

Holocaust and Genocide Review (HGR) Information Resources  
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**HOLOCAUST STUDIES  
THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY  
AUSTRALIA**

The establishment of a Holocaust Studies program is a fairly new development at the University of Sydney. It has emerged at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels with an interdisciplinary approach over the last decade, partly as a result of the employment of new scholars in the Faculty of Arts with a particular interest and expertise in these areas. Efforts were made initially to create a broad, interdisciplinary approach involving the Departments of Jewish Studies and History in the Faculty of Arts, and the Faculties of Education and Law, but this broader approach has not been successful. However, there has been close co-operation within the Faculty of Arts, resulting in the development of a strong program offered between the departments of Jewish Studies and History.

The Holocaust Studies program began in 1998 with the introduction of two new undergraduate units: 'From Emancipation to the Holocaust,' covering modern European Jewish history until the 1930s as background to the Holocaust, and 'Holocaust: History and Aftermath,' dealing with the events of the Holocaust itself and its ongoing repercussions in the post-war era. These units are part of the overview course of the Jewish Civilisation, Thought and Culture program offered within the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, and were initially taught by Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland. The Holocaust course has been accepted as part of a History major and attracts a significant number of students each year.

Suzanne Rutland's own family background inspired her to develop this program. Her own parents, initially from Poland, were the 'lucky ones,' arriving on Australian

shores in January 1939, and sponsoring the few members of the family who survived to migrate to Australia after the war. Her grandparents on both sides perished during the war, and on her mother's side, from those who were in Europe in 1939, there was only one survivor who had jumped the train on its way to Treblinka. Her father's family from Cracow were luckier - a few members were saved by Oscar Schindler, and other cousins were on the boat, the Pencho, and ended up in an internment camp in Southern Italy. Whilst Rutland only learned the details of her family stories very recently, the Holocaust was always there in the background as she grew up in Sydney, with most of her parents' social crowd being survivors, mainly "Schindler" Juden from Cracow.

In 2001 Professor Emeritus Konrad Kwiet joined the department as the Roth Lecturer in Holocaust Studies, supported by the Henroth Holocaust Foundation. The late Henry Roth was assisted to escape from Lithuania by the Japanese Consul Sugihara, and his two sons, John and Stanley Roth, believe strongly in supporting Holocaust Studies. Professor Emeritus Konrad Kwiet, who had taken early retirement from Macquarie University in Sydney, brought a new level of expertise to his position and has been the moving force in the development of the Holocaust program. This has expanded from an undergraduate program into the postgraduate level.

Over the last decade, the Departments of Jewish Studies and History have developed a Master of Arts program by coursework, as well as a research program at both the MA and the PhD levels. In the MA by coursework, there are four core units, taught by Professor Kwiet: 'Holocaust Research: Issues and Problems'; 'The German Jewish Experience'; 'Contemporary Responses to the Holocaust'; and 'The Holocaust: A context of Health'; Professor Suzanne Rutland offers a unit on 'The Australian Jewish Experience'; which looks at Australia and the Holocaust; and Associate Professor Dirk Moses offers in rotation units on the History of Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries Germany, Genocide Studies, and International Terror.

In addition there is a 'supervised reading' unit in which candidates have to analyse the historiographical debate on a specific Holocaust topic. The units "Dissertation I / II" are designed to subject one or two other themes to critical analysis. Our students are encouraged to consult the rich archival record collections kept at the University of Sydney (in the Archive of Australian Judaica) and the Sydney Jewish Museum, as well to enroll in one of the educational seminars offered by Yad Vashem which in turn is credited towards their MA Program

Last year the number of students enrolled in our UG Holocaust amounted to 140. Currently 25 are enrolled in our MA coursework and research programs

Students have undertaken a range of different research projects relating to the Holocaust and its aftermath as part of their dissertations. The most recent theses include:

- Michael E Abrahams-Sprod, *Life under Siege. The Jews of Magedeburg under Nazi Rule*, PhD 2006 (The German translation is currently in print)
- Reingard Porges, *Theodor Wolff: The Writer in Exile 1933-1943*, PhD 2006
- Ross William Halpin, *A History of Concern: The Ethical Dilemma of Using Nazi Medical Research Data in Contemporary Medical and Scientific research*, MA (Research) 2008 (Mr Halpin is currently engaged in a PhD project centered on Jewish doctors, nurses and orderlies in Auschwitz)
- Ruth Wirth, *Orphaned Holocaust Teenagers and the Rhythms of Jewish Life*, MA (Research) 2008
- Anna Berger, *Munkacs: A Jewish World that was*, MA (Research) 2009

Topics presently being researched at present in the department include:

Avril Alba , *'Holocaust Museums and Memorials: Sacred Memory Secular Space'*, PhD, with the Department of History, submitting 2010

- Dr George Foster, *'The Perpetrator Syndrome'*, MA (Research) submitting 2010
- Sophie Gelski, *'The missing paradigm: How personal biography affects teaching, using the Holocaust as a case study'*.
- Dovid Slavin, *'Rabbi Meir Shapiro and the Lublin Yeshiva'*.
- Anna Rosenbaum, *'Czech Jewish Refugee Migration to Australia, 1938-1940'*.

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[http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/hbjs/postgraduate/2010\\_pgcw\\_hbjs\\_holocaust\\_overview.htm](http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/hbjs/postgraduate/2010_pgcw_hbjs_holocaust_overview.htm)

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