

ABOUT THIS BOOK

The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings has been designed with a number of different readers in mind. The volume will introduce those who are new to study of the Holocaust to some of the fundamental concerns, challenges, and debates provoked by the Nazi genocide over the course of several decades. At the same time, readers who are already acquainted with the major issues that have emerged from study of the Holocaust will find the most important theoretical reflections on the Nazi genocide collected in one source for the first time.

Although the entries can of course be read in any order, we recommend looking over the general and section introductions first in order to get a sense of how the reader has been organized and why particular selections have been included. The general introduction maps out the field of Holocaust studies in an overarching way; it also offers a brief account of the emergence of scholarly and public interest in the Holocaust and some preliminary thoughts on the theoretical challenges posed by the events. Section introductions delve further into particular areas of concern and provide necessary context for the individual selections and themes. Each section also contains a selected bibliography of further readings in Holocaust studies as well as suggestions for companion readings in other areas of literary and cultural theory. These section introductions are meant to construct bridges for dialogue between Holocaust studies and other realms of contemporary intellectual engagement.

The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings is also designed for course use. We can imagine several different types of courses being built around this reader. It provides a basic outline and sufficient readings for a semester-long course on the theoretical implications of, and intellectual debates surrounding, the Nazi

genocide. The reader could also be used as one of the main texts for an interdisciplinary course in Holocaust studies. That is, it could be combined with a literary anthology like Lawrence Langer's *Art from the Ashes*, a collection of documents, such as Lucy Dawidowicz's *A Holocaust Reader*, or a historical reader, such as Omer Bartov's *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, Aftermath*, in order to provide a varied and comprehensive approach to the Holocaust. Finally, it could serve as one of the main texts for a course in literary theory or cultural studies. Instructors could either integrate the question of the Holocaust's theoretical implications into a course in twentieth-century or contemporary theory; or they could put the Holocaust at the center of the course and supplement it with the works of general theory mentioned in the introductions and bibliographies.

In editing this volume, we have been acutely aware of the difficulties of collecting a comprehensive set of readings for a field that is already characterized by a vast range and profound depth of contributions and that continues to grow exponentially. Due to limitations on space, we have had to leave out the work of many important scholars, have had to leave aside further favorite contributions by some scholars who are included, and have, in most cases, had to make excerpts from entries that we would have preferred to leave intact. It is a testimony to the vibrancy and significance of the field of Holocaust studies that even as large a collection as this one can only cover a selection of the most important works. We urge readers to follow our suggestions for further reading.