

# Newsletter

## Director's Desk

As we approach a watershed election year, it is necessary to reflect on the ongoing challenges facing advocates of human rights and democracy around the globe. There are currently at least five genocides taking place—two in Sudan, one in the Central African Republic, one in Myanmar, and one in the Syria-Iraq theater. In addition, there are over 65 million refugees across the planet, which is the highest number since World War II.

Moreover, while the number of countries slipping into authoritarianism declined in 2018, according to authorities at *The Economist*, only 4.5% of the people in the world live in what its journalists categorize as “full democracies,” which means there’s still so much more work to be done.

West Chester University’s Holocaust and Genocide Studies program continues to play a vital role in this regard. Our undergraduate and graduate students are dedicated to the mission of spreading awareness about the Holocaust, genocides, and human rights in general. The program continues to place students in doctoral granting universities, schools, museums, and government institutions, where they can help to shape policies and mold future generations of students committed to social justice.

As part of their capstone experience, in July 2020, students in the Master of Arts program will be presenting original research at the University of Venice Conference on New Directions in the Humanities. This will help not only to give students authentic experience as historians, but also to demonstrate at an international level that WCU is a serious and committed place when it comes to the study of Holocaust and Genocide Studies as an academic discipline.

Jonathan Friedman, Director



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### Special points of interest

- Holocaust Remembrance Day Program, April 20, 2020
- Graduate Students Present at University of Venice Conference
- Study Abroad, Venice-Krakow, July 2020



## Spring 2020 Class Schedule

### Undergraduates

#### **HIS 397 Genocide**

Dr. Brenda Gaydosh MW 3:00-4:15 pm  
Anderson 217

#### **HIS 440 American Jewish History**

Dr. Jonathan Friedman Th 7:15-10:00 pm  
Wayne 104B

#### **GER 326 Holocaust Survivor Memories**

Dr. Joseph Moser MW 3:00-4:14 pm

#### **PHI 411 The Problem of War**

Prof. David Headman MWF 1:00-1:50 pm  
Anderson 301

### Graduates

#### **HIS 536 Europe Since 1914**

Dr. Lisa Kirschenbaum W 5:50-8:35 pm  
Main 313

#### **HIS 546 Genocide**

Dr. Brenda Gaydosh MW 4:25-5:40 pm  
Anderson 306

#### **HIS 601 Readings in American Jewish History**

Dr. Jonathan Friedman Th 7:15-10:00 pm  
Wayne 104B

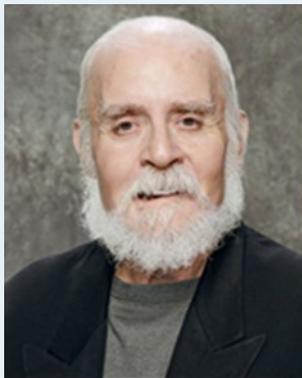
#### **GER 526 Communicating the Unspeakable**

Dr. Joseph Moser MW 3:00-4:14 pm

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*““Holocaust,” in its pre-World War II usage, has a connotation of which few who now use the term are aware; for most often the term was actually employed to characterize a particular sort of consumption by fire: the religious sacrifice...”*

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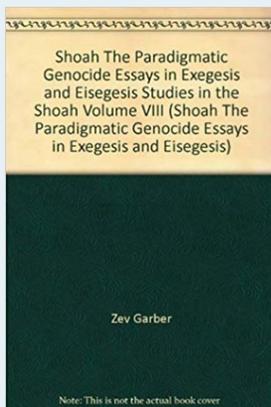
## Dr. Zev Garber to Speak at Holocaust Remembrance Day Program, April 20, 2020

Dr. Zev Garber, Professor Emeritus of Jewish Studies at Los Angeles Valley College will speak on campus at Sykes Theater on April 20, 2020 at 7:30 pm. A renowned scholar for decades, Dr. Garber has been a Visiting Professor in Religious Studies at the University of California at Riverside and the President of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew.

Among his many publications are *Methodology in the Academic Teaching of Judaism* (1986), *Methodology in the Academic Teaching of the Holocaust* (1988), *Teaching Hebrew Language and Literature at the College Level* (1991), *Shoah: the Paradigmatic Genocide* (1994), and *Shoah and Israeli Writing* (2005).

Dr. Garber will be speaking about the issue of theology, language, and the Holocaust. Why do we call the Holocaust by that name? How is the term problematic from a linguistic and theological perspective? The genocide of the Jews has sparked questions not only about “man’s inhumanity to man,” but also about the presence or absence of God. Always thought-provoking and never one to avoid controversy, Dr. Garber will undoubtedly spark an interesting conversation.

The program will be held in Sykes Theater on April 20, 2020 at 7:30 pm.





Site of the Jewish Ghetto in Venice

## HGS Students Present at the University of Venice, July 2020

This summer, three students from the Master of Arts Program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies will present papers at the University of Venice's Conference on New Directions in the Humanities. Each student focuses on a particular war crimes trial and the issue of restorative justice.

Ellen Dodge addresses the Einsatzgruppen Trial, one of the twelve military trials held by the United States occupation force at Nuremberg, Germany after World War II. The Einsatzgruppen were responsible for the murders of over a million Jews during the German occupation of the Soviet Union, and yet little was known about their activities until the post-war interrogation of one of the leaders (Otto Ohlendorf) and the discovery of field reports. Although an *ad hoc* trial, it became one of the most important processes against Nazi war criminals and left an important set of legal precedents for prosecuting war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Jenna Walmer evaluates the multi-faceted approach to reconciliation and justice in post-genocide Rwanda. Scholarship debates the successes and failures of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the national courts, and the Gacaca courts. After analyzing the structure, reasoning, and effects of each approach to justice, she argues that the three-pronged method allowed for healing on the political and personal levels.

James McAllister analyzes the United Nations-approved and Cambodian-led tribunals of Khmer Rouge officials who perpetrated the genocide of nearly two million Cambodians from 1975-1979. The failure of the United States in Southeast Asia delayed the tribunal process, impacting survivors and future generations of Cambodians. Cambodian courts, unlike those in Rwanda or Yugoslavia, spearheaded the United Nations tribunals, but they resulted in only three convictions. This research creates a new understanding of the tribunal process in Cambodia and addresses the dangers of allowing countries that perpetrate genocides to discipline themselves.

### Holocaust and Genocide Studies Faculty

Dr. Jonathan Friedman, Director

Dr. Mary Brewster (*Criminal Justice*)

Dr. Kevin Dean (*Communications*)

Dr. Brenda Gaydos (*History*)

Dr. Paul Green (*English*)

Dr. Lisa Kirschenbaum (*History*)

Dr. Deborah Mahlstedt (*Psychology*)

Dr. Josef Moser (*Languages*)

Dr. Frauke Schnell (*Political Science*)

Dr. Jasmin Tahmaseb-McConatha (*Psychology*)

Dr. LaTonya Thames Taylor (*History*)

Dr. Larry Udell (*Philosophy*)

Dr. Carla Verderame (*English*)

Dr. Joan Woolfrey (*Philosophy*)



## IAGS Conference



## International Association of Genocide Scholars Conference, Summer 2019

In July 2019, the International Association of Genocide Scholars held its biennial conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the first symposium on the topic to be held in southeast Asia. The conference theme was “The Missing Picture: Rethinking Genocide Studies and Prevention.”

Taking place on the 40th anniversary of the end of the genocide in Cambodia, the symposium involved new research on how Cambodians are memorializing and educating the general public about the genocide. Conference participants also delivered papers about other genocides and issues of prevention, peace-building, transitional justice.

Heather Hayes, a graduate from the MA

program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, presented a paper, entitled “Ethnocentric Ideology: Genocidal Rhetoric and the Construction of Tutsi Identity in Radio.”

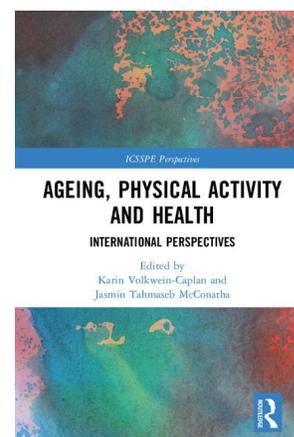


Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the site of the IAGS Conference in 2019

## Faculty Profile: Dr. Jasmin Tahmaseb-McConatha

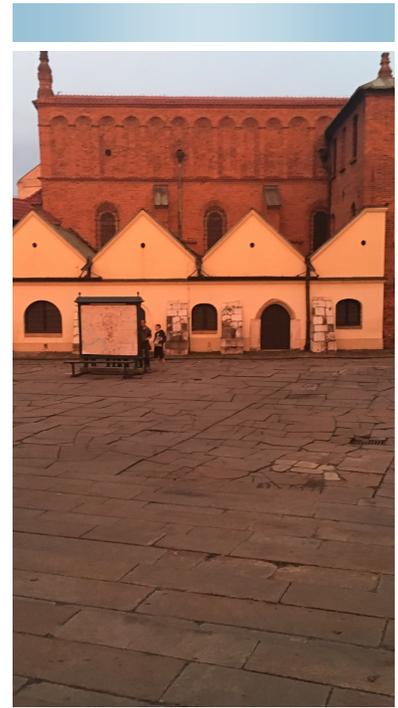
Dr. Tahmaseb-McConatha teaches in the Psychology Department and has been one of the longest affiliated faculty members in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. She teaches Multicultural Psychology and Advanced Social Psychology, which she will be offering in the Fall 2020. In her classes, she discusses the unique stressors that students in the field of genocide studies often encounter. She is also working on a project on coping with ageism and other forms of age-related discrimination.

Her recent publications include: “My Days in Solitary Confinement: The Plight of Older Immigrant Caregivers,” *International Journal of Aging and Society* (2019) and (with Karen Volkwein-Kaplan), *Ageing, Physical Activity, and Health* (Routledge, 2019).



# Krakow Study Abroad, Summer 2020

In addition to presenting research at the University of Venice and learning about the history of the Jewish community in Venice before and during World War II, students will travel to Krakow Poland to visit sites related to Jewish history and the history of the Holocaust. These include the numerous synagogues of the Kazimierz district, the enamel-ware factory of Oscar Schindler, the Plaszow concentration camp, and Auschwitz.



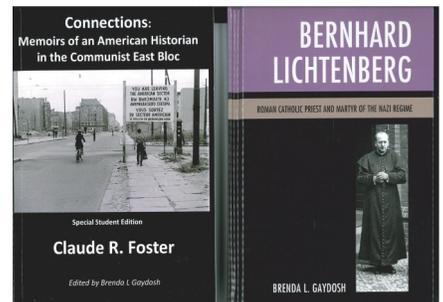
## Faculty Profile: Dr. Brenda Gaydosh

Dr. Gaydosh, who teaches modern German history and the history of Genocide and is currently a tenured Associate Professor in the History Department, has published two books in the past couple of years.

*Bernhard Lichtenberg: Roman Catholic Priest and Martyr of the Nazi Regime* is the definitive English biography of the martyred Nazi-era Berlin provost, Bernhard Lichtenberg. This work presents a broad overview of Bernhard Lichtenberg's life (1875–1943) in the context of history. It discusses the areas of his life that had the greatest impact on how he dealt with situations during the Second Empire, the Weimar Republic, and the Third Reich, and it gives a detailed account of his resistance to the Nazis and his imprisonment and death. Appendices present a wealth of primary sources on Lichtenberg's life, including a collection of his letters from prison which have not previously been made available in English.

Dr. Gaydosh's second book, *Connections: Memoirs of an American Historian in the Communist East Bloc* is about Dr. Claude R. Foster, internationally acclaimed scholar of the German Reformation. In *Connections*, he serves as a congenial tour guide through East Germany and other communist bloc countries during the height of the Cold War.

Being fluent in the German language with extensive connections, Dr. Foster offers a level of insight rarely found by historians. His stories -- sometimes gripping, sometimes humorous and always memorable-- share his connections with German citizens, government officials, fellow scholars, and members of the clergy on both sides of the Berlin Wall. This book, filled with history, personal stories, and aptly placed anecdotes, poems and snippets from literary works with mass appeal.



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## West Chester University

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### Holocaust and Genocide Studies Program

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WCU faculty have been pioneers in Holocaust Studies since 1978 when professor Irene Shur first offered an undergraduate course on the Holocaust. The program now includes a Master of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, a certification program, an undergraduate minor, a regional education center, and a library collection.

# Holocaust and Genocide Studies

West Chester University's Master of Arts Program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies seeks to train graduate students, professionals, and teachers in Holocaust and Genocide Studies at a post-baccalaureate level. WCU's Holocaust and Genocide Studies program also aims to advance and disseminate knowledge about the Holocaust and other genocides and ethnic conflicts to the general public. This objective recognizes that early educational interventions are the best way to overcome hatred and prejudice.

West Chester's Holocaust and Genocide Studies program remains the only program of its kind in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE). The impulse to create an MA program in Holocaust and Genocide Studies was both moral and practical, following a 1996 Pennsylvania State Assembly resolution that encouraged the state's Department of Education to include a recommendation for PA schools to incorporate curricular about the Holocaust and other genocides. In 2014, Pennsylvania joined Florida, California, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois as a state requiring the inclusion of Holocaust and genocide curricula in classrooms when it enacted the Holocaust Education Bill. This law requires the PA "State Department of Education to create curriculum options to teach about the Holocaust and genocide...[calls] for providing teachers with Holocaust education and training...[and finally establishes] a statewide study to determine which schools are teaching the Holocaust and allows the Department of Education to require schools to offer such instruction if, after two years, fewer than 90 percent of schools are teaching the subject."

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## West Chester University

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### Holocaust and Genocide Studies Program

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