



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Medicine during the Holocaust & beyond - For medical students - 96240

Last update 05-11-2025

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Medicine

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Ein Karem

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Alex Gural and Dr. Michal Ramot, Prof. Shmuel Reis

Coordinator Email: michal.ramot1@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Michal Ramot,
Prof. Alexander Gural

Course/Module description:

The Online course addresses both the darker sides and the brighter sides of medicine and health during the Holocaust, and the lessons for today's and tomorrow's healthcare practitioners, students or anyone who is intrigued by questions of morals, values and ethics

Course/Module aims:

Confront fundamental issues such as conscience, moral courage, personal and professional development, enhancement of empathy and compassion and, as a result, acquisition of moral resilience.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- By the end of the course learners will
1. Know the relevant historical facts
 2. Understand the sequence of events from eugenics to genocide, and the role that medicine and physicians have played in it.
 3. Be aware of the wrongful "medical" experiments, know the Nuremberg Code and Helsinki Declaration and their role in contemporary Medical Ethics
 4. Recognize the inherent risk of abuse of power in medicine and know how to prevent it
 5. Contemplate examples of worthy conduct in impossible circumstances and draw their own conclusions for the future
 6. Describe and apply survivors' special needs and how to care for them
 7. Will reflect on the above issues and their meaning for their professional identity formation

Attendance requirements(%):

Online course- no attendance

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: An online asynchronous course

Course/Module Content:

1. The Nazi Death Industry-From Eugenics to Genocide
2. The contribution of Academia in the Third Reich to the Nazi medical atrocities
3. Conduct of Jewish doctors in the ghettos & camps in care, teaching & research, as well as community leadership as a test case of professional conduct in impossible circumstances
4. The Nazi doctors & scientists role in the racial doctrines: sterilization, experiments and genocide and their implications for current medical ethics
5. How healers become killers?
6. Survivor care, PTSD, resilience
7. The present and the future: The inherent risk of abuse of power in Medicine and other health professions, and its prevention.

Required Reading:

18;166(8):591-595. doi: 10.7326/M16-2758. PMID: 28418558.

Lancet 2012 - Apologizing for Nazi medicine: a constructive starting point

Shasha SM. [Medicine in the concentration camps of the Third Reich]. *Harefuah*. 2005 Apr;144(4):291-5, 301. Hebrew. PMID: 15889615. בעברית מאמר

Shasha SM. [Medicine in the ghettos during the Holocaust]. *Harefuah*. 2002 Apr;141(4):318-23, 412. Hebrew. PMID: 12017881 בעברית מאמר

Berger RL. Nazi science--the Dachau hypothermia experiments. *N Engl J Med*. 1990 May 17;322(20):1435-40. doi: 10.1056/NEJM199005173222006. PMID: 2184357.

Cassell EJ. Consent or obedience? Power and authority in medicine. *N Engl J Med*. 2005 Jan 27;352(4):328-30. doi: 10.1056/NEJMp048188. PMID: 15673798.

Reis S. [Bergen-Belsen liberation 15th April 1945- personal and professional reflections]. *Harefuah*. 2012 Jul;151(7):427-31, 434. Hebrew. PubMed PMID: 23002696 בעברית מאמר

Reis S; Wald HS; Weindling P. The Holocaust, Medicine and Becoming a Physician: The Crucial Role of Education. *Israel Journal of Health Policy Research* 2019, 8:55 . Published on: 27 June 2019 .DOI: 10.1186/s13584-019-0327-3

Additional Reading Material:

Daniel nadav , Medicine & Nazism, Magnes Press

A full reading list will be provided at the beginning of the course.

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 20 %

*Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports
/ Forum / Simulation / others 80 %*

Additional information: