

THE HOLOCAUST AND GENDER

COMPLEX BODIES LECTURE 6

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OUTLINE

- The Holocaust: Some Facts
- Prof. Marion Kaplan, Did Gender Matter during the Holocaust? Lecture to watch and questions to think about
- Introduction to the second part of your Portfolio (due this Thursday)
- Menstruation and the Holocaust
- Resources

HOLOCAUST 1939-1945

- The Holocaust refers to the period from January 30th 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, to May 8th 1945, when the war in Europe ended.
- The Jewish people were the victims of Germany's genocide plan.
- This was a plan Hitler called, 'The Final Solution'
- It has been 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz

BBC Website Link and Video: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51223804>



DEATHS DURING THE HOLOCAUST PERIOD

- 6 million Jewish people died.
- 3 million Russians died.
- 2 million Polish Christians died.
- 1,5 million Romani Gypsies died.
- 250,000 disabled people died.
- 1,000s of gay people, Jehovah Witness' and enemies of the Nazi Party died.

PROFESSOR MARION KAPLAN, “DID GENDER MATTER DURING THE HOLOCAUST?”

2019 Keynote Lecture presented at the Shoah Foundation Centre for Advanced Genocide Research

The lecture is available at the bottom of the page in the link below. It starts 20 minutes in and as an **advanced warning** there is discussion of sexual violence (including rape) in the lecture (appears between 53 minutes – 57 minutes) so for those who do not want to hear about that topic please make sure you skip those minutes.

Go watch the lecture now and then come back to me here after you have watched it 😊

Link to Lecture: <https://sfi.usc.edu/news/2019/05/24876-“did-gender-matter-during-holocaust”-marion-kaplan-skirball-professor-modern>



“DID GENDER MATTER DURING THE HOLOCAUST?”

I hope you all enjoyed that lecture as much as I did, it was really refreshing to hear such important topics being discussed in an open platform.

Some of the key areas that I particularly enjoyed from the lecture were:

- The history of women's scholarship since 1945 and how early topics relating to women's experience of the Holocaust were being discussed.
- The importance of doing a gendered history of holocaust, which included both men's experiences and women's (and I would also argue children's too) and not just 'adding on' women.
- The discussion of gender and age, gender and class, gender and sexuality and how they interrelated to the Holocaust.
- Kaplan's future ideas of research in the area of gender and the Holocaust relating to the de-masculinisation of Jewish men, same sex couples during the Holocaust, relations between class, race and gender, and depictions of sexual violence during the Holocaust.

SECOND PART OF YOUR PORTFOLIO

Part Two. 1000 words (20%): Written piece on the topic of gender from a historical perspective (e.g. the construction of the gender in the ancient world, the role of gender in the holocaust, differences between gender and sexuality through the ages) and a full Bibliography must be included.

- I have included Marion Kaplan's 2019 article, Did Gender Matter during the Holocaust? for those students who may want to engage with this topic for the second assessment.

MENSTRUATION AND THE HOLOCAUST

Last year, Jo-Ann Owusu, recent History graduate from the University of Warwick, had part of her BA dissertation Published in History Today. Owusu's research focussed on the little discussed topic of menstruation and the Holocaust.

Here is the article (**Warning:** The article does discuss sexual violence):

<https://www.historytoday.com/archive/feature/menstruation-and-holocaust>



“A much-cited argument in Holocaust scholarship, made by Hannah Arendt, is that the totalitarian regime of the camps broke human solidarity, making them a very isolating place to be. But, contrary to this view, periods could provide moments of bonding and solidarity among prisoners: many older women gave help to teenagers, who experienced their first period alone after their families had been murdered. When we look for it, many survivors talk with great openness about their periods. Having or not having a period could shape daily experience of the camps.”

TASK: Read Owusu's fascinating article and dissertation (link on previous slide and also on Moodle)

OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON MOODLE

On Moodle you will find the following links for you to look through:

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website which has a Women section
- An article from 2003 by Zoe Waxman entitled 'Unheard Testimony, Untold Stories: The representation of women's Holocaust experience'
- Jewish Women's Archive link, Women in the Holocaust
- Blog post on Queer History and the Holocaust
- Stephen Haynes 2002 article on 'Ordinary Masculinity: Gender Analysis and Holocaust Scholarship.'