This course is a study of the Holocaust as an historical event and its impact on Jewish thought and culture. The first—briefer—part of the course will survey the historical context: the European Jewish community on the eve of the destruction, and the events leading up to and culminating in that destruction. The second part of the course will focus on inner Jewish (and some non-Jewish) reactions to the Holocaust, its representation in literature, art, and architecture, and the philosophical and ethical implications for those of us who come “after.”

Historical writing, film, memoirs, poetry, fiction, theology, music, art and architecture will all be treated as sources for exploration. This course demands engagement—intellectual, emotional, ethical—but the rewards for such engagement are considerable.