

Making the Holocaust Speak

English 301 Section 13955
Winter 1998
MW 8.00-9.25
321 State Hall
Office Hours 10.00-12.00 Monday & by appt.

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Course Description

In this course we will investigate how the Holocaust is represented in literature and film. We will examine a variety of representations including memoirs, diaries and testimonies, historical films, poetry, the internet and popular films. The goal of the course is to try to understand how we can make the Holocaust speak, more than fifty years after the fact.

The course will focus on refining researching and research paper-writing skills. The use of quotes and paraphrases, and introductions and conclusions will be emphasized.

Coursework

I will ask you to produce two distinct, but related types of writing for this course. The first will be a series of fifteen one to two page reaction papers based on readings, films, websites, and presentations. These papers will serve as a record of your own reactions to the course material. The second type of writing will be formal research papers. There will be three shorter papers and one longer. Details of these papers can be found below. Participation in discussion, peer reviewing, conferences and an editing journal will also be part of the required work.

Grading

		Scale	
15 Reaction Papers	150	100%-90%	A
3 Short Papers	150	89%-80%	B
1 Longer Paper	100	79%-70%	C
Participation	50	69%-60%	D
Editing Journal	50	59%-	E
Total	500 points		

Textbooks

These books are available at Marwil Bookshop on the corner of Cass and Warren.

Art from the Ashes: A Holocaust Anthology, Lawrence Langer (ed.)

Maus I&II, Art Spiegelman

Night, Elie Wiesel

Recommended

If you do not have a good paperback dictionary and a writing handbook I recommend picking up these.

American Heritage Dictionary

A Pocket Style Manual by Diana Hacker

Attendance

Prompt and consistent attendance is crucial to the course's success.

Entering class after it has begun is very disruptive, especially if we have a speaker or are watching a film. If you miss a class notify me as soon as possible, either by phone or email. You are responsible for material covered in class whether you are there or not.

Late Papers

All papers are due at the beginning of class. Any paper turned in after will lose five points per day. Any paper not turned in will result in an incomplete grade for the course.

Paper Format

All papers are to be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins in a ten or twelve point font. Be certain your name, date, and the assignment are on all papers. Please number all pages. Always keep an extra copy of your work on disk or paper. Any serious grammar, spelling or typographical errors will cause a paper to be returned unmarked for revision and resubmission.

Revision

Any of the three short papers and the research paper may be revised. You must let me know that you wish to revise within a week after receiving the paper back. You will then have two weeks to prepare the revision. The revision must be substantial and not merely be a correction of issues raised in my or your peer's comments. Please turn in the original version of the paper with the revision. The revision score will replace the previous score, whether it is higher or not. A paper that you have told me you wish to revise must be revised or it will be treated as a late paper and then an incomplete.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's work. Do not plagiarize. If you are unclear as to what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, please see me.

Editing Journal

This is to be kept in a blue book. After you receive a paper back from myself or a peer, make an entry for that paper in the blue book. The entry should describe any mechanical errors and their corrections. Second, it should note any structural or organizational issues. The goal of the editing journal is to create a critical record of your own writing so that you can better address your strengths and weaknesses. I will check the journals periodically. Full credit will only be given to editing journals which are up to date and turned in on time.

Internet Use

One method of research and investigation that I hope to utilize is the internet. If you do not have an e-mail address I urge you to go to the C&IT office in the basement of the Science Library and get one. In addition, some assignments will involve the use of the world wide web. The address for the course website is at the top of the first page.

Conferences

I will hold regular office hours as noted at the top of the syllabus. I am also available by appointment. In order to get participation credit for this course you must meet with me at least twice during the semester.

Calendar

Details of reaction papers are on the following pages. Page numbers refer to *Art from the Ashes*.

12 January	Introductions
14 January	<i>Genocide</i> (film)
19 January	MLK jr. Day, no class
21 January	Reaction Paper 1 (<i>Genocide</i> film) Reaction Paper 2 Newspaper/magazine article
26 January	Gunskirchen Lager witness website Reaction Paper 3
28 January	Avram Tory, "Memoir" pp. 217-233 & Jozef Zelkowicz, "Days of Nightmare" pp. 200-214 Reaction Paper 4
2 February	Writing Workshop, Bring draft of Paper 1
4 February	Paper 1 due
9 February	"Kulmhof (Chelmno) Deathcamp" pp. 54-59 & Christopher Browning, "One Day in Józefów: Initiation to Mass Murder" pp. 95-105 Reaction Paper 5
11 February	Charlotte Delbo, "Voices" pp. 77-92 Reaction Paper 6
16 February	<i>Night</i> Reaction Paper 7
18 February	Golda Kalib talk (<i>Night</i>)
23 February	Writing Workshop, Bring Draft of Paper 2 Reaction Paper 8 (Golda Kalib talk)
25 February	Paper 2 due
2 March	Tadeusz Borowski, "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen" pp. 343-356 Reaction Paper 9
4 March	Sara Nomberg-Przytyk, "The Verdict" pp. 264-267 & "Friendly Meetings" pp.268-270 Reaction Paper 10 Abstract of long paper due

9 March Primo Levi, "Shame" pp. 108-118
Reaction Paper 11
Night and Fog (film)

11 March Reaction Paper 12 (*Night and Fog*)

16 March Spring Break

18 March Spring Break

23 March Writing Workshop, Bring Draft of Paper 3
Bibliography of long paper due

25 March Paper 3 due

30 March Art Spiegelman, *Maus I*
Reaction Paper 13

1 April Art Spiegelman, *Maus I*

6 April Art Spiegelman, *Maus II*
Reaction Paper 14

8 April Art Spiegelman, *Maus II*

13 April Research Paper due

15 April *Schindler's List* (film)

20 April *Schindler's List* (film)

22 April *Schindler's List* (film)

27 April Last Day of Class
Reaction Paper 15

Reaction Papers

These are to be at least one page, but no more than two (250-500 words). You will be responding to a piece of writing, a film, or a speaker. I am looking for a thoughtful, coherent response. You may think of them as a journal of sorts, of your reactions to the class. These are not to be researched, but they are not to be informal either. You may use them as an opportunity to explore some topics you are considering writing about in more depth in the longer papers. Page numbers refer to *Art from the Ashes*.

Reaction Paper 1 I would like you to respond to the film *Genocide* in what ever way makes sense to you. Is the material new to you or is it familiar? Have you studied the Holocaust before? Can you compare the film to anything you have seen or experienced?

Reaction Paper 2 For this paper I want you to find a newspaper or magazine article from the last two months (November-December-January) that somehow relates to the Holocaust. Photocopy it, read it and write your reaction to it. Please include the photocopy so I can read it too. How does the article refer to the Holocaust? Why is it still "news" fifty years after it happened?

Reaction Paper 3 Reaction based on the American soldier's witness of the liberation of the Guns kirchen Lager. Read all four sections. Address: www.remember.org/mooney/full_version.html

Reaction Paper 4 "Memoir" pp. 217-233 & "Days of Nightmare" pp. 200-214

Reaction Paper 5 "Kulmhof (Chelmno) Deathcamp" pp. 54-59 & "One Day in Jozefow: Initiation to Mass Murder" pp. 95-105

Reaction Paper 6 "Voices" pp. 77-92

Reaction Paper 7 *Night*

Reaction Paper 8 Golda Kalib talk

Reaction Paper 9 "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen" pp. 343-356

Reaction Paper 10 "The Verdict" pp. 264-267; "Friendly Meetings" pp. 268-270

Reaction Paper 11 "Shame" pp. 108-118

Reaction Paper 12 *Night and Fog* (film)

Reaction Paper 13 *Maus I*

Reaction Paper 14 *Maus II*

Reaction Paper 15 *Schindler's List*

Short Papers

These are to be three to five page (750-1250 words) researched papers. The research is to be your own investigation of the reserve readings, the library, the course work and any other resource. All research is to be documented in MLA style with a works cited page. Each one will address one of the three sections of the course.

Paper 1

This paper should address your own initial reaction to the Holocaust as represented by very recent writing and the writing of survivors and witnesses. It should draw a balance between your own thoughts and feelings and factual information from the course work and your own research. Possible questions to investigate might include: a comparison of various accounts, modern and contemporary, survivor and witness; of a sharp focus on your own reaction to specific parts of the readings or film.

Paper 2

This section of the course has examined the accounts of the Holocaust to include descriptions of and by perpetrators as well as two well-known survivor accounts. Has your idea of the Holocaust changed? Can the motives of the perpetrators be understood? Can the experience of survivors be understood? Is the quote below true?

"To establish an order of reality in which the unimaginable becomes imaginatively acceptable exceeds the capacities of an art devoted entirely to verisimilitude..." Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and Literary Imagination*, p. 43.

Paper 3

After having written and read about the Holocaust as history and as memoir, we have now examined it as literature. What can the purpose of fiction and poetry about an event like Auschwitz be? Are the quotes below accurate?

"[The Holocaust] is above all unique in that it erects a ring of fire about itself... Fiction is a transgression. I deeply believe that there are some things that cannot and should not be represented." Claude Lanzmann, *Manchester Guardian*, 3 March 1994, p. 15.

"To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today." Theodor Adorno, *Cultural Criticism and Society*

Long Paper

This is to be a formal research paper of eight to ten pages (2,000 - 2,500 words) in length. I want you to be working on it throughout the course. You may use your shorter papers as opportunities to examine possible topics. You may also draw on your own writing for this paper. I will ask you to choose a topic from the list below. You may generate your own provided you check it with me first.

On March 4th I will ask for an abstract of your paper, a one-page description of your topic. On the 23rd of March I will ask you to turn in a bibliography of sources you intend to use.

Some of the possible topics include:

Non-Jewish victims of the Nazis

- women
- homosexuals
- Romani (Gypsies)
- political prisoners
- Jehovah's Witnesses

Local reactions to the Holocaust

- in a specific country, Germany, Poland, Denmark, France

International reactions

- United States
- Great Britain

Issues of Responsibility

- rescue
- war criminals/war trials

Revisionism/denial

Anti-Semitism

Genocide

Collaboration

- Switzerland

Witnessing

Christian roles

Could the Allies have prevented/halted the Holocaust?

Ghettos

Concentration camp system

Resistance

War guilt

Surviving the Holocaust

- children and grandchildren of survivors

Memory

Websites

The Holocaust Cybrary

www.remember.org

This site has a vast amount of information including sections on survivors, resistance, witnesses, rescuers, and perpetrators. Part of this site, The Gunskirchen Lager liberation (www.remember.org/mooney/full_version.html) will be the subject for a reaction paper.

United States Holocaust Center

www.holocaustcenter.org

This is the website for the Holocaust center in West Bloomfield. It has a particularly good historical summary, chronology and glossary attached to it at www.holocaustcenter.org/holocaust.shtml It also has a simulation game called "Life Chance" in which you make choices based on historical situations.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

www.ushmm.org

A guide to the Holocaust memorial in Washington D.C. and the resources it contains. It also has a good, brief historical summary: www.ushmm.org/misc-bin/add_goback/education/history.html

Yad Vashem

www.yad-vashem.org.il

This is a guide to the Holocaust memorial in Israel. It is soon to be revised.

Nizkor Project

www.nizkor.org

This site is run by Nizkor, a group dedicated to challenging and disproving Holocaust deniers and revisionists.

Holocaust/Genocide Program

www.igc.apc.org/learn/hgp/

This site is devoted to educational resources about the Holocaust and genocide. It is not entirely complete yet.

Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies

www.library.yale.edu/testimonies/homepage.html

This is a guide to the Fortunoff Archive of videotaped testimonies of survivors and witnesses. The Archive is the largest of its kind in the world.

Holocaust Links

www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/Holocaust/holhome.html

This is a set of links set up by a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. It has a tremendous amount of information, although not always well-organized. A very broad span of information.

Forgotten Camps

www4.3dresearch.com/~june/Vincent/Camps/CampsEngl.html#Camps

This website is devoted to the lesser-known camps used by the Nazis. The listings and information are exhaustive.

L'Chaim Project

www.charm.net/~rbennett/l'chaim.html

This site is a good general set of information about the Holocaust and resources.

Photo Archive

modb.oce.ulg.ac.be/schmitz/holocaust.html

This is an archive of downloadable? photos of the Holocaust.

Simon Wiesenthal Center

www.wiesenthal.com

This site is devoted to Simon Wiesenthal's work and writing. It has a good Holocaust FAQ list.

Visual History Foundation

Survivors of the Shoah

www.vhf.org

This is a site set up by Steven Spielberg's Visual History Foundation. It is a type of archive.

AMCHA

www.amcha.org/

This site is organized for psychological services and support of Holocaust survivors and the Second Generation, the children of survivors.

The Anti-Defamation League

www.adl.org

The Anti-Defamation League is the world's leading organization in the fight against Anti-Semitism and hate crimes. It has a large section on Holocaust denial.

An Auschwitz Alphabet

www.spectacle.org/695/ausch.html

An attempt to describe some of the concentration camp experience through twenty-six definitions of terms relevant to life in the camps.

Holocaust Understanding and Prevention

haven.ios.com/~kimel19/

A site created by survivor Alexander Kimel dedicated to education and prevention.

Books on Reserve

These books are on reserve at the Purdy-Kresge Library for your own reference. They include many of the standard works on the Holocaust.

Bauer, *History of the Holocaust*

Botwinick, Rita S., *A History of the Holocaust: From Ideology to Annihilation*, New York: Prentice Hall, 1996.

Dawidowicz, Lucy, *A Holocaust Reader*

Gilbert, Martin, *Atlas of the Holocaust*

Gilbert, Martin, *The Holocaust: A History of the Jews of Europe During the Second World War*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1985.

Kogon, Eugen, *The Theory and Practice of Hell*,

Levin, Nora, *Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry 1933-1945*

Marrus, Michael, *The Holocaust in History*

Spiegelman, Art, *Maus I & II*

Wiesel, Elie, *Night*

Yahil, Leni, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Paper Guidelines

Below are a few formalities that I would like you to follow in writing your papers. They are conventions and should be used in all papers you write, unless your instructor explicitly tells you not to.

Titles

Underline (or italicize) titles of independent works such as books, magazines, movies and television shows.
Put quotation marks around titles of articles within periodicals or books, single poems, or songs.

Works Cited Page

Use the MLA (Modern Language Association) style. If you are not familiar with it, or are unsure, come see me.

Dictionary Definitions

Avoid using dictionary definitions. It is important to define the terms you use, but form your own definitions or use one from your research.

Numbers

Write out all numbers, unless they consist of more than three words. Thus: ninety-nine, 138, two hundred twenty, three million, 1,545.

Etc.

Avoid using "etc." If you are presenting a list of items, give the information you know. Do not leave it up to the reader to determine what "etc." means.

Number all pages.

Use a title.

Voice/Style

Be consistent in your use of pronouns. Formal research papers should be in the third person. Avoid the second person (you) and the first person (I, me, my; we, us, our) if possible. The first person singular (I, me, my) is fine if it is necessary to communicate a point. Be consistent in using it. Do not mix pronouns in a single paragraph.

Let's

This is a contraction of "let us." It is first person plural.

Quotation marks and other punctuation

A quotation mark should be the last punctuation in a given sentence or phrase. Thus commas, semicolons, colons, question marks, periods all must be inside the quotation marks. Thus: For Monday, please read "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

Sound-alike (homophone) words

These are words that are pronounced very similarly and are therefore often confused in writing.

than / then

"Than" is used in comparisons. My brother is younger than I am.

"Then" is used to establish a sequence of events. "I was born, then my brother was born."

accept / except

"Accept" is a verb meaning to receive or understand something. "I accept your invitation to dinner."

"Except" is an adverb which separates things from a group. "We saw all the Red Wings' games except one."

passed / past

"Past" is a noun. "In the past, life was much more difficult."

"Passed" is the past tense of the verb "to pass." "That car passed me on the right!"

your / you're

"Your" is a possessive pronoun. "Is that your book or mine?"

"You're" is a contraction of "you are." "You're going to visit your grandmother tomorrow."

its / it's

"Its" is a possessive pronoun. "The dog chased its tail."

"It's" is a contraction of "it is." "It's going to rain tonight."

weather / whether

"Weather" is a noun describing the climate. "The weather is much warmer in Florida."

"Whether" is an adverb of choice. "I don't care whether you go to your grandmother's house or not."

effect / affect

In most cases, "effect" is a noun. "The effect of the new plan was not good."

"Affect," in most cases, is a verb. "The weather affected my arthritis."

there/their/they're

"There" is a demonstrative pronoun or a pronoun of place. "There are ten people in this room." "I parked my car over there, near the drug store."

"Their" is a plural possessive pronoun. "That's their car, not mine."

"They're" is a contraction of "they are." "They're going to see the Red Wings tonight."