

The University of Florida
History 3931, Jewish Studies 3930
Holocaust Studies
Fall Semester 2019
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Walker Hall 201
 Office Hours: Fridays 1:00-2:00

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This is not a course on the Holocaust. Rather it is a course on how the Holocaust is remembered and represented – how it is portrayed toward the ultimate end of conveying an understanding of something that is in many ways beyond comprehension. We will look at four methods of representation: historical testimony, literature including poems and novels, film including documentaries and feature films, and art from paintings to photography to memorials to museums.

Our overall questions concern the following:

- *Can* the Holocaust be conveyed and comprehended given its horror? Is it even possible for the voices, pens, paint brushes, cameras, or drafting tools, either of survivors, novelists, poets, or artists to convey the terrible, unimaginable truth? Or is the wall of understanding that separates us from the events ultimately impenetrable?
- *How* has the Holocaust been represented from the time of the events themselves to the present day? Is the effort to represent the Holocaust truly an effort to represent truth? Or do novelists, filmmakers and the like seek to use the Holocaust to represent either parts of truth or other realities entirely?

This course assumes a few things. Read them carefully.

- One is that you have some familiarity with the Holocaust itself. We cannot use our time to go over the basic narrative. I will provide four days of barebones introduction, but if you have not had a course on the Holocaust then I suggest that you read a brief account during our first week. A good one is Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), which is an optional book for this course.
- A second is that you have no aversion to reading. Each week we will read challenging texts that demand your attention. I promise that everything we read will be compelling, but you have to commit to completing the reading by the dates listed in the class schedule below.
- A third is that you come to class each day and that you have no aversion to speaking or writing as a method by which to explore and test your own ideas. Much of our work will take place in the setting of discussion. You will also take a midterm examination and a final examination (both take home exams), and you will write a term paper.

- A fourth is that you will make time outside of class periods to see two of our three films (see class schedule below). They are an essential part of the class and we will watch them together, as a group on a big(ish) screen, and NOT individually on our phones.

You will need to attain the following texts. All are available in the university bookstore but are also available **used** via amazon.com and other sites.

- Bergen, Doris. *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009. (Optional)
- Levi, Primo. *The Drowned and the Saved*. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- Semel, Nava. *And the Rat Laughed*. Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2008.

The other readings will be posted on the class Canvas site.

Undergraduate Grades will be configured as follows:

Discussion:	25%
Midterm:	25%
Term Paper:	25%
Final Exam:	25%

Discussions 25% in aggregate.

You are expected to come to discussion prepared, having done the reading in advance, and you are expected to participate. You can miss one discussion without penalty to your grade. Afterwards each unexcused absence from discussion will result in zero for that discussion. You are also expected to attend the film screenings for this course as outlined in the syllabus. Failure to do so will result in a ten-point deduction from the term paper for each film missed.

Midterm and Final Examinations 50% in aggregate.

The midterm and final are take-home, open book exams, due on the dates given in the class schedule below. You will be graded on the degree to which you answer the questions analytically and on the degree to which you engage with the readings meaningfully in your answers.

Term Paper -- 25%.

The term paper will concern the film section on this course. You will be graded on the degree to which you answer the question analytically and on the degree to which you engage with the films and the readings on the films meaningfully in your answers.

The Numerical Grading Scale is as follows:

A	93-100	A-	90-92		
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	68-69	D	63-67	D-	60-62
F	<60				

Grading Criteria is as follows:

- A-range – 90s -- Excels – Full command and facility with material with the ability to place it within larger historical/literary context and to make arguments based upon it.
- B-range – 80s – Good – Solid understanding of material but without complete facility or ability to make arguments based on it.

- C-range – 70s -- Fair – Some understanding of major themes, lack of command with detail, or some understanding of detail but lack of contextual understanding.
- D-range – 60s -- Poor – Enough factual understanding to pass, but little to no contextual clarity.
- F-range – Fails – Lack of university level quality.

For the grading policies of the University of Florida in general, follow this link:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Class Policies

Attendance:

Your grade will be directly affected if you miss discussion days and the two evening films (see above). I will not take attendance on regular lecture days, but if you miss class, believe me, it will show in your written work. Be in class on time.

Cell phones, tablets, laptops:

Turn your cell phones off when we begin class. Use your computer, tablet, etc., to take notes and **only** to take notes. **You will need to take notes by hand with pen on paper.** I have had too many problems over the years with students using their machines for social media, etc. It is a distraction, especially to the students sitting behind you.

Late Papers and Tests:

Tests and papers will not be accepted late without medical documentation.

Academic Honesty:

The University of Florida Student Honor Code is located at this link:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluations:

Students in this class are participating in the pilot evaluation of the new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors so that teaching effectiveness is enhanced and to be more seamlessly linked to UF’s CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals.

Academic Resources:

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu.
<https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
<http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Class Schedule:

Part 1: August 20-September 4

Overview: Problems of Uniqueness, Problems of Explaining

8/21: Introduction: Avrom Sutzkever's Problem and Ours

8/23: Antisemitism: Representing the Jew as Other

8/26: Hitler and Nazism

8/28: Ghettos

8/30: Extermination

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 8/30: If you are not familiar with basic narratives of the Holocaust then you must become so. Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide* is concise and will help you in this regard.

9/2: NO CLASS: LABOR DAY

9/4: Discussion: *What was the Holocaust? Is it Unique? What are the Problems of Representation?*

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 9/4: Gary Weissman, *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 1-27; Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 1-69.

Part 2: September 9-18

***Historical Witnessing:
Testimony***

9/9: The Problem of Testimony

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 9/9: Cathy Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 3-13.

9/11: Discussion: Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 9/11: Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, all.

9/13: The Problem of Gendered Testimony

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 9/13: Myrna Goldenberg, "Memoirs of Auschwitz Survivors: The Burden of Gender," in *Women and the Holocaust*, ed. Dalia Ofer and Lenore Weitzman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 327-40.

9/18: Discussion: Gendered Testimony

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 9/16: Sara Horowitz, "If He knows How to Make a Child," Memories of Birth and Baby Killing in Jewish Testimony Narratives," in *Jewish Histories of the Holocaust*, ed. Norman J.W. Goda (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 135-151.

Part 3 September 23-October 15:

The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination

9/20: "Poetry after Auschwitz": Basic Problems

Reading: Lawrence L. Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), Chapter 1.

9/23: Discussion: Paul Celan, *Death Fugue*

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 9/23: Paul Celan, "Death Fugue." John Felstiner, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, and Jew* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 22-42

9/25: Problems of Holocaust Fiction

9/27: Discussion: Short Stories: Isaiah Spiegel

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 9/27: Isaiah Spiegel, "Bread" and "The Ghetto Dog."

9/30: NO CLASS: ROSH HASHANAH

10/2: Discussion: Religious Tales: Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust

Undergraduate Reading to be Completed by 10/2: “Hovering above the Pit,” “Jew Go Back to the Grave,” “A Bowl of Soup,” “Who Will Win this War”, “The Mosaic Artist’s Apprentice,” “A Sign from Heaven,” from Yaffa Eliach, *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust* (for 10/4).

10/4: *Discussion:* Nava Semel, *And the Rat Laughed*
Undergraduate Reading to be Completed by 10/2: *And the Rat Laughed*, parts I and II.

10/7: *Discussion:* Nava Semel *And the Rat Laughed*
Undergraduate Reading to be Completed by 10/2: *And the Rat Laughed*, parts III and IV.

10/9: NO CLASS: YOM KIPPUR

10/11: NO CLASS: HOMECOMING

10/15: MIDTERM EXAMINATION DUE – SUBMIT ON CANVAS

Part 4 October 14-November 4:

The Holocaust and Film

10/16: Holocaust Film: The Problem of Authenticity

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 10/16: Joshua Hirsch, *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust*, Chapter 1.

10/18: *Diary of Anne Frank* – (No Class but Screening at 6 pm previous evening).

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 10/17. Selections from *Diary of Anne Frank*.

10/21: *Discussion:* *Anne Frank*

Alvin Rosenfeld, “Popularization and Memory: The Case of Anne Frank” in *Lessons and Legacies: The Meaning of the Holocaust in a Changing World*, ed. Peter Hayes (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press University Press, 2011), pp. 243-278.

10/23: Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah* (in-class screening)

10/25: Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah* (in class screening)

10/28: *Discussion:* *Shoah*

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 10/23 : Shoshanna Felman, *The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah* in Felman, ed., *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, pp. 204-85 (complete by Friday).

10/30: Steven Spielberg, *Schindler’s List*: (no class but screening at 6 pm on 10/30).

11/1: *Discussion:* *Schindler’s List*

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 11/1: Omer Bartov, *Spielberg’s Oskar: Hollywood Tries Evil*, in Yosefa Loshitzky, ed., *Spielberg’s Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler’s List* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 41-61 (for 11/1);

11/4: *Discussion:* Holocaust Humor?

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 11/4: Watch Larry David Clip, “Survivor;” South Park, “Passion of the Jew;” Ruth R. Wisse, *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 143-155; Articles on Joan Rivers, Dieudonné M’Bala M’Bala.

Part 4: November 6-December 4:

Visual Art, Photography, and Memorialization

11/6: Artistic Representations of the Holocaust (TERM PAPERS DUE)

11/8: Discussion: Good Art, Bad Art.

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 11/8: Pat Lipsky, “A Painter of the Holocaust for Our Times: Three Self Portraits by Felix Nussbaum at New York’s Neue Galerie,” *Tablet Magazine* (<https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/285637/felix-nussbaum-neue-galerie>). Watch Magnes Symposium: *The Holocaust Effect on Contemporary Art* (Canvas); Documentary on Anselm Kiefer, *Remembering the Future*.

11/11: NO CLASS: VETERAN’S DAY

11/13: The Holocaust and the Camera Lens.

11/15: Discussion: Photographing the Holocaust

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 11/15: Carol Zemel, “Emblems of Atrocity: Holocaust Liberation Photographs,” and Monica Bohm Duchon, “The Uses and Abuses of Photography in Holocaust-Related Art,” both in *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, ed. Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 201-235; Barbie Zelizer, “Gender and Atrocity: Women in Holocaust Photographs,” in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Zelizer (London: Athlone, 2001), pp. 247-75.

11/18: The Problem of Memorialization

11/20: Discussion: Poland’s Holocaust Memorials.

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 11/20: Michael Meng: *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), Chapter 3; Jonathan Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration 1945-1979* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003); James Young, “The Biography of a Memorial Icon: Nathan Rapoport’s Warsaw Ghetto Monument,” *Representations*, v. 26 (Spring 1989), pp. 69-106 (by 11/22).

11/22: Discussion: Contemporary Memorialization in Germany

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 11/22: Jenny Edkins, "Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial," in *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 135-49; James Young, "Germany's Holocaust Memorial Problem – And Mine," *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 153-224. Watch video on the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*.

11/25: What is a Holocaust Museum?

11/27: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

11/29: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

12/2: The Politics of Two Museums: Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 12/2: Roni Stauber, The Holocaust in Israeli Public Debate in the 1950s, pp. 19-29, 133-48. James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), Introduction and Part II. Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), Chapter 4.

12/4: Discussion: Museum Narratives

Undergraduate Reading to be completed by 12/4: Visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Site at the following and go through the entire online exhibition, "Americans and the Holocaust," including videos.

<http://www.ushmm.org/> (click: "Americans and the Holocaust" exhibition and see online exhibition)

Also Dara Horn, "'Auschwitz is Not a Metaphor,' *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 6, 2019 (<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/06/auschwitz-not-long-ago-not-far-away/591082/>)

FINAL EXAM DUE 12/9, 9 AM