



EUROPEAN TEACHERS ACADEMY

Course title:	TEACHING DIFFICULT TOPICS EDUCATION AFTER AUSCHWITZ
Introduction:	<p>“On 27 January 1945 Soviet soldiers entered the gates of the Auschwitz concentration camp complex in south-west Poland. The site had been evacuated by the Nazis just days earlier. Thus ended the largest mass murder in a single location in human history. Precise numbers are still debated, but according to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the German SS systematically killed at least 960,000 of the 1.1-1.3 million Jews deported to the camp. Other victims included approximately 74,000 Poles, 21,000 Roma, 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war and at least 10,000 from other nationalities. More people died at Auschwitz than at any other Nazi concentration camp and probably than at any death camp in history”¹.</p> <p>Auschwitz-Birkenau is the general term for the network of Nazi concentration and labor camps, established near the Polish city of Oswiecim. Together this complex was the largest of all the Nazi death camps across Europe and could hold upwards of 150,000 inmates at any given time. The complex, which divided into three main areas, was established by the Nazi’s in 1940 and was in use until its Allied liberation in 1945. Historians and analysts estimate the number of people murdered at Auschwitz somewhere between 2.1 million to 4 million, of whom the vast majority were Jews. The majority of prisoners held at Auschwitz were killed in the various gas chambers though many died from starvation, forced labor, disease, shooting squads, and heinous medical experiments. Today, the word Auschwitz has become synonymous with terror, genocide, and The Holocaust. The site, though partially destroyed by the retreating Nazi’s in 1945, has been established as a museum to help future generations understand the atrocities committed within its fences. By 2011, more than 30 million people had visited the camp, and during 2014 a record number of 1.5 million people visited the Auschwitz complex and museum. Spokespeople for the museum said that from January to April 2015, over 250,000 people visited Auschwitz, marking a 40% increase over the already large numbers from the previous year. Authorities in charge of the site began to urge people to book their visit to Auschwitz online ahead of time to prevent them from having to turn people away”²</p>

1 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/27/auschwitz-short-history-liberation-concentration-campholocaust> (accessed: 02.01.2019).

2 <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-and-overview-of-auschwitz-birkenau> (accessed: 02.01.2019).

<p>The objectives of the course:</p>	<p>In 1966, philosopher and sociologist Theodor Adorno published the essay “Education after Auschwitz”, noting that “The premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again”³. Education after Auschwitz means two things: teaching about the Shoah, the Final Solution, and education in general.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Education after Auschwitz” with the emphasis on the first word: Education. Education should focus on de-barbarization. Barbarism like Auschwitz is a lack of love, an absence of warmth, it is coldness, an inability to identify with others, the incapacity to feel what other people are feeling in other situations. In short, barbarism comes from not being able to empathize. Education after Auschwitz means promoting empathy (the ability to feel what other people are feeling in other situations) and warmth (a climate of safety, security and openness). 2. “Education after Auschwitz” with the emphasis on the second word: after. The heinousness of Auschwitz is the heinousness of our world and the pointlessness of the atrocities of Auschwitz is the pointlessness of all atrocities. If youngsters are unaware that yesterday’s Auschwitz is part of today’s world, there is all the more chance of a repetition. The victims of a second Holocaust would not necessarily be Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, invalids, or any of the other groups the Nazis viewed as “enemies” or as “inferior.” They could be anyone who is different. Education after Auschwitz means promoting empathy with the heinousness of Auschwitz, which is the heinousness of this world. Here “empathy” means: Allowing Auschwitz into our heart and soul and not pushing it away. It also means placing Auschwitz inside our world and not keeping it outside. It happened so it can happen again. That is the core of what we have to say. 3. “Education after Auschwitz” with the emphasis on the third word: Auschwitz. Education after Auschwitz means promoting empathy with the perpetrators, the victims and the bystanders of the Holocaust. Since Auschwitz has become the symbol of various forms of cruelty and aggression, nowadays Education after Auschwitz also means promoting empathy (ability to put yourself in someone else’s place) with perpetrators, victims and bystanders in general. Education after Auschwitz means gaining insight into the mechanisms and circumstances that turn people into aggressors and murderers, insight into the structure of destruction.
<p>Target groups:</p>	<p>Teachers, (especially history, literature, humanities, etc.), educators, youth workers, trainers, coaches, therapists: any professional who works with other people as a teacher, guide, mentor, leader or counselor.</p>
<p>Daily programme:</p>	<p>Depending on the group's experience, expectations and background, the program will include all or some of the following modules: 1. The Ark of Innocence - Morality and Memory after Auschwitz 2. Memories of the Holocaust: Public and Private Discourses 3. The Holocaust and European Historical Culture 4. Representing the Holocaust: Memorials (all day visit to the Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940 1945) 5. Representing the Holocaust: Writing, Art, Education 6. Anti-Semitism Today 7. Islamophobia and other forms of exclusion 8. Holocaust and Human Rights: Values and Awareness Model.</p>

3 <https://josswinn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/AdornoEducation.pdf> (accessed: 02.01.2019).

Will participants receive a ready set of teaching materials / course methodology for future implementation in their school?	Yes
Dates in 2021:	9-15 May, 15-21 August, 31 October-6 November.
Location:	Krakow, Poland with visits to Auschwitz
Social programme:	The social programme activities are included within your course fees and can be arranged for interested participants noting a sensitive subject of this course.



EUROPEAN
TEACHERS ACADEMY

Contact us

+48 509 583 501

Krakowskie Forum Edukacji sp. z o.o.
Rynek Główny 28, 31-010 Kraków, Poland

info@teachersacademy.eu

OID number: E10255949

