

Dr. Elisa von Joeden-Forgey
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Fall 2014

Office Hours:
MW 10-11am
& by appt.
F-214

GIS 3666
The Holocaust in Film and Literature
MW 3:35-5:25
B003

Course Description

The Holocaust is an event that in many ways defies representation. The sheer scale of the horror, its complexity and vast territorial reach, have led some scholars to suggest that the Holocaust is beyond human comprehension. Nevertheless, the desire to comprehend continues to be strong and people still attempt to understand and convey the depth of the horror and its meaning for the present-day in historical studies, museum exhibits, philosophical and theological meditations, and film and literature.

In this course we will address some of the pressing questions about the Holocaust and Holocaust representation through literature, film and the arts. Questions that we will explore include: How can we represent the depth of the horror of the Holocaust? Who can represent it? What is permissible in such representations? What gets left out? How are ethical issues raised by the Holocaust reflected in art? How can we use art to convey the moral meaning of the Holocaust and educate people about the need for genocide prevention in the future?

In pursuing these questions, we will also address how victims and survivors have used art to cope with tragedy, convey their experiences, and memorialize the event. Alongside this we will discuss the way that the Nazis employed artistic techniques in their propaganda against Jews and other targeted groups.

IDEA Goals

Though reading, discussion and assignments students in this course will:

1. Develop a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values.
2. Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories pertaining to the Holocaust and genocide.
3. Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Requirements

Attendance and Participation	35%
Film Review	15%
Book Review	15%
Final Project	35%

Required Readings

- Doris Bergen, *War & Genocide*
- Imre Kertesz, *Fatelessness*
- Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*
- Shawn and Goldfrad (eds), *The Call of Memory* [designated CoM in the course schedule]
- Hana Volavkova (ed), *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*

Attendance & Participation

Attendance is more than simply coming to class. **It means coming to class prepared and engaging actively in discussion.** Students are allowed four (4) unexcused absences; all other absences must be cleared with me before class, except in cases of true emergencies.

A Note on Class Meeting Times:

I have scheduled the digital stories to be presented during the last week of class. There is a chance I will need to be in Cape Town, South Africa during that week, in which case I will make sure to allot time for digital stories during class the previous week.

Essays

Students will write a film review and a book review for this class. A list of possible books and films will be posted on blackboard, as will the instructions for completing each assignment. Each review should be 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages. The due dates are as follows:

Film Review	Oct. 6
Book Review	Nov. 10

Homework Assignments

Frequently I will assign written homework to be completed and turned in. Your grade on these assignments will be factored into your overall grade for attendance and participation. **Unless otherwise noted, all written homework must be turned in on time. All of your work is expected to be neatly typed and checked for spelling and grammar.**

Final Presentation

Students will work throughout the semester to prepare a final project that will be presented to the class at the end of the semester. The project can be a short story, a set of poems, a digital story, a dramatic reading, a one-act play, a powerpoint—in other words, students are encouraged to be creative and to use their artistic talents to craft a final project that captures one of the questions with which we have been struggling all semester. You may work with other students on your final project—for example, if you wish to preform a play; however, each student must turn in a project that will be individually graded.

All students are required to complete the following in preparation for their final projects:

1-paragraph proposal	Sept. 30
Meeting with me	Oct. 6-15
Short presentation	Oct. 22, 29 & Nov. 5
Updated proposal	Nov. 17
Final Presentation	Last week of class

For students interested in putting together a video project, more information on digital storytelling can be found here:

<http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/index.cfm?id=44&cid=44>

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the principal short-term and long-term facilitators of the Holocaust and identify the most important people, places, dates and statistics associated with it;
2. Speak cogently about the key issues presented in texts and films, including the historical, ethical, religious, political and cultural questions raised by the fact of the Holocaust;
3. Think critically, and productively, about the various historical and philosophical analyses presented throughout the class by clearly articulating various points of view and weighing their relative merits and limitations.
4. Identify and define the meaning of key terms in the study of the Holocaust, including: the Versailles Treaty, Beer Hall Putsch, fascism, communism, totalitarianism, appeasement, the Führer principle, the Nuremberg Laws, *Kristallnacht*, *Anschluss*, Evian Conference, T-4 Aktion, Blitzkrieg, Operation Barbarossa, *Generalgouvernement*, the Warsaw ghetto, the Wansee Conference, Final Solution, *Aktion Reinhard*, Babi Yar, Auschwitz-Birkenau, “choiceless choices,” partisans, rescuers, righteous gentiles.
5. Identify the role played by the following in the implementation of the Holocaust: Anti-Judaism, Anti-Semitism, race theory, Social Darwinism, eugenics, euthanasia, technology, bureaucracy,

the SS, the *Einsatzgruppen*, the Gestapo, the concentration camp system, Adolf Hitler, Josef Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler, Reinhold Heydrich, Adolf Eichmann, bystanders.

6. Describe how the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was influenced by the tragedy of the Holocaust.
7. Make direct and meaningful connections between the questions faced by individuals during the Holocaust and the ethical dilemmas faced by citizens of the United States and the world today.

A Note on Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty, will not be tolerated in this course and will be handled according to the college's procedures and protocols, which are available here:

<http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=209&pageID=17>

Stockton's statement on academic dishonesty is the following:

"As an academic institution of merit and integrity, The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey affirms its commitment to the honesty and excellence of research and pedagogy conducted by members of the Stockton academic community. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of academic policy and the Campus Conduct Code, and is punishable by severe sanctions including suspension and expulsion. The range of sanctions imposed is contingent on several factors, including the decision of the faculty member making the charge, whether it is the student's first or a repeat offense, and the extent and nature of the offense. It is possible that a first offense will carry a penalty of suspension or expulsion, if deemed appropriate by the College.

"The College makes two primary demands of its students and staff: 1) that each individual exercise the utmost care in planning and preparing the work presented for academic consideration, and 2) that members of the academic community conscientiously ensure the validity and protect the integrity of academic work and the grades earned for such work."



Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Sept 3: Introduction to the course

Film (in class): "Night and Fog" (32 min.)

In-class writing assignment

Week 2: The World That Was Lost

Readings:

Bergen, *War & Genocide*, Ch. 1

Sholem Asch, "The Little Town" [blackboard]

Sept 8 Film: "Shtetl"

Sept 10 Discussion of Jewish Life in Europe

Week 3: The Third Reich in Power

Reading:

Bergen, *War & Genocide*, Chs. 2 & 3

Shear, "No Way Out: Letters from the Holocaust" [CoM]

Sept 15 Film: "Europa, Europa"

Sept 17 Discussion of Nazi Propaganda

Homework (bring to class): Write a letter or a series of letters in the style of those you have read in *Call of Memory*. Imagine a character and, without divulging directly too much information about the character's biography, try to give us a sense of who this person is through what he or she says in his or her letter(s).

Week 4: Under Occupation

Readings:

Bergen, *War & Genocide*, Ch. 4

Aichinger, "Fear of Fear" [CoM]

Gotfryd, "A Chicken for the Holidays" [CoM]

Asscher-Pinkhof, "Grandson" & "White Lie" [CoM]

Sept 22 Film: "La Rafle"

Sept 24 Discussion of Nazi Occupation

Homework (bring to class): Write a paragraph about the following: How do the short stories and the film "La Rafle" try to convey the difficulty people faced in understanding what was happening to them as persecution mounted and their normal lives became increasingly terrifying? Pay attention to where the various stories take place. Do you notice any differences between Nazi occupation in Western and Eastern Europe?

Week 5: Daily Life in the Ghetto

Reading:

Bergen, *War & Genocide*, Ch. 5

Spiegel, "Bread" [CoM]

Gotfryd, "The Last Morning" and "On Guilt" [CoM]

Sept 29 "Chaim Rumkowski and the Jews of Lodz" (60 min.)

Sept 30: Discussion of the Judenräte/**Proposal Due**

Week 6: The Warsaw Ghetto

Set up a meeting with me in the next two weeks to discuss your final project

Reading:

Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, excerpts TBA

Oct 6 Film: "The Pianist"

Oct 8 Discussion of Life in the Ghettos

Homework (bring to class): Select a passage from Ringelblum's diary that you found particularly educational and write a paragraph explaining why. Did you learn something from it that you had not previously thought about? Did it clarify something for you? Did it raise new questions? Be sure to bring the diary entry that you discuss to class as well.

Week 7: Resistance

Readings:

Bergen, *War & Genocide*, Ch. 6

Nomberg-Przytyk, "The Camp Blanket" [CoM]

Oct 13 Film: "Defiance"

Oct 15 Discussion of Forms of Resistance

Homework (bring to class): List different forms of resistance that we have encountered throughout this class. Try to think about resistance beyond simply the use of force.

What examples of spiritual, cultural, economic, and political resistance have we seen?

How have they been represented in the films and readings?

Week 8: Theresienstadt

Reading:

I Never Saw Another Butterfly

Oct 20 Film: "Defiant Requiem"

Oct 22 Discussion of Art During the Holocaust/**Short Project Presentations**

Week 9: The Camp Experience

Readings:

Imre Kertesz, *Fatelessness*

Bergen, *War & Genocide*, Ch. 7

Oct 27 Film: "Fateless"

Oct 29 Discussion of Camp Experience/**Short Project Presentations**

Week 10: The Grey Zone

Reading:

Levi, "The Grey Zone" [blackboard]

Nov 3 Film: "The Grey Zone"

Nov 5 Discussion of "Choiceless Choices"/**Short Project Presentations**

Week 11: Gender and the Holocaust

Readings:

Leitner, *Fragments of Isabella* [blackboard]

Fink, "A Conversation" and "Aryan Papers" [CoM]

Nov 10 Film: "Out of the Ashes"/**Book Review Due**

Nov 12 Discussion of Gender

Homework (bring to class): In a paragraph discuss some differences you have noticed between the experiences faced by women and men during the Holocaust.

Week 12: The Limits of Representation

Watch the Film "Life is Beautiful" at home

Nov 17 Film: "Train of Life" / **Updated Proposal Due**

Nov 19 Discussion of the Limits of Representation

Week 13: Aftermath

Readings:

Bergen, *War & Genocide*, Ch. 8 & Conclusion

Vonnegut, "Adam" [CoM]

Megged, "The Name" [CoM]

Nov 24 Discussion of the Long-Term Consequences of the Holocaust

Homework (bring to class): Write a two-paragraph essay (single-spaced) on how names are important in each of the two short stories you have read. What is the significance of naming in the wake of the Holocaust? What tensions can names raise? How do we see these tensions play themselves out across the generations? What do you make of Raya's feeling about her child at the end of "The Name": "At that moment it seemed to her that he was in need of pity and great love, as though he were alone, an orphan in the world"?

Nov 26 NO CLASS (Happy Thanksgiving!)

Week 14: PRESENTATIONS

Dec 1 Final Presentations

Dec 3 Final Presentations

Week 15: PRESENTATIONS

Dec 8 Final Presentations