COURSE DESCRIPTION: The aim of this seminar is to introduce students to the history and historiography of race and gender during the Holocaust. As in many historical contexts, race and gender interacted dynamically and created the particular context of Nazi-occupied Europe, which was a place where Jewish men and women suffered in particular ways, German men and women participated in particular ways, and other racial groups – men and women alike – were targeted, collaborated, resisted and rescued. We will read a variety of texts that explore the influences that shaped the behavior and response of an array of people during the Holocaust. Racism sat directly in the center of the Nazi world view. Once the Nazis got into power, they sought to translate ideology into policy. Still, their racial policies evolved over time, spurred by opportunism, innovation, and war. And too, Jewish men and women responded in ways similar and divergent to the Nazi onslaught. Sexism was also seemingly an important aspect of the Nazi perspective. While they indeed embraced an anti-feminist stance, the Nazis nevertheless sought to incorporate “German” women into the national community and women participated actively in the implementation of Nazi racism.

AREA OF CONCENTRATION: Europe

TEACHING METHOD: Lecture

EVALUATION METHOD: Class participation, weekly short papers, self-evaluation

GRADING BASIS: ANC

READING LIST:
Between Dignity and Despair by Marian Kaplan, 9780195130928.
Belonging and Genocide by Thomas Kühne, 9780300121865.
Hitler’s Furies by Wendy Lower, B01L9EGFNQ.
Women in the Third Reich by Matthew Stibbe, 9780340761045.
Sexuality and German Fascism edited by Dagmar Herzog, 9781571815514.
Course Packet

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE: Sarah Cushman, PhD is Director of the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University. Prior to coming to Northwestern in September 2016, she served as Head of Educational Programming at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University for three years. She was Director of Youth Education at the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County (New York) from 2007-2013. While there, she completed her doctoral dissertation, The Women of Birkenau (Clark University, 2010), a social history of the women’s camp in Auschwitz. She is currently revising the dissertation into a book. Her research and writing, which focus on women’s experiences during the Holocaust, particularly in concentration camps, have been supported by fellowships from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Holocaust Educational Foundation, and Steven Spielberg.