

**1<sup>st</sup> graded assignment (worth 20% of final grade) Remember that you need to do (only) 3 out of the 4 20% assignments. You may turn this one in at the time the next one is due (October 29, if you decide you prefer this one to the next one. But you can't turn both of these assignments in by this method. You have to choose.)**

<b>The moral responsibility of the men in Police Battalion 101</b>
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**1250-1500 words**

**DUE: Tuesday, October 13 [After that, .2 will be taken off for every day late.]**

Write an essay concerning the motivation of the approximately 500 German men in Police Battalion 101, who engaged in a massacre of Jews in the Polish town of Jozefow in July 1942, and then went on to participate in rounding up Jews for deportation to extermination camps. In the essay, you are to focus on **3** motivations or contributing factors that at least some scholars have thought played a significant role in what led the men to engage in these horrors. The 3 factors are to be chosen *from among the following*:

1. Obedience to authority
2. Peer effects (in relation to fellow members of the battalion)
3. Anti-Semitism
4. Any other factor that you wish to discuss. It has to be a factor that it is plausible to think played a significant part in the men's actions.

For each of the three factors that you pick, explore the question *whether and to what degree* this factor played a role in the motivation of the officers. Also, be sure not to confuse one of these factors with another one. (Focus most of your attention on their participation in the initial round-ups and massacres in the town of Jozefow, keeping in mind that the men were murdering non-combatant civilians who posed no direct physical threat to them. Also, keep clearly in mind that the men went on to commit many more atrocities. [Browning estimates 83,000 deaths altogether.]

**A.** In your discussion, explore some of the **psychological and philosophical complexity** of the factor in question. (For example, does deference to authority operate entirely independent of what is being commanded; or will someone not go along with an authority unless he/she agrees with the goals of the authority? What is the role of sanctions for disobedience in the operation of this motive?) Show an awareness of the different forms that the factor in question can take. For example, anti-Semitism can be of the "eliminativist" variety, suggested by Goldhagen (p. 92: he does not use that word there, but gives its meaning), in which the anti-Semite thinks that it is right for Jews to be killed (or otherwise eliminated). But it can also take milder forms. Similarly, peer effects are not all of one type.

**B.** You must also show some understanding of the **debates among scholars** about the role and character of the factor in question in explaining the conduct of the police battalion. In particular, show an awareness of the Browning/Goldhagen dispute, which is pertinent to factors 1, 2, and 3 (and possibly to #4, depending on which factor you pick). But you must also make reference to *at least two* of Jones, Koonz, and Zangwill (but you can cite all 3 if you

wish), scholars who either commented directly on the Browning/Goldhagen dispute (Jones and Zangwill) or who discussed issues relevant to that dispute (Koonz).

C. Finally, briefly discuss how each factor you discuss bears on the **issue of moral responsibility**, excuse, and mitigation (i.e. reducing responsibility but not totally excusing it). For example, if the men felt that they had to conform to the group or they would be ostracized or shamed, does this constitute an excuse or a mitigating factor? If the men were “eliminationist” anti-Semites, but had become so through the influence of Nazi propaganda and ideological “training”, does this mitigate their responsibility? If they obeyed orders just because they were part of a chain of command, does this excuse or mitigate? And so on. **Briefly support the view you take on this question.** (It is not enough to say “No” “Yes”. You have to explain your reasoning. But do so only briefly. The issue of moral responsibility would be a topic for a paper in its own right.)

NOTE: Be sure to have your historical facts straight. I am *not* looking for an historical essay, in which you demonstrate your command of these facts. However, you must make sure that the facts that you do make use of are correct!

You may write this essay as either 3 mini-essays—one on each of the 3 factors you choose—or you may try to tie them together. It may be somewhat difficult to prevent “spillover” from one factor to another, since you may decide that factor x would not operate unless factor y was present along with it. However, this should not prevent you from structuring the paper as 3 mini-essays if you wish. Again, the format is totally optional.

### **Grading:**

Your grade will be based on several factors:

- 1) How good an understanding you exhibit of (a) the complexity of, (b) the different forms of, and (c) the scholarly debates about, each of the 3 factors you choose to discuss.
- 2) The overall coherence of your discussion of *each* of the factors (*not* of the paper overall), and also of the consistency of your 3 discussions. You cannot contradict what you say in one mini-essay in another one.
- 3) The originality and insight of your discussion. (This is a less important element than the other 2.)

### **REFERENCE/CITATION FORMS**

When you draw either a quote or a specific point from a particular source, you must cite that source. For this paper, when you use any of the readings from the course, you may cite them by putting the author and page number (e.g. “(Browning, 213),” “(Zangwill, 145)”) at the end of the appropriate quote, sentence, or paragraph. But at the end of the paper, you should give a BIBLIOGRAPHY, in which you list all of your sources, in alphabetical order, using a standard form. For example,

\*\*Goldhagen, Daniel, Jonah, “Hitler’s Willing Executioners,” in Donald Niewyk (ed. [for editor]), The Holocaust, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003).

\*\*Zangwill, Nick, “Perpetrator Motivation: Some Reflections on the Browning/Goldhagen Debate,” in Eve Garrard and Geoffrey Scarre (eds.), Moral Philosophy and the Holocaust (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2003)