

History Access Reading Group

Meet with Professor UTA POIGER
to discuss

Christopher Browning,
*Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the
Final Solution in Poland*

with a new afterword (Harper Perennial, 1998).

*Monday, January 24
1:30 to 3:00 in Smith 306*

The book is widely available. Please read an edition with the afterword.

Christopher Browning's book traces how a unit of average, middle-aged German men—men without strong ties to Nazi organizations—became cold-blooded murderers of tens of thousands of Jews during World War II in Poland. This chilling and important contribution to the history of the Holocaust gained heightened attention in the mid-1990s when Daniel Goldhagen attacked Browning for underestimating and mis-interpreting the significance of German anti-Semitism in explaining the actions of the battalion. In the afterword, Browning replies to Goldhagen's critique and the international debate that ensued. The questions the book raises about military culture and racism remain highly relevant.

Please sign up for this group by visiting our website and clicking on the RSVP
button or contacting History Undergraduate Advising (543-5691,
histadv@u.washington.edu):

<http://depts.washington.edu/history/studying/access/reading.html>

Questions to consider while you read the book:

- What makes members of Police Battalion 101 average or ordinary? What do we learn about their background?
- What makes the "morning in Jozefow" so chilling?
- What factors, according to Browning, made these men into participants in genocide? Why did some men not participate? What were the consequences for them?
- Do you find Browning's writing style and use of photography appropriate?
- What do you learn about involvement of non-Germans in the Holocaust?
- How do you assess Browning's use of postwar psychological experiments?
- Does Browning underestimate the significance of anti-semitism for the actions of these German perpetrators?
- Does Browning revise his findings in the afterword?
- Is the title of the book appropriate?
- Does this book change any of your perceptions of the Holocaust of European Jewry?