

# ART 495: ART AND THE HOLOCAUST

Dr. Samantha Baskind  
Email: s.baskind@csuohio.edu  
Office hours: Tues., Thurs. 12-1, by appointment  
Office: Middough Building, room 233  
Phone: 687-2096

Spring 2014  
MB 235  
T/Th 10:00-11:50 AM  
4 credit hours

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In 1951, German philosopher Theodor Adorno famously asserted that there can be no poetry after Auschwitz. Only six years following the full disclosure of human suffering and torture, along with accompanying shock at the barbarity of humanity, Adorno's sentiment is both understandable and appropriate for that moment. Adorno amended his oft-repeated dictum in 1966: "Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems." By that time the Holocaust was a subject repeatedly engaged in the arts, and since then art about the Holocaust has become a major motif among succeeding generations participating in a program of memory and commemoration. That art builds upon imagery created during the actual years of Nazi power, including work by Jews sequestered in ghettos, Jews in hiding, concentration camp inmates, and free artists creating imagery in protest of the war and fascism. In this course we will examine all these types of representations while also investigating how art became a major focus of the Nazi regime, both the creation of a Nazi art, mostly in the form of propaganda, and also the search for a "pure German art" (shown at annual 'Great German Art Exhibitions' in Munich beginning in 1937). Along with studying art (e.g., painting, sculpture, prints, memorials, graphic novels) from this seminal moment in twentieth-century history, the seminar seeks to convey a broad understanding of Jewish history and anti-Semitism; the rise of Nazism; the positions of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders; rescue and resistance; trauma and memory; and legacies of the Holocaust. Students will read a wide range of sources crossing disciplinary boundaries into sociology, history, and art criticism. Participants require no previous background in Jewish studies or the Holocaust.

Throughout the semester, students will investigate an artist or artistic theme relating to the Holocaust, on which they will write an original research paper. By February 4, you will have chosen a significant topic on which to write your paper. Our course readings are a starting point. I will be happy to recommend more sources for you, and as you read class assignments you will find that endnotes and the bibliographies will be very helpful as you begin to refine your paper interests.

A **rough draft** of your paper is due on March 20. I expect this rough draft to be a fully fleshed out argument – essentially almost a “final” draft, clearly written and over 10 pages, that you will rework for the remainder of the term according to my comments. By the end of the semester, undergraduates will produce a 12-15 page paper, and graduate student papers will be 15-20 pages. Papers will be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced. Images with captions (your course readings provide good examples of how this done) will be included with your paper as will a bibliography (for the draft and final version). All papers will adhere to the documentary-note style format found in the Chicago Manual of Style (for draft and final paper).

Unless requested by me, no assignments during the semester will be submitted as an attachment. Please bring a hard copy of your assignments to class before the class period begins.

Course readings are a key component of the class. Much of class period will be used to discuss the readings, and therefore class participation is essential. Diverse student experiences, perspectives, and ideas constitute a valuable resource that can allow for an interesting and complex discussion. Additionally, while helping you develop your own informed and thoughtful opinions, I hope to encourage you to consider the viewpoints and arguments of others and to consult and evaluate evidence from credible sources.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Participation	20% of final course grade
2) Written annotated bibliography	10% of final course grade
3) Outline of paper	10% of final course grade
4) Group presentation	10% of final course grade
5) Rough draft	10% of final course grade
6) Final oral presentation (20 minutes plus questions)	15% of final course grade
7) Final written paper	25% of final course grade

### CLASS PARTICIPATION

In determining your class participation grade, I will consider the following:

1. Attendance--If you don't come you can't participate; please arrive **on time** and stay until class ends.
2. Preparation--You have completed the assigned reading. You have thought about the material and have formulated questions.
3. Participation--You are willing to respond to my questions, to ask questions, to respond to the comments of other students, to express an opinion, to take intellectual risks, to take responsibility for your education. There will also be several in-class assignments that will impact your grade.

**NOTE:** Cell phones **must be turned off** when you enter my classroom. If a cell phone rings during class, you will be asked to lead the next scheduled class discussion.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance at class is expected. As you can see under course requirements, class participation is worth 20% of your grade and if you don't attend class then you can't participate. 20% is substantial and therefore absence from class will negatively affect your class participation grade. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class meeting. If you have more than two unexcused absences your final course grade will be lowered one letter grade, for every subsequent absence your grade will continue to drop (for example, three unexcused absences will drop an A to a A-, on the fourth unexcused absence that A- will drop to a B+, etc).

*Please note: If you have missed a class it is your responsibility to obtain the information necessary to be up-to-date for the next class. In addition, for all missed classes that are dedicated to discussion, a two-page response paper addressing each of that day's readings will be due at the next class meeting. Failure to bring in such a paper will result in an automatic full*

*grade drop (An A would drop to a B, a B to a C, and so on). If you are absent on a day that we watch a film in class then you are required to see that film within a week and provide me with a two-page reaction paper to it. Failure to do so will result in your grade being lowered one full letter.*

Particularly relevant to absences is our visit to the Maltz Museum on February 18. This visit is the most crucial day of our semester. Not only will we see actual material culture from the Holocaust and examine how the museum presents the Holocaust's narrative, we will also hear from a Holocaust survivor. Indeed, this day at the museum is so important that we will spend two and a quarter hours at the museum and in exchange I will give you two full classes off to make up for the time at the museum and travel (which means you will be getting *extra* time off considering the Maltz visit is 2 ¼ hours, plus whatever your travel time to the museum). If you miss the Maltz visit then it will count as three absences and your grade will be lowered. In addition to your grade being lowered, in order to pass the class you will need to visit the Maltz Museum on your own time and write an extensive paper, which will include research, about that visit and Holocaust testimony (5-plus pages; details about this paper will be provided if it comes to that).

Another essential field trip in this class is our attendance at Cleveland's citywide Yom Hashoah commemoration on Sunday, April 27 from 2-3:30 (see syllabus date for additional details). This annual commemoration takes place at a local temple on the east side, in Pepper Pike. Yom Hashoah -- Holocaust Remembrance Day -- is observed one week after the conclusion of Passover. While the rituals for this holiday are still being created, it is a solemn day that is widely observed wherever Jews live. Hundreds of local Holocaust survivors, their families, and community members will gather to honor the six million Jews who died during the Holocaust. Stories from six Holocaust survivors will be shared as they light memorial candles with the families. There also will be a March of the Generations, with children of all ages from area youth groups and schools carrying candles to signify that Jewish life continues after the Holocaust. The guest speaker this year is a Holocaust survivor and graphic novelist, Miriam Katin, whose work we will look at in class. Again, like the Maltz visit, you will be getting two days off from in-class readings and discussion to make up for the time you will spend at the commemoration, which is one of the most moving rituals in modern Jewry. Also akin to the Maltz visit, if you miss the commemoration then it will count as three absences and your grade will be lowered. In addition to your grade being lowered, in order to pass the class you will need to write a paper, which will include research, about Yom Hashoah and Miriam Katin (5-plus pages; details about this paper will be provided if it comes to that).

### TEXTS

#### **Texts for purchase at the CSU Bookstore:**

Doris Bergen, *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009).

Joe Kubert, *Yossel: April 19, 1943* (New York: iBooks graphic novels, 2003).

Art Spiegelman, *Maus I: A Survivor's Tale: My Father Bleeds History* (1986) and *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began* (1991). The bookstore has copies for purchase but if you already own a copy then any edition is fine.

**COURSE READINGS:**

All of your readings, aside from those books cited above, will be on electronic reserve. It is your responsibility to allow sufficient time to access and read these essays. That the computer system was down the day before class is not a good excuse for being unprepared. I recommend that at the beginning of the term you print out or download all of the readings.

**HONOR CODE**

Students are bound by the Cleveland State University Honor Code. I also want to point out that academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor or a manual of style like that of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Jan. 14: Introduction to course
- Jan. 16: Survival and Remembrance (an overview to get us started)  
Samantha Baskind and Larry Silver, "Art and the Holocaust, Survival and Remembrance," in *Jewish Art: A Modern History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 162-201.
- Jan. 21: Weimer Art and Anti-Semitism  
Sherwin Simmons, "'Hand to the Friend, Fist to the Foe': The Struggle of Signs in the Weimar Republic," *Journal of Design History* 13, no. 4 (2000): 319-39.  
*Night and Fog* (1955)
- Jan. 23: Hitler and Culture  
Frederic Spotts, "The Bohemian Aesthete," "A Philosophy of Culture," and "The Grand Paradox," in *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 2003), 3-39.
- Jan. 28: "Degenerate Art" and the "Great German Art Exhibition"  
Frederic Spotts, "The Modernist Enemy" and "The Failure of National Socialist Realism," in *Hitler and the Power of Aesthetics* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 2003), 151-86.  
Christoph Zuschlag, "An 'Educational Exhibition': The Precursors of *Entartete Kunst* and Its Individual Venues," in Stephanie Barron, ed., "*Degenerate Art*": *The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany* (New York: Abrams, 1991): 82-97.
- Jan. 30: *Jud Süß* (1940)  
David Culbert, "The Impact of Anti-Semitic Film Propaganda on German Audiences: *Jew Süß* and *The Wandering Jew* (1940)," in Richard Etlin, ed., *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 139-57.
- Feb. 4: The Power of Nazi Propaganda  
Edward Phillips, ed., "Propaganda for War and Mass Murder," in Steven Luckert and Susan Bachrach, eds., *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2009): 100-39, 173-75.  
PAPER TOPICS DUE
- Feb. 6: Camp Art and Jewish Artists on the Run  
Ziva Amishai-Maisels, "The Complexities of Witnessing," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 2 no. 1 (1987): 123-147.  
Edward Timms and Deborah Shultz, "Autobiographical Motifs in the Paintings of Felix Nussbaum," *Word & Image* 24 no. 3 (July-September 2008): 224-50.

- Feb. 11: Nazism and the Looting of Art  
*Rape of Europa* (2007)
- Feb. 13: NO CLASS. Our trip to the Maltz Museum will take up more than one class period, thus we will not have class on this day, substituting our field trip visit for these hours.
- Feb. 18: Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage visit from 10:15-12:30 pm. The cost to get into the museum is \$6 and parking is free. Please consider this cost as one of your “book purchases.” I think that you will find the museum visit worthwhile for the nominal fee. We will meet at the Maltz at 10:15 am and you can expect to be there until 12:30 pm, giving you plenty of time to get back to campus for a 1 pm class. As you can see from this syllabus, I have cancelled two classes to make up for the extra time we will be spending at the museum. In addition to seeing actual artifacts from the Holocaust, while at the Maltz we will hear from a Holocaust survivor. That we live in Cleveland and have these opportunities is extraordinary, and I think it very important we take advantage of them. The museum is located at 2929 Richmond Road, Beachwood. The museum is 19 miles from campus.  
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
- Feb. 20: The Holocaust and Secondary Witnessing  
Art Spiegelman, *Maus*, vols. 1 and 2.  
Marianne Hirsch, “Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-Memory,”  
*Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 15, no. 2  
(Winter 1992-93): 3-29.
- Feb. 25: The Warsaw Ghetto  
Joe Kubert, *Yossel: April 19, 1943*  
Daniel H. Magilow, “The Interpreter’s Dilemma: Heinrich Jöst’s Warsaw Ghetto Photographs,” in David Bathrick, Brad Prager, and Michael D. Richardson, eds.,  
*Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008), 38-61.  
PAPER OUTLINE DUE
- Feb. 27: GROUP PRESENTATION #1: Chapters 1 and 2  
-Preconditions: Antisemitism, Racism, and Common Prejudices in Early-Twentieth-Century Europe  
-Leadership and Will: Adolf Hitler, the National Socialist German Workers' Party, and Nazi Ideology  
  
GROUP PRESENTATION #2: Chapters 3 and 4  
-From Revolution to Routine: Nazi Germany, 1933-1938  
-Open Aggression: In Search of War 1938-1939

- Mar. 4:           GROUP PRESENTATION #3: Chapters 5 and 6  
 -Experiments in Brutality, 1939-1940: War against Poland and the So-Called Euthanasia Program  
 -Expansion and Systematization: Exporting War and Terror, 1940-1941
- GROUP PRESENTATION #4: Chapters 7 and 8  
 -The Peak Years of Killing: 1942 and 1943  
 -Death Throes and Killing Frenzies, 1944-1945
- Mar. 6:           PAPER UPDATES – part of your class participation grade (10 minutes each)
- Mar. 11, 13:     Spring break
- Mar. 18:         PAPER UPDATES – part of your class participation grade (10 minutes each)
- Mar. 20:         American Artists Respond to the Holocaust  
 Matthew Baigell, *Jewish Artists in New York: The Holocaust Years* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 1-65.  
 Alvin H. Rosenfeld, “The Americanization of the Holocaust,” *Commentary* (June 1995): 35-40.  
 ROUGH DRAFT OF PAPER DUE
- Mar. 25:         Israeli Art and the Holocaust  
 Dalia Manor, “From Rejection to Recognition: Israeli Art and the Holocaust,” *Israel Affairs* 4, no. 3-4 (Spring-Summer 1998): 253-77.
- Mar. 27:         NO CLASS. Our trip to the Maltz Museum will take up more than one class period, thus we will not have class on this day, substituting our field trip visit for these hours.
- Apr. 1:           Memorializing the Holocaust  
 James E. Young, “Introduction,” in *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 1-15, 351-53.  
 Elke Heckner, “Whose Trauma is It?: Identification and Secondary Witnessing in the Age of Postmemory,” in David Bathrick, Brad Prager, and Michael D. Richardson, eds., *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008), 62-85.
- Apr. 3:           NO CLASS. Our class will attend the citywide Yom Hashoah commemoration in lieu of class at this time (see April 27).
- Apr. 8:           Student Presentations (3 each day)
- Apr. 10:          Student Presentations (3 each day)

- Apr. 15: Student Presentations (3 each day)
- Apr. 17: Student Presentations (3 each day)
- Apr. 22: Student Presentations (3 each day)
- Apr. 24: NO CLASS. Our class will attend the citywide Yom Hashoah commemoration in lieu of class at this time (see April 27).
- Apr. 27: Yom Hashoah commemoration at B'nai Jeshurun Congregation, 27501 Fairmount Blvd, Pepper Pike, OH 44124. Sunday, 2-3:30 PM. There is no cost to attend.
- Apr. 29: Memorializing the Holocaust continued  
 Marc Godfrey, "Peter Eisenman's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, 1977-2005 and Susan Hiller's *The JStreet Project*, 2002-2005," in *Abstraction and the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 238-65, 278.  
 Natasha Goldman, "Israeli Holocaust Memorial Strategies at Yad Vashem: From Silence to Recognition," *Art Journal* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 102-22.
- May 1: Post-Modern Responses to the Holocaust in Israel and the United States  
 Lisa Saltzman, "'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' Revisited: On the Ethics of Representation," in Norman Kleeblatt, ed. *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* (New York: Jewish Museum, 2001), 53-64.  
 Michelle Friedman, "Haunted by Memory," in Shelley Hornstein, Laura Levitt, Laurence J. Silberstein, eds., *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art after the Holocaust* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 31-50.  
 FINAL PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

