

Introduction

In 2013, Florida's Governor's Commission on Holocaust Education, began the process of updating its recommended Grades 9-12 Holocaust Studies curriculum resources in order to

- reflect the current state of knowledge about the history of the Holocaust and instructional approaches to teaching about government sponsored mass-murder in age-appropriate ways.
- incorporate recent research in Holocaust studies and the pedagogy of teaching the Holocaust and Genocide.
- provide teachers with Holocaust Studies lesson plans that are easily integrated into School District approved scope and sequence for English/Language Arts and Social Studies required courses.
- align all lessons that make up this recommended Holocaust studies curriculum with current Florida standards and benchmarks.
- intentionally align Holocaust content and pedagogy with the specific requirements of Florida's mandate for Holocaust education which states that:

“Required Instruction - 1003.42(f) The history of the Holocaust (1933-1945), the systematic planned annihilation of European Jews and other groups by Nazi Germany, a watershed event in the history of humanity, is to be taught in a manner that leads to an investigation of human behavior, an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, and an examination of what it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions.”

Analytical Framework of Florida Recommended Grade 9-12 Holocaust Studies Curricula

The lessons that follow reflect the current state of research and writing about the Holocaust and take into account new lines of inquiry that are being pursued as a consequence of the opening of archives in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union during the 1990s. These lessons also reflect the impact of the Holocaust on expanding knowledge and understanding of genocide and international refugee policy.

The Holocaust embraced not only the systematic, industrialized mass murder of European Jews, but also the myriad decisions made at local and regional levels by Nazi officials, their allies and collaborators to murder Jews in the states of the former Soviet Union. Though aligned with the stated intentions of the Nazi leadership, these decisions were often made in anticipation of explicit orders from Berlin and in accordance with perceived local priorities.

In the late summer and fall of 1941, the killing operations in the occupied Soviet territories became more thorough and systematic and the first make-shift death camps were set up in occupied Poland. The policy of complete annihilation of European Jewry, which began in Eastern Europe in the form of mass executions/massacres, was extended to the whole European continent and given the form of a

coordinated, bureaucratic plan at the conference of various state and Nazi Party officials in January 1942 at the Berlin suburb, Wannsee.

Recent research strongly suggests that the origins of Nazi policies in the 1940s can be traced to a number of widely-held assumptions and specific administrative practices characteristic of European statecraft both on the continent and in the European colonies from the 1890s onward. In the wake of the First World War, those assumptions and practices underwent radicalization which often resulted in the degradation of human dignity, especially in the public sphere. This process reached its apex under the Nazi Dictatorship.

Recent research has also deepened our understanding of the impact of war and genocide on the Jews who survived the Holocaust, as well as surviving perpetrators, on-lookers and bystanders then and now. Despite the massive abuses of human rights, especially the Genocide of the Jews of Europe, survivors of the Holocaust continued to suffer the consequences of antisemitism as concentration camp survivors, refugees, and displaced persons well into the 1960's. Despite the revelations of human rights abuses during the Nuremberg Trials, especially under indictment 4, "Crimes Against Humanity," allied refugee policies toward Holocaust survivors and other refugees remained unchanged from pre-war positions. Even the new United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Right," was conceived as an aspirational guideline to promote human dignity throughout the world that is only slowly gaining recognition. Neither the UDHR nor the UN Convention Against Genocide have prevented genocides since 1945. Only an informed and active public can do this.

Thus, we believe that to ensure that the scourge of genocide is eliminated, it is imperative to continue providing teachers and students knowledge about the Holocaust and other genocides that is current and provides evidence for citizen action to prevent genocide and/or to intervene against it.

Florida Holocaust Studies Resources

The eleven individual lesson plans that follow, form the nucleus of the new Grade 9-12 curriculum are intended to replace the older resource guides that supported the state Holocaust Education mandate in the early years of implementation. These lessons were written by practicing high school teachers and field-tested in classrooms. The lessons were developed to use at each grade level with the goal that students will gain a developmental and comprehensive understanding of the Holocaust and its lessons by the end of 12th grade, thus eliminating the perceived need to teach a comprehensive history of the Holocaust in each subject area and grade level every year.

The Task Force Web Site at <http://flholocausteducationtaskforce.org/> serves as clearinghouse of specific information and web links that teachers may use to develop their own lessons and/or to adapt the Grade 9-12 curriculum core.

Feedback on the Grades 9-12 Holocaust Studies Lesson Plans

During the initial roll out of the Grades 9-12 lesson plans, the Task Force is seeking feedback from teachers and students in order to improve and/or develop additional lessons. In your feedback please refer to the specific lesson, clearly reviewing the parts that you would like to see improved.

Send your feedback, via email to Linda Medvin, Chair of the Commissioner's Task Force on Holocaust Education at flaholocaustchair@gmail.com.

Overview

On the pages that follow you will find:

- the curriculum map that guided the development of the lessons
- the learning goals and objectives of the Florida Holocaust Mandate
- a matrix showing the alignment of Holocaust Studies content with the mandate and its learning goals and objectives.