Medical Research
- o Utilitarianism in Clinical Research
- o The Use of Unethically Acquired Body Parts/Anatomy in Nazi Germany
- o Whether to Use the Data from the Nazi Experiments
- o Doctor-Patient Confidentiality

**Selected sources:**

- Tessa Chelouche, Geoffrey Brahmner, Susan Benedict. Casebook on Bioethics and the Holocaust.  
<http://www.unesco-chair-bioethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Casebook-on-Bioethics-and-the-Holocaust.pdf>
- Shasha SM. [Sterilization and eugenics]. Harefuah. 2011 Apr;150(4):406-10, 415. Hebrew. PMID: 22164927.
- Volker Roelcke. Nazi medicine and research on human beings.  
<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2804%2917619-8>
- Andrew Yee et al. Ethical consideration in the use of Pernkopf's Atlas of Anatomy: A surgical case study.  
[https://www.surgjournal.com/article/S0039-6060\(18\)30481-1/fulltext](https://www.surgjournal.com/article/S0039-6060(18)30481-1/fulltext)
- THE VIENNA PROTOCOL: Medicine's Confrontation with Continuing Legacies of its Nazi Past .<https://www.leilalax.ca/research/pernkopf-symposium>
- Chelouche T. Doctors, pregnancy, childbirth and abortion during the Third Reich. Isr Med Assoc J. 2007 Mar;9(3):202-6.

**4. The abuse of power and authority in medicine -past and present**

**Selected Source:**

Grodin, M., & Annas, G. (2007). Physicians and torture: Lessons from the Nazi doctors. .International Review of the Red Cross, 89(867), 635-654

**5. Medical Ethics Education in Nazi Germany**

Discussion of medical ethics education in the past and in the present and what we can learn from the practice of medicine during the Holocaust

**Selected sources:**

- Bruns F, Chelouche T. Lectures on Inhumanity: Teaching Medical Ethics in German Medical Schools Under Nazism. *Ann Intern Med.* 2017 Apr 18;166(8):591-595.
- Reis SP, Wald HS, Weindling P. The Holocaust, medicine and becoming a physician: the crucial role of education. *Isr J Health Policy Res.* 2019 Jun 27;8(1):55.  
<https://ijhpr.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13584-019-0327-3>
- Richard Horton. Medicine and the Holocaust: It's Time to Teach  
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(19\)31608-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(19)31608-3/fulltext)

**6. The Clandestine Medical School in the Warsaw Ghetto**

**Selected sources:**

- Roland CG. An underground medical school in the Warsaw ghetto, 1941-2. *Med Hist.* 1989;33(4):399-419.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1035933/>

**7. Mortality and Morbidity in the ghettos and the camps**

**Selected Sources:**

- Shasha SM. [Medicine in the concentration camps of the Third Reich]. *Harefuah.* 2005 Apr;144(4):291-5, 301. Hebrew. PMID: 15889615.
- Shasha SM. [Morbidity in the concentration camps of the Third Reich]. *Harefuah.* 2004 Apr;143(4):272-6, 318. Hebrew. PMID: 15116584.

**8. Medical practice in the ghettos and the camps based on Holocaust survivors' testimonies/published works**

Issues discussed:

- Medical Futility in Extreme Circumstances
- Medical Triage
- Abuse of Medical Triage: The Nazi " Selections"
- Distributive Justice
- The Risks of Medical Care
- Disclosure of Professional Identity when Confronted with Mortal Danger
- Treating the Enemy
- Medical Care in Dangerous Circumstances - The Doctor's Duty of Obligation
- Altering Ethical Stances
- Complying with the Nazi Doctors
- Abortion: The Perspective of the Nazi doctors and the Prisoner doctors

- o Truth Telling
- o Choiceless Choices in Medicine

**Selected Sources:**

- Tessa Chelouche, Geoffrey Brahmner, Susan Benedict. Casebook on Bioethics and the Holocaust.  
<http://www.unesco-chair-bioethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Casebook-on-Bioethics-and-the-Holocaust.pdf>
  - Chelouche T. Some ethical dilemmas faced by Jewish doctors during the Holocaust. Med Law. 2005 Dec;24(4):703-16.
  - Chelouche T. Leo Eitinger MD: tribute to a Holocaust survivor, humane physician and friend of mankind. Isr Med Assoc J. 2014 Apr;16(4):208-11.  
<https://www.ima.org.il/MedicinEMAJ/viewarticle.aspx?year=2014&month=04&page=208>
  - Chelouche T. Doctors, pregnancy, childbirth and abortion during the Third Reich. Isr Med Assoc J. 2007 Mar;9(3):202-6.  
<https://www.ima.org.il/MedicinEMAJ/viewarticle.aspx?year=2007&month=03&page=202>
  - Shasha SM. [Medicine in the ghettos during the Holocaust]. Harefuah. 2002 Apr;141(4):318-23, 412. Hebrew. PMID: 12017881.  
<https://www.ima.org.il//FilesUpload/Medicine/0/16/8346.pdf>
  - Shasha SM. [Morbidity in the ghettos during the Holocaust]. Harefuah. 2002 Apr;141(4):364-8, 409, 408. Hebrew. PMID: 12017893.  
<https://www.ima.org.il//FilesUpload/Medicine/0/16/8370.pdf>
9. **Dr Gisella Perl**- A survivor doctor of Auschwitz- told by her grandson Giora Yardeni  
Use of the film "Out of the Ashes"

**Selected sources:**

- <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200526-dr-gisella-perl-the-auschwitz-doctor-who-saved-lives>
- Peleg R. Gisella Perl: a Jewish gynecologist in Auschwitz. J Womens Health (Larchmt). 2005 Sep;14(7):588-91. doi: 10.1089/jwh.2005.14.587. PMID: 16181013.

10. **The Hunger Study of the Warsaw Ghetto**

**Selected Sources:**

- <https://urologichistory.museum/collections/the-scope-of-urology-newsletter/issue-2-may-2020/hunger-disease-study>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2A0A0DX95A>  
Medical Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto [Hebrew]

**11. The significance of visiting the sites of medical atrocities in Europe for medical professionals**

**Selected source:**

- Fox MA, Strous RD. ["WITNESS IN WHITE" SEMINAR TOURS ON MEDICINE AND PHYSICIANS IN THE HOLOCAUST]. Harefuah. 2020 Apr;159(4):287-291. Hebrew.

**12. Nazi medicine from the perspective of third/fourth generation Germans today**

In the last few years we have had the honor of hearing from German citizens, mostly medical professionals, including Prof Franziska Eckert, who are aware of their past and of its relevance to the present.

**Selected Source :**

- Eckert F. Standing on the ramp: A young German radiation oncologist faces her ancestors. Pract Radiat Oncol. 2017 Sep-Oct;7(5):293-294