

Making the Holocaust Speak

English 301 56139
MW 8.45-10.20
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Objectives

This course is first and foremost a writing course. We will spend much of our time writing, reading and talking about writing and reading. Working on the basis of your experience in English 102 or the equivalent introduction to writing course, we will utilize and refine the skills of researching, critical thinking and analytic writing. By the end of this course you should have greater familiarity and facility with the resources at WSU and will have refined your ability to read and write critically.

We will pursue these objectives via a series of linked units, each with reading and writing components. The first unit focuses on Holocaust victims and survivors, how they write and what it means to write about their experiences. This unit will culminate in an analytic biography of a particular writer.

The second unit will focus on Holocaust denial. We will investigate the claims of denial groups and in particular their use of the internet.

The third unit will attempt to pull the first two units together in terms of how the Holocaust is memorialized. We will examine how several writers memorialize the Holocaust in personal and public ways. The final paper will address a particular memorial.

Requirements

The work required for this course consists of three researched papers of approximately three to five pages, ten one to two page papers, compilation of an editing journal and regular and constructive class participation.

Grading

		Scale	
10 Reaction Papers	100 points	100-90%	A
3 Short Papers	150 points	89%-80%	B
Editing Journal	25 points	79%-70%	C
Participation	50 points	69%-60%	D
Total	325		

Texts

Art from the Ashes: A Holocaust Anthology ed. Lawrence Langer
Maus I & II by Art Spiegelman
A Pocket Style Manual by Diana Hacker
Recommended: A dictionary
Available at Marwil Bookshop (on the corner of Cass and Warren).

Attendance

Prompt and consistent attendance is important in creating a community. I hope we'll be able to a better part of the class time talking among ourselves about the subject matter and our own writing. It is important, then, that you make it to all the class meetings and arrive on time. Coming late is disruptive to discussion and especially to group work. If something does happen you must contact me, via phone, answering machine or email within 24 hours. You are still responsible for what happened in a missed class. I take attendance a the beginning of class, if you arrive late you may be marked absent.

Participation

This grade is largely determine by your performance in class and your preparation for class. Points are awarded for coming to class on time, bringing your book and other materials, not only speaking in discussion but listening to and responding to your colleagues. Points are also awarded for listserv participation.

Late Papers

Late papers will lose five points per day until they are turned in. Any paper not turned in will result in the failure of the course.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's ideas or words without giving that person credit. Any ideas or facts that are not your own must be cited using MLA format. This includes misuse of quotations, paraphrases and summaries. The penalties for plagiarism are failure of this course and potential suspension from the university. I expect that you have gone through this in your introductory writing courses. If you have not or are unsure, please come see me rather than take a risk.

Listserv

A listserv is a discussion group that functions via email. Participation in the listserv is one of the class requirements. I will post a question once a week beginning on 17 May and you must post a response to the question or to a peer's response. You must post at least once a week. Therefore you must check

your email at least once a week. You need an active email address to participate. If you do not have an email address you can get one from the C&IT Computer Lab in the Undergraduate Library. In order to subscribe to the listserv you must send a message to:

listserv@lists.wayne.edu

In the body of the message type:

subscribe Holocaust301 your name

Do not put a subject on the message. Type it exactly as it looks above. Within twenty-four hours you should get a message confirming your subscription. If you are having problems, send me an email.

Website

The course has a website that has the syllabus, calendar, and information. Do check it from time to time. There are links and other helpful things on it.

Written Work

I expect that you have had at least English 102 and are familiar with the conventions of academic writing. For this course, all papers are to be typewritten, with one-inch margins, numbered pages, in a twelve point font, with your name, the date, the course and the assignment at the top of the first page. If a paper contains grievous mechanical, spelling, or typographical errors I will give it back to you for revision. You must turn the revision and the original in to me the next class meeting.

Editing Journal

This is to be kept in a bluebook. After you receive a paper back from me, read over the paper looking especially at any mechanical errors I have marked. In your bluebook write out the sentence containing the error. Below it, write out the same sentence with the error corrected. The goal of the editing journal is to increase your consciousness of what you write and keep track of any repeated errors. The journal is especially helpful in working out spelling and grammar problems. I will check the journals three times during the semester. Points will be awarded based on completeness of the journal.

Reaction Papers

These are one to two page papers that essentially respond to a question or idea I have generated. A list of the questions can be found after the calendar and on the website. The emphasis is on your own way approaching the question and the reading. Avoid any sort of a qualitative evaluation, such as: "I liked it, it was good, it was bad, it was funny, it was tragic, it was

difficult, etc." I expect to read your opinion, but that opinion must be illustrated with evidence from the text itself. Do not summarize! Assume that the reader is familiar with the text. You may quote, but only briefly. Do not try to address the text as a whole, there is not enough room in two pages. Focus on an element and discuss it in depth. These will get easier as you go through them. You may use them as a place to explore term papers ideas. My comments will tend to be general with the goal of asking you to think of the issues you raise in greater detail. If you are unsatisfied with your reaction papers please come see me. I am more than willing to preview them before you hand them in.

Calendar

The page numbers refer to *Art from the Ashes*.

Part 1 Survivors and Witnesses

- 10 May Introductions
12 May *Genocide*
- 17 May Avraham Tory "Memoir" pp. 217-233
 Reaction Paper 1
- 19 May
- 24 May Ida Fink "The Key Game" & "Spring Morning"
 pp. 242-248
 Reaction Paper 2
- 26 May Annotated bibliography for Paper 1 due
- 31 May No class
- 2 June Tadeusz Borowski "This Way for the Gas..."
 pp. 343-356
 Reaction Paper 3
- 4 June (NB This is a Friday)
- 7 June Sarah Nomberg-Prztyk "The Verdict" and
 "Friendly Meetings" pp. 264-270
 Reaction Paper 4
- 9 June Paper 1 due
- ### **Part 2 Memory and Denial**
- 14 June Primo Levi "Shame" pp. 108-118
 Reaction Paper 5
- 16 June
- 21 June Elie Wiesel "A Plea for the Dead" pp. 138-152
 Reaction Paper 6
- 23 June
- 28 June on-line Holocaust Denial sites
 Meet in 029 State Hall
 Reaction Paper 7 (see description)
- 30 June *Night and Fog* (film)

5 July No Class
7 July Reaction Paper 8 (*Night and Fog*)
9 July Paper 2 due
 (NB: this is a Friday)

Part 3 Memorials

12 July *Maus I*
 Reaction Paper 9
14 July

19 July *Maus II*
 Reaction Paper 10
21 July

26 July Final Paper due

Reaction Paper Questions

These papers are to be 1-2 pages, typewritten, double-spaced. Be sure your name, date, course name and a title are on all Reaction Papers.

Reaction Paper 1 (17 May)
Avraham Tory "Memoir" pp. 217-33
How is Dr. Elkes characterized?

Reaction Paper 2 (24 May)
Ida Fink "The Key Game" & "Spring Morning" pp. 242-48
How do the situations affect the fathers in the stories?

Reaction Paper 3 (31 May)
Tadeusz Borowski "This Way for the Gas..." pp. 343-56
Why does the narrator get angry?

Reaction Paper 4 (7 June)
Nomberg-Przytyk "The Verdict" & "Friendly Meetings" pp. 264-70
Why and how do the characters in the stories lie?

Reaction Paper 5 (14 July)
Primo Levi "Shame" pp. 108-118
Why does Levi believe he and others survived?

Reaction Paper 6 (21 July)
Elie Wiesel "A Plea for the Dead" pp. 138-52
For Wiesel, what is the difference between knowledge and understanding?

Reaction Paper 7 (28 June)
For this reaction paper I want you to investigate one of the Holocaust Denial or Hate sites indexed on the Anti-Defamation League website. These links are found on the course website. Write about the overall effect the website is trying to create. Who is its audience? Is it trying to persuade you to believe something? How does it establish its credibility?

Reaction Paper 8 (8 July)
Night and Fog (film)
In what ways is the film a memorial to the Holocaust?

Reaction Paper 9 (12 July)

Maus I

Why does Artie decide to write about his father's experience?

Reaction Paper 10 (19 July)

Maus II

What sort of person is Vladek?