

Course Title: Nazi Fugitives in Latin America: Escape, Exile, and Justice

T/Th periods 4/4-5 (10:40-11:30/10:40-12:35)

Instructor: Prof. Raanan Rein

Office Hrs. Walker Hall 200E, Wednesday 10-12 (or by appointment)

Course Description: This course examines the history of Nazi fugitives who fled Europe after World War II, their routes to Latin America, and the countries that became sanctuaries for them. We will explore the geopolitical, social, and moral implications of these escapes, as well as the role of Latin American governments, international organizations, and the Nazi legacy in the region. Through readings, primary sources, and films, we will study the fate of these figures, the networks that helped them escape, and the historical and cultural impacts on Latin American societies.

Course Objectives:

- Understand the historical context that allowed Nazi fugitives to escape to Latin America.
- Investigate key escape networks and the complicity of international actors.
- Study the political, social, and legal environment in Latin American countries that enabled fugitive Nazis to find refuge.
- Analyze individual cases of Nazi war criminals and assess the success and failure of justice efforts.
- Explore the legacy of Nazi fugitives on Latin American politics, culture, and historical memory.

Course requirements: class participation, including response papers on the weekly readings (by class on Tuesday), midterm in-class exam, and a final in-class exam.

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Discussions and Response Papers -- 40% in aggregate. Students will have to write during the term four (4) **300-word** (typed, double-spaced) comments on the weekly reading. Your grade will be determined by the quality of your written comments: the degree to which they are polished (no misspellings, good grammar, etc.); the degree to which they **engage the readings with topics discussed in class**; and the degree to which you **participate** in discussion.

Midterm Examination -- 30%. The midterm in-class examination is on 24 Feb. 2026. It cannot be made up save for extreme circumstances. The exam will include ten concepts/figures discussed in class and you will be asked to write up to 250 words on five of these concepts/figures.

Final Examination -- 30%. The final in-class exam is on 21 April 2026. It will include four primary sources discussed in class from which you will be asked to choose two and write a brief essay on each one of the two.

The Numerical Grading Scale is as follows:

A	93-100	A-	90-92
B+	87-89	B	83-86
C+	77-79	C	73-76
D+	68-69	D	63-67
F			<60

Grading criteria is as follows:

- A-range – 90s -- Excels – Full command and facility with material with the ability to place it within larger historical context and to make arguments based upon it.
- B-range – 80s – Good – Solid understanding of material but without complete facility or ability to make arguments based on it.
- C-range – 70s -- Fair – Some understanding of major themes, lack of command with detail, or some understanding of detail but lack of contextual understanding.
- D-range – 60s -- Poor – Enough factual understanding to pass, but little to no contextual clarity.
- F-range – Fails – Lack of university level quality.

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#). (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.)

For the grading policies of the University of Florida in general, follow this link:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/Links to an external site.>

Class Policies

Attendance: Attendance will be taken and your grade will be affected if you miss. If you miss classes, you will not be able to do well in the exams. Be in class on time.

Academic Honesty: The University of Florida Student Honor Code is located at this link:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>
Links to an external site..

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Resources:

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/Links to an external site.>

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Week 1 (Jan. 13&15): Introduction and the Nuremberg Trials

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - Germany liberated, Eastern Europe dominated by the Soviet Union.
 - Overview of the aftermath of WWII and the Nuremberg Trials.
 - The scale of Nazi war crimes and the importance of holding war criminals accountable.
 - Early post-war efforts to track and prosecute Nazis.
- **Readings (expected by class on Thursday):** Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (2005), chaps. 1-2.
- Lawrence Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment: Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust* (2001), Part. 1.

Week 2 (Jan. 20&22): Latin America in World War II, Jewish Refugees

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - From Neutrality to Supporting the Allies: Political, economic, and ideological landscape of Latin America in the 1940s.
 - Sympathies for fascism in certain Latin American countries.
 - Jewish immigrants and refugees.
- **Readings:** Thomas M. Leonard and John F. Bratzel (eds.), *Latin America during World War II* (2007), chaps. 9 & 10.
- Judith Laikin Elkin, *The Jews of Latin America*, 3rd ed., chap. 1.

Week 3 (Jan. 27&29): German Communities in Latin America; Nazi Escape Network

Topics for Discussion:

- The creation and operation of "Ratlines"—escape routes for Nazis fleeing Europe.
- Italy as a country of temporary refuge.
- Key figures behind the ratlines
- The role of the Catholic Church and the Red Cross.
- **Readings:** Ronald C. Newton, *The 'Nazi Menace' in Argentina, 1931–1947* (1992), Chaps. 1-2.
- Gerald Steinacher, *Nazis on the Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fled Justice* (2011), chap. 1.
- Uki Goñi, *The Real Odessa* (2002), Cap. 6.

Week 4 (Feb. 3&5): Recruiting German Scientists

Topics for Discussion:

- Scientists, engineers, and technicians in demand
- The U.S. and the Paperclip Operation
- The Soviet Union and the Osoaviakhim Operation

Readings: Brian E. Crim, *Our Germans: Project paperclip and the National Security State*, (2018), chaps. 1 & 4.

- Eric Lichtblau, *The Nazis Next Door: How America Became a Safe Haven for Hitler's Men* (2014), Chapter 6.

Week 5 (Attend Jewish-Latin American Workshop Feb. 10; 12 Feb.):

Argentina: The Primary Destination: Nazis and Collaborationists

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - Argentina's role as a central hub for Nazi fugitives.
 - The support of Argentine President Juan Perón and the role of the Argentine government.
 - Nazi scientists, engineers, and technicians in Argentina.
 - Nazi influence on Argentine society and politics.

Readings: Raanan Rein, *Populism and Ethnicity: Peronism and the Jews of Argentina* (2020), Chap. 2.

Uki Goñi, *The Real Odessa* (2002), Caps. 14-15.

Week 6 (Feb. 17&19): The Case of Adolf Eichmann

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - Eichmann's role during World War II.
 - Eichmann's escape to Argentina, his life in hiding, and his capture by Mossad.
 - Legal and ethical implications of the Eichmann trial.
- **Readings:**
 - Raanan Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews* (2002), Chaps. 6 & 7.
 - Lawrence Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment: Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust* (2001), Chap. 6.

Week 7 (Feb. 24 Mid-Term Exam; Feb. 26):

The “Angel of Death”: Josef Mengele

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - Mengele’s role during WWII
 - Mengele’s life in Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil, and his interactions with local authorities.
 - Attempts by Israel and other countries to bring him to justice.
- **Readings:**
 - Gerald L. Posner, *Mengele: The Complete Story* (1986), Chapters 4-5.
 - Or; David G. Marwell, *Mengele: Unmasking the ‘Angel of Death’* (2020), Chaps. 7-9.

In-class mid-term exam, Feb. 24.

Week 8 (March 3&5): The U.S., Germany, and Nazi Presence in Latin America;

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - U.S. concern about Nazi activities in Latin America during WWII
 - U.S knowledge of Nazi hiding in the Americas
 - The Federal Republic of Germany and the use of former Nazis
 - Nazis in the U.S.
- **Readings:** Max Paul Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The US Campaign Against Germans in Latin America during World War II* (2003), chap. 2;
- Daniel Stahl, “Avoiding ‘Everything that Separates’: The West German Embassy and the Nazi Exiles in Argentina” (in Erker and Rein);
- Eric Lichtblau, *The Nazis Next Door: How America Became a Safe Haven for Hitler’s Men* (2014), Chapters 2-3.

Week 9 (March 10&12): The Role of Paraguay, Brazil, and Chile

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - The sanctuary provided by Paraguay and Brazil for Nazis and fascists.
 - The lack of legal prosecution and the state of Nazi war criminal investigations.
 - The political regime of Alfredo Stroessner and its support for Nazi fugitives.
 - Paraguay’s position during the Cold War and its relationship with Nazi exiles.
 - The assassination of the Latvian war criminal Hebrbert Cukurs by Mossad agents

- Walter Rauff and his flight to Chile after WWII.
- The political dynamics in Chile that allowed Rauff to avoid extradition.
- **Readings:** Gerald L. Posner, *Mengele: The Complete Story*, Chapter 6;
- Sarah R. Valente, “Post-World War II Brazil: A New Homeland for Jews and Nazis?”, *Comparative Cultural Studies: European and Latin American Perspectives* 11: 75-87, 2021.
- Gustavo Guzman, “A Veil of Silence: the Life and Networks of Walther Rauff in Chile”, in Linda Erker and Raanan Rein (eds.), *Nazis and Nazi Sympathizers in Latin America after 1945*, 137-156.

Week 10 (March 24 & March 26 Price Library of Judaica Visit): Klaus Barbie: The Butcher of Lyon in Bolivia

- **Topics for Discussion:**
- Klaus Barbie’s role in post-war Bolivia as an advisor to the military regime.
- Barbie’s involvement in Operation Condor and the Bolivian drug trade.
- His eventual capture and extradition to France.
- **Reading:** Brendan Murphy, *The Butcher of Lyon* (1983), Chapters 10-12.

Week 11 (March 31& April 2):

The Hunt for Nazis

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - Post-war efforts to locate and prosecute Nazi criminals.
 - The role of Jewish organizations and Nazi hunters in locating and prosecuting fugitives.
 - Simon Wiesenthal’s contributions to tracking down Nazi war criminals.
- **Readings:**
 - Andrew Nagorski, *The Nazi Hunters* (2016), Chapter 5.
 - Kinga Frojimovics and Marianne Windsperger, “‘Vía Área’/‘Por Correo Aéreo’: Correspondence with Jews and Jewish Communities in South America in the Simon Wiesenthal Archive” (in Erker and Rein), 269-284.

Week 12 (April 7&9): The Return and Extradition of Nazi War Criminals to Europe

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - The return of high-profile Nazis like Eichmann and the moral questions surrounding their trials.

- The political climate in post-WWII Europe regarding the prosecution of war criminals.
- **Readings:** Daniel Stahl, Hunt for Nazis: South America's Dictatorships and the Prosecution of Nazi Crimes (2018), pp. 153-213.

Session 13 (no class on April 14; April 16): The Cultural and Social Impact of Nazi Fugitives in Latin America; The Debate on Accountability

- **Topics for Discussion:**
 - How Nazi fugitives shaped social, political, and cultural life in Latin American countries.
 - The role of exiled Nazis in local economies and military regimes.
 - Long-term impacts of Nazi fugitives on Latin American societies, including the rise of far-right movements.
 - The role of memory and post-memory in Latin American countries.
 - The Globalization of Holocaust Studies: Reflections on the significance of studying Nazi fugitives in Latin America
- **Readings:** Daniel Stahl, Hunt for Nazis: South America's Dictatorships and the Prosecution of Nazi Crimes (2018), pp. 235-277.
 - Jacobo Timerman, *A Prisoner with no Name, a Cell with no Number* (1981).

Session 14 (April 21: Final Exam):