

Jewish Studies 2250W  
Spring 2016  
MWF 9:10-10:00  
Buttrick 302

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## **Witnesses Who Were Not There: Literature of the Children of Holocaust Survivors**

### **Course Description**

While a relatively large amount of material has been written about and by those who survived the German concentration camps during World War II, both non-fiction and fiction, significantly less has been written about and by the children of these Holocaust survivors. Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, these “second generation” children started to raise their voices and to discuss the effect that the Holocaust had had on their lives, even though they had not actually been present in the camps. These effects are varied in degree and in kind from one person to the next, and this course is designed to look at these various responses, as seen in both memoirs and fictional productions of writers who are children of survivors, in an attempt to understand the rationales and motivations behind these diverse reactions. At the end of the course we will also briefly consider two related situations: those of the children of Holocaust perpetrators and those of the grandchildren of the survivors.

### **Required Texts**

- Eisenstein, Bernice. I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006.
- Epstein, Helen. Children of the Holocaust: Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors. 1979. New York: Penguin, 1988.
- Pisano, Nirit Gradwohl. Granddaughters of the Holocaust: Never Forgetting What They Didn't Experience. 2012. Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2013.
- Rosenbaum, Thane. Second Hand Smoke. 1999. New York: St. Martin's, 2000.
- Rosner, Elizabeth. The Speed of Light. 2001. New York: Ballantine, 2003.
- Spiegelman, Art. Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History. New York: Knopf, 1986.
- . Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began. 1991. New York: Knopf, 1992.

### **Additional Readings**

- Selected short stories by Sonia Pilcer, Lev Raphael, Thane Rosenbaum, and J.J. Steinfeld (via OAK)
- Essays by children of perpetrators (via OAK)

## Course Requirements

The most significant determining factor in the success of this course will be the extent to which students do the reading. The reading load is fairly heavy, and the subject matter is sometimes very heavy. All students are expected to have completed all reading assignments by the beginning of class on the date listed on the syllabus.

Since this is largely a discussion course, which is why it is imperative that all students do the reading, as it is impossible to discuss knowledgeably what one has not read, class participation is also required and very important. Not only for the sake of the student's own learning, but also as a contribution to the learning of others in the class, each student is expected to attend every scheduled class meeting, to be properly prepared for each day's discussion, and to join in that discussion attentively and in a critical spirit, both as a respectful listener and as a speaker. Attendance will be taken at every session; excessive absence may be cause for failure in the course, regardless of work that has been submitted. Promptness is also important; students who arrive more than ten minutes late will not be considered present.

Because this is a "W" course, the majority of the class grade is dependent upon two major writing assignments, papers of literary criticism/analysis, 7 to 10 pages in length, as well as a series of shorter "Response" papers. Each long paper will require a draft, a peer review, an individual conference with the instructor, and a revision. The "Response" papers are 2 to 3 page reactions to particular reading assignments; there will be a total of 8 of them due during the course of the semester. These drafts, papers, and "Response" papers must be typed (or word-processed) on standard paper, double-spaced, with one inch margins.

Students are expected to meet deadlines. Work not submitted on time will be marked down by 1/3 letter grade if received by the next class meeting and by 1 letter grade if received within one week of the due date; after that the paper will receive a zero. "Response" papers will not be accepted late.

## Course Grading

Final grades will be determined by the following percentages:

Paper 1	25%
Paper 2	30%
Responses	25%
Participation	20%

## Schedule

M	Jan.	11	<b>Introduction</b> "Breaking the Silence" (Videotape)
W		13	"Breaking the Silence" (Videotape)
F		15	Epstein 9-109
M		18	<b>NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY</b>

W		20	Epstein 110-188
F		22	Epstein 189-279
M		25	Epstein 280-345
			<b>RESPONSE #1</b>
W		27	Eisenstein 11-97
F		29	Eisenstein 98-187
			<b>RESPONSE #2</b>
M	Feb.	1	selected stories from Sonia Pilcer's <u>The Holocaust Kid</u>
W		3	selected stories from Sonia Pilcer's <u>The Holocaust Kid</u>
			<b>PAPER #1 ASSIGNED</b>
F		5	selected stories from Lev Raphael's <u>Secret Anniversaries of the Heart</u>
M		8	selected stories from Lev Raphael's <u>Secret Anniversaries of the Heart</u>
W		10	selected stories from J.J. Steinfeld's <u>Dancing at the Club Holocaust</u>
F		12	selected stories from J.J. Steinfeld's <u>Dancing at the Club Holocaust</u>
M		15	<b>DRAFT PAPER #1 DUE</b>
			<b>PEER REVIEW</b>
W		17	<b>NO CLASS – INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES</b>
F		19	<b>NO CLASS – INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES</b>
M		22	Spiegelman I 1-93
W		24	Spiegelman I 95-159
			<b>RESPONSE #3</b>
F		26	Spiegelman II 1-74
M		29	Spiegelman II 75-136
			<b>RESPONSE #4</b>
W	Mar.	2	<b>PAPER #1 DUE</b>
			<b>PEER REVIEW</b>
F		4	selected stories from Thane Rosenbaum's <u>Elijah Visible</u>
M		7	<b>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</b>
W		9	<b>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</b>
F		11	<b>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</b>
M		14	selected stories from Thane Rosenbaum's <u>Elijah Visible</u>
W		16	Rosenbaum 1-71
F		18	Rosenbaum 73-123
M		21	Rosenbaum 125-196
			<b>PAPER #2 ASSIGNED</b>
W		23	Rosenbaum 197-255
F		25	Rosenbaum 256-303

**RESPONSE #5**

M		28	Rosner 1-92
W		30	Rosner 93-179
F	Apr.	1	Rosner 179-241

**RESPONSE #6**

M		4	essays by children of perpetrators
W		6	essays by children of perpetrators
F		8	essays by children of perpetrators

**RESPONSE #7**

M		11	<b>DRAFT PAPER #2 DUE</b> <b>PEER REVIEW</b>
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W		13	<b>NO CLASS – INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES</b>
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F		15	<b>NO CLASS – INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES</b>
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M		18	Pisano 11-63
W		20	Pisano 64-127
F		22	Pisano 128-190

**RESPONSE #8**

M		25	<b>PAPER #2 DUE</b> <b>PEER REVIEW</b>
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