

How to Deal with a Difficult Past? – Educational Perspectives on National Socialism, Shoah, and the Second World War – a two-part seminar for German and Polish teachers and students

July 16th–22nd, 2026: Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen Memorials and Museums

September 23rd–27th, 2026: Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum

The International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, together with the Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen Memorials and Museums, introduces the second edition of the seminar for German and Polish teachers entitled *How to Deal with a Difficult Past? – Educational Perspectives on National Socialism, Shoah, and the Second World War*.

During the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Marian Turcki – the former Auschwitz prisoner and Holocaust survivor – said that “Auschwitz did not fall from the sky. Auschwitz tiptoed along, treading in small steps, approaching until what happened here did happen.”

It is not possible to understand the crimes committed in Auschwitz without going back to the pre-war time, putting Auschwitz into a broader context, and confronting different points of view and ways of remembrance about them. That is why the aim of the project is to follow and analyze the history of the Nazi crimes from their origin to the way they are remembered in the contemporary world. The seminar consists of two parts – one in Germany and one in Poland – and addresses teachers from these two countries who are on different levels of their professional lives – from students completing their studies up to educators experienced in introducing this topic into the school lessons. During the two-part program, participants will have an opportunity to visit authentic memorial sites, find out more about their educational activities, get to know the history from different perspectives, and exchange experiences with co-participants as well as with the staff of the memorial sites.

PROGRAMME – PART 1

Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen Memorials and Museums

THURSDAY, July 16th, 2026

- From 15:00** *Arrival and check-in at the hotel*
- 15:45-17:15** Experiences, personal backgrounds & expectations of the participants and organizers – a creative **getting to know each other**
- 17:30-19:00** **“We didn’t know about Buchenwald.”** – walk into the city of Weimar with a focus on the history of the city in National Socialism and its pedagogical intentions
- 19:15** *Dinner in the city of Weimar & walk back to the hotel*

FRIDAY, July 17th, 2026

- 08:00** *Breakfast at the hotel & walk to the Museum “Forced Labour”*
- 09:15** **“Forced Labour under National Socialism”** – introduction to the place & its history
- 09:30-12:30** **Exploration of the exhibition** with tasks and discussion about pedagogical intentions
- 12:45-14:15** *Lunch in the city of Weimar*
- 14:45** *Transfer to the Buchenwald Memorial by public bus*
- 15:00** **“The Commemorative Buchenwald Railway Path”** – introduction to a long-term civil society project and its historical context
- 16:30** *Coffee break*
- 17:00** **Perspectives on the history of National Socialism and the Second World War in Poland and Germany and their role for school and out-of-school education** – workshop & discussion
- 18:24** *Transfer to the hotel by public bus; refreshing at the hotel*
- 19:30** *Dinner in the city of Weimar*

SATURDAY, July 18th, 2026

- 08:50** *Transfer to the Buchenwald Memorial by public bus*
- 09:05** **The International Meeting Place of the Memorial Buchenwald** – introduction into its presence and history & talk
- 09:30-12:00** **Buchenwald and its diverse layers of history** – introduction & guided tour through the former concentration camp with a focus on the pedagogical aims
- 12:00-13:00** *Lunch*
- 13:00-13:30** **Buchenwald and its diverse layers of history** – visit to the former crematorium building.
- 13:45-15:15** **Buchenwald. Ostracism and Violence, 1937 to 1945** – visit to the main exhibition with a focus on the museological concept & didactic aims
- 15:30-16:15** *Coffee break (with an open reflection about the exhibition)*
- 16:30-18:00** **Prescribed history? Buchenwald narratives in times of Communism** – guided tour over and reflections about the National GDR Memorial of 1958
- 18:23** *Transfer to Weimar by public bus*
- 19:30** *Dinner and free time in the city*

SUNDAY, July 19th, 2026

- 08:50** *Transfer to the Buchenwald Memorial by public bus*
- 09:15** **Why to visit the place?** – reflections and discussion about the philosophy and aims of the education work
- 10:45** **Learning by doing** – workshops and reflection formats for a more in-depth understanding
- **Aspects of inclusion** – a methodical introduction with a timeline & biographies of Buchenwald inmates
 - **“Camp life was most strongly influenced by the isolation from the outside world”** – approaches to the history of Soviet Special Camp No. 2 in Buchenwald, 1945-1950 (*optional*)
 - **Means of survival - testimony - work of art - pictorial memory** – individual visit of the art exhibition (*optional*)

Critical feedback

- 12:45** *Lunch break*
- 14:15** *Bus transfer to Berlin Oranienburg and dinner (arrival time at the hotel ca. 18:30)*

MONDAY, July 20th, 2026

- 10:25** *Departure to the Sachsenhausen Memorial by public transport*
- 10:40** **Official welcome**
- 10:50-11:30** **Historical layers of Sachsenhausen (1936 until today) – lecture**
- 11:30-13:30** **Visit of the Memorial, Part I**
- 13:30-14:15** *Lunch*
- 14:15-16:30** **Visit of the Memorial, Part II with a focus on commemoration**
- 16:45-17:45** **Reflection of day 1**
- 17:55** *Departure to the hotel*
- 18:30** *Dinner in Oranienburg*

TUESDAY, July 21st, 2026

- 9:25** *Departure to the Memorial by public transport*
- 09:35-11:35** **Dealing with the topic of perpetrators – workshop**
- 11:35-11:45** *Coffee break*
- 11:45-12:45** **Guided tour of former SS areas – IKL, SS houses, and troop camp – with a focus on the relationship between the town and concentration camp**
- 13:00-13:45** *Lunch*
- 14:00-15:15** **Dealing with the topic of perpetrators – exhibition visits and critical feedback with a coffee break**
- 15:15-17:55** **Learning by doing – workshops and reflection formats**

Reflection of day 2

18:00 *Farewell dinner in Oranienburg after Part I of the seminar*

WEDNESDAY, July 22nd, 2026

10:25 *Departure to the Memorial by public transport*

10:45-12:00 **Expectations regarding a memorial visit** – exercise

after 12:00 *Departure of participants*

PROGRAMME – PART 2

Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum

WEDNESDAY, September 23rd, 2026

by 16:15 *Arrival and check-in in the Museum's hostel*

16:15-16:45 **Welcome to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum & Ice-breaking activity**

16:45 *Departure for the town center of Oświęcim*

17:00-18:30 **Visit to the Oshpitzin Jewish Museum and walking tour in the town center of Oświęcim**

18:30 *Return to the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust (ICEAH) and dinner*

THURSDAY, September 24th, 2026

8:15 *Departure for Będzin*

9:30-11:30 **Jewish community in the city of Będzin** – visit to the House of Prayer at the Cukerman's Gate and the Ghetto Fighters' House

11:30 *Departure for Gliwice*

12:15-13:45	Jewish community in the city of Gleiwitz (until 1945) and in the city of Gliwice (after 1945) – visit to the House of Remembrance about Upper Silesian Jews
14:00-15:00	<i>Lunch</i>
15:00	<i>Return to Oświęcim</i>
16:30-17:00	Reflection about the visit to Oshpitizn Jewish Museum, Będzin, and Gliwice
17:00-17:15	<i>Break</i>
17:15-18:15	Auschwitz – a lesson from history? – presentation on the educational philosophy of the ICEAH
18:15	<i>Dinner</i>

FRIDAY, September 25th, 2026

9:00-12:00	Study guided tour of the former Auschwitz I camp
12:00-13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30-14:30	Programme of choice Option 1: Remnants of the Nazi past – visit to the Rudolf Höss garden Option 2: Preserve for the future – visit to the Conservatory Labs
14:30-15:00	<i>Break</i>
15:00-18:00	How do we teach about Auschwitz and the Holocaust? – methodological workshop based on the educational materials created by the ICEAH
18:15	<i>Dinner</i>

SATURDAY, September 26th, 2026

8:45	<i>Departure for Brzezinka</i>
9:00-12:00	Study guided tour of the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp
12:00-13:30	<i>Return to the ICEAH and lunch</i>

- 13:30-15:00** **From the liberation of the camp to the establishment of the State Museum in Oświęcim (1945-1949) – lecture**
- 15:00** **Free time at national exhibitions**
- 18:30** *Departure for the town centre of Oświęcim*
- 19:00** *Farewell dinner*

SUNDAY, September 27th, 2026

- 8:30-10:30** **11th commandment: Thou shalt not be indifferent** – workshop summarizing the visit to the Auschwitz Memorial
- 10:30-11:00** *Break*
- 11:00-12:00** **Evaluation of the seminar**
- 12:00** *Lunch and departure of participants*

Educational activities are realized in the building, which adaptation has been financed within the project “The Adaptation of the ‘Old Theatre’ Premises for the Functioning of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust” —Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2014-2020.

