

McAfee School of Theology
Mercer University
May-June 2008
Travel Study Experience

Course Title: Ethics and Theology After the Holocaust: Travel Course

Home Institution Instructor: Dr. David P. Gushee

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Course Description. A travel course designed to explore the excruciating questions raised by the Holocaust through group discussions based on readings, an intensive travel study experience, and post-travel reflections and writing. Theological and moral questions—for Jews, for Christians, and for humankind – include: God's relationship with the world, with Israel, and with the Church; the problem of evil and human suffering; human nature, sin, and Jewish-Christian relations. Ethical issues explored include those raised by the spectrum of human behavior during the Holocaust: perpetration, bystanding, rescue, resistance; as well as the experience of victimization. Contemporary applications of such moral themes are considered. This course includes interdisciplinary teaching during the travel portion of the course to Germany, the Czech Republic, and Poland. It is a **cooperative educational venture** between the University of Tennessee at Martin, Union University, Rhodes College, and Mercer University, involving joint meetings, shared faculty, and a group travel and reflection experience.

Shared Faculty: **Dr. Alice-Catherine Carls**, Professor of History, University of Tennessee-Martin, course coordinator, has 22 years of teaching experience, a European background, and is fluent in French, Polish, and German. She has lived in France, Poland, and Germany, and has led two travel study courses at UT Martin. She specializes in 20th century European history, the history of international relations, and Polish history and culture.

Dr. Stephen Carls, Professor of History, Union University, has 37 years of teaching experience and is fluent in French and German. A specialist in World War I, he has lived in France and has traveled extensively throughout Europe, leading six European trips for students.

Dr. David Gushee, Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics, Mercer University, has 15 years of teaching experience. He is an internationally known expert on Christian ethics and regularly teaches courses on the Holocaust. His publications include *Kingdom Ethics* and *Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust*. He is also widely traveled to Europe, including lectures in Germany on the Righteous Gentiles.

Dr. Stephen Haynes, Professor of Religion at Rhodes College, has 20 years of teaching experience. An author of several books about the Holocaust, Jewish-Christian relations, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, he is one of the nation's leading experts on the issues covered by this course.

Course Objectives.

1. **Academic Experience**—The student will grow in knowledge concerning:
the antecedents, organization, and execution of the Holocaust
historical, theological, and literary works testifying to the experience and implications of the Holocaust
European and Jewish culture since the 18th century
moral issues raised by the Holocaust
the geography of Central Europe and the Holocaust
Theological implications of the Holocaust for Jews and Christians
the impact of the Holocaust since 1945 in Europe and on western culture.
2. **Experiential Learning**—The student will learn through experiencing:
onsite visits: concentration and death camps; Nazi governmental institutions ; memorials and museums; places of Jewish culture such as Jewish city quarters, historical museums, and synagogues; places of German, Czech, and Polish culture such as palaces, museums, government buildings, churches, etc.
onsite discussion and reflection meetings with Polish scholars
onsite interaction with local people and daily life in Germany, the Czech Republic, and Poland
3. **Personal Growth**—The student will grow as a human being and Christian minister by:
understanding the legacy and impact of the Holocaust, including past and present responses
gaining an ability to function, albeit in a limited way, in these three cultures
gaining an ability to relate to, work with, and learn from other travel study participants
clarifying his or her moral thinking, especially as it relates to the choices that people face in periods of extreme stress and deprivation
putting the Holocaust in the context of 20th century genocides
practicing an interdisciplinary approach to the Holocaust (history, literature, ethics, religion)

Course Format, Content, Instructional Methods, and Schedule.

1. **Pre-Departure**. The course will meet for 75 minutes once a week from April 15 until we leave. These meetings will include:
academic preparation related to the course subject matter and the culture of the places and countries included in the travel portion of the course
pre-departure sessions for practical travel preparation such as general cultural information about the country to be visited, how to pack, safety rules, everyday conversational phrases in a foreign language, information about documents, money, food, and local culture.
2. **Travel Experience**. Students will be required to attend all scheduled visits and meetings and to keep a journal.

Date

Location

Activities

18-May	Atlanta - Amsterdam	Air Travel
19-May	Amsterdam - Berlin – Tour of Berlin	Check in hotel
20-May	Ravensbruck Ravensbruck camp , then Holocaust Memorial, Hitler's bunker, Checkpoint Charlie, Wannsee, Synagogue	
21-May	Berlin Brandenburg Gate – Free Afternoon	Reichstag,
22-May	Berlin - Prague – Old Town	Check in hotel
23-May	Theresienstadt Theresienstadt Camp , then Jozefov, Jewish Museum	
24-May	Prague Free Afternoon	Free
25-May	Prague - Auschwitz Center for Dialogue – Camp I -- Meeting with Father Manfred	Check in at
26-May	Auschwitz Travel to Cracow	Camp II -
27-May	Cracow quarter, cemetery, Kazimierz, Wawel – <i>Schindler's List</i> quarter – Free Afternoon	Jewish
28-May	Cracow - Warsaw -- Tour of Warsaw	Check in hotel
29-May	Warsaw Treblinka camp – Monument to the Heroes of the Ghetto - Umschlagplatz	
30-May	Warsaw Jewish representatives, JHI – Free Afternoon - Palace of Culture	Meetings with
31-May	Warsaw Service – Free Afternoon	Sabbath
1-Jun	Warsaw – Atlanta	Air Travel

3. Post-travel meeting. At a time to be negotiated, an end of travel meeting will take place, during which students will present their reports and fill an evaluation questionnaire.

Required and recommended readings.

Doris L. Bergen. *War and Genocide* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

Irving Greenberg. *For the Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter Between Judaism and Christianity* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2004).

David P. Gushee. *Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Paragon House, 2004).

Course Requirements and Evaluation.

1. A research paper on a topic of the student's choice (due July 1) 30% of the grade
2. Attendance and participation in pre-departure meetings 20% of the grade
3. Quality of participation in the travel portion of the course 40% of the grade
4. Journal and scrapbook, papers, and other materials gathered during the semester of instruction and the trip 10% of the grade

Code of Conduct.

1. Students pledge to participate fully in the course's activities during the entire duration of the course, to complete all assignments, and to provide support and to cooperate with the travel study participants.
2. Students pledge to conduct themselves as worthy ambassadors of Mercer University abroad and to use the same behavior criteria as they would on the Mercer campus.
3. All parties engaging in a travel study course enter into a partly formal, partly informal agreement based on mutual responsibility, respect, and cooperation;
4. Faculty pledge to provide quality teaching, to treat students courteously, to provide support to the travel study participants, and to attend to all details related to the travel experience.