

The University of Florida

Representing the Holocaust

Fall Semester 2022

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Office Hours: Fridays 1:00-2:00

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This is not a course on the Holocaust. Rather it is a course on how the Holocaust is remembered and represented – how it is portrayed toward the ultimate end of conveying an understanding of something that is in many ways beyond comprehension. We will look at four methods of representation: historical testimony, literature including poems and novels, film including documentaries and feature films, and art from paintings to photography to memorials to museums.

Our overall questions concern the following:

- *Can* the Holocaust be conveyed and comprehended given its horror? Is it even possible for the voices, pens, paint brushes, cameras, or drafting tools, either of survivors, novelists, poets, or artists to convey the terrible, unimaginable truth? Or is the wall of understanding that separates us from the events ultimately impenetrable?
- *How* has the Holocaust been represented from the time of the events themselves to the present day? Is the effort to represent the Holocaust truly an effort to represent truth? Or do novelists, filmmakers and the like seek to use the Holocaust to represent either parts of truth or other realities entirely?

This course assumes a few things. Read them carefully.

- One is that you have some familiarity with the Holocaust itself. We cannot use our time to go over the basic narrative. I will provide four days of barebones introduction, but if you have not had a course on the Holocaust then I suggest that you read a brief account during our first week. A good one is Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), which is an optional book for this course.
- A second is that you have no aversion to reading. Each week we will read challenging texts that demand your attention. I promise that everything we read will be compelling, but you have to commit to completing the reading by the dates listed in the class schedule below.
- A third is that you come to class each day and that you have no aversion to speaking or writing as a method by which to explore and test your own ideas. Much of our work will take place in the setting of discussion. You will write brief papers aimed at sharpening your ideas and you will also take a midterm examination and a final examination (both take home exams), and you will write a term paper.

- A fourth is that you will make time outside of class periods to see two of our three films (see class schedule below). They are an essential part of the class and we will watch them together, as a group on a big(ish) screen, and NOT individually on our phones.

You will need to attain the following texts. All are available in the university bookstore but are also available **used** via amazon.com and other sites.

- Bergen, Doris. *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009. (Optional)
- Levi, Primo. *The Drowned and the Saved*. New York. Vintage, 1989.
- Semel, Nava. *And the Rat Laughed*. Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2008.

The other readings will be posted on the class Canvas site.

Your grade will be determined by the following:

Discussion Participation.....	14%
5 brief trial summary papers.....	20% (in aggregate)
Midterm Examination.....	33%
Final Examination.....	33%

The brief papers are three pages each and ask you to think about and sharpen your thinking on the main issues concerning a given form of representation. Discussions ask you to address a key question concerning the form in question and the readings for that day. The midterm and final examinations are seven to eight pages and based on broad questions concerning the material covered up to that exam. They are open book, open notes, and you have several days to complete them.

The Numerical Grading Scale is as follows:

A	93-100	A-	90-92		
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	68-69	D	63-67	D-	60-62
E	<60				

Grading Criteria is as follows:

- A-range – 90s -- Excels – Full command and facility with material with the ability to place it within larger historical/literary context and to make arguments based upon it.
- B-range – 80s – Good – Solid understanding of material but without complete facility or ability to make arguments based on it.
- C-range – 70s -- Fair – Some understanding of major themes, lack of command with detail, or some understanding of detail but lack of contextual understanding.
- D-range – 60s -- Poor – Enough factual understanding to pass, but little to no contextual clarity.
- F-range – Fails – Lack of university level quality.

For the grading policies of the University of Florida in general, follow this link:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/> (Links to an external site.)

Class Policies

Attendance:

I do not take attendance but if you miss class, believe me, it will show in your work. You *are* expected to participate on days during which we have discussion (see discussion grading above). Be in class on time.

Class Etiquette:

Phones will be turned off before class begins. I will allow you to take notes on a computer but you are not to look at all manner of websites during class. It is rude and a distraction to those around you. If we start looking at unrelated websites I will need to ban laptops.

Late Papers and Tests:

Tests and papers will not be accepted late without medical documentation.

Academic Honesty:

The University of Florida Student Honor Code is located at this link:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php> (Links to an external site.).

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the

University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluations:

Students in this class are participating in the pilot evaluation of the new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors so that teaching effectiveness is enhanced and to be more seamlessly linked to UF’s CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals.

Recordings:

As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Academic Resources:

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> ([Links to an external site.](#))

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Class Schedule:

Part 1: August 24-September 7

Overview: Problems of Uniqueness, Problems of Explaining

8/24: Introduction: Avrom Sutzkever's Problem and Ours

8/26: Antisemitism: Representing the Jew as Other

8/29: Hitler and Nazism

8/31: Ghettos

9/2: Extermination

Reading to be completed by 9/2: If you are not familiar with basic narratives of the Holocaust then you must become so. Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide* is concise and will help you in this regard.

9/5: NO CLASS: LABOR DAY

9/7: *Discussion:* *What was the Holocaust? Is it Unique? What are the Problems of Representation?*

Reading to be completed by 9/7: Gary Weissman, *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 1-27; Steffen Klävers, "Paradigm Shifts – Critical Reflections on the Historikerstreit 2.0, The Catechism Debate, and their Precursors," *Society* (2022), n. 59, pp. 16-24.

Brief Paper 1 due on 9/7 by 9:35

Part 2: September 9-19

***Historical Witnessing:
Testimony***

9/9: The Problem of Testimony

Reading to be completed by 9/9: Cathy Caruth, "Trauma and Experience," in *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*, ed. Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg (New Brunswick, NJ, 2003), pp. 192-

98; Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness of the Vicissitudes of Listening," in Levi and Rothberg, eds., *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*, 221-26.

9/12: Discussion: Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*.

Reading to be completed by 9/12: Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, pp. 1-91.

9/14: Discussion: Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*.

Reading to be completed by 9/14: Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, pp. 91-153.

9/16: Discussion: Gendered Testimony

Reading to be completed by 9/19: Pascale Rachel Bos, "Women and the Holocaust: Analyzing Gender Difference," in *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*, ed. Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg (New Brunswick, NJ, 2003), pp. 178-86; Gisela Perl, *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz* (Lanham, MD. 2019), pp.1-49

9/19: Discussion: Gendered Testimony

Reading to be completed by 9/19: Gisela Perl, *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz*, pp. 49-93. Sara Horowitz, "If He knows How to Make a Child," Memories of Birth and Baby Killing in Jewish Testimony Narratives," in *Jewish Histories of the Holocaust*, ed. Norman J.W. Goda (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 135-151.

Brief Paper 2 due 9/19 by 9:35

Part 3 September 21-October 10:

The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination

9/21: "Poetry after Auschwitz": Basic Problems

Reading to be completed by 9/21: Lawrence L. Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), Chapter 1.

9/23: Discussion: Paul Celan, *Death Fugue*

Reading to be completed by 9/23: Paul Celan, "Death Fugue." John Felstiner, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, and Jew* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 22-42

9/26: NO CLASS: ROSH HASHANAH

9/28: Problems of Holocaust Fiction

9/30: Discussion: Short Stories: Isaiah Spiegel

Reading to be completed by 9/30: Isaiah Spiegel, "Bread" and "The Ghetto Dog."

10/3: Discussion: Religious Tales: Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust

Reading to be Completed by 10/3: “Hovering above the Pit,” “Jew Go Back to the Grave,” “A Bowl of Soup,” “Who Will Win this War”, “The Mosaic Artist’s Apprentice,” “A Sign from Heaven,” from Yaffa Eliach, *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust* (for 10/4).

10/5: NO CLASS: YOM KIPPUR

10/7: Discussion: *Nava Semel And the Rat Laughed*
Reading to be Completed by 10/7: *And the Rat Laughed*, Part I and II.

10/10: REVIEW FOR MIDTERM (DUE 10/14 at 5:00 PM)
Brief Paper 3 due 10/10 by 9:35

Part 4 October 12-31:

The Holocaust and Film

10/12: Holocaust Film: The Problem of Authenticity

Reading to be completed by 10/12: Joshua Hirsch, *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust*, Chapter 1.

10/14: *Diary of Anne Frank* – (No Class but Screening at 6 pm on 10/13).

10/17: Discussion: *Anne Frank*

Reading to be completed by 10/17. Selections from *Diary of Anne Frank*.
 Alvin Rosenfeld, “Popularization and Memory: The Case of Anne Frank” in *Lessons and Legacies: The Meaning of the Holocaust in a Changing World*, ed. Peter Hayes (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press University Press, 2011), pp. 243-278.

10/19: Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah* (in-class screening)

10/21: Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah* (in class screening)

10/24: Discussion: *Shoah*

Reading to be completed by 10/24: Shoshanna Felman, *The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah* in Felman, ed., *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, pp. 204-85 (complete by Friday).

10/26: Steven Spielberg, *Schindler’s List*: (no class but see *Schindler’s List* by 10/26).

10/28: Discussion: *Schindler’s List*

Reading to be completed by 10/28: Omer Bartov, *Spielberg's Oskar: Hollywood Tries Evil*, in Yosefa Loshitzky, ed., *Spielberg's Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler's List* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 41-61

10/31: Discussion: Holocaust Humor?

Reading to be completed by 10/31: Watch Larry David Clip, "Survivor;" South Park, "Passion of the Jew;" Ruth R. Wisse, *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 143-155; Articles Dieudonné M'Bala M'Bala.

Brief Paper 4 due 10/31 by 9:35

Part 5: November 2-December 7:

Visual Art, Photography, and Memorialization

11/2: Artistic Representations of the Holocaust (TERM PAPERS DUE)

11/4: Discussion: Good Art, Bad Art.

Reading to be completed by 11/4: Pat Lipsky, "A Painter of the Holocaust for Our Times: Three Self Portraits by Felix Nussbaum at New York's Neue Gallerie," *Tablet Magazine* (<https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/285637/felix-nussbaum-neue-galerie>). Watch Magnes Symposium: *The Holocaust Effect on Contemporary Art* (Canvas); Documentary on Anselm Kiefer, *Remembering the Future*.

11/7: The Holocaust and the Camera Lens.

11/9: Discussion: Photographing the Holocaust

Reading to be completed by 11/9: Lynn Hilditch, "Believe It! Lee Miller's Second World War Photographs as Modern Memorials," *Journal of War and Culture Studies*. V. 11, n. 3 (2018), 209-22; Carol Zemel, "Emblems of Atrocity: Holocaust Liberation Photographs," and Monica Bohm Duchon, "The Uses and Abuses of Photography in Holocaust-Related Art," both in *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, ed. Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 201-235.

11/11: NO CLASS: VETERANS' DAY

11/14: NO CLASS: CONFERENCE

11/16: The Problem of Memorialization

11/18: Discussion: Poland's Holocaust Memorials: Cold War

Reading to be completed by 11/18: James Young, “The Biography of a Memorial Icon: Nathan Rapoport’s Warsaw Ghetto Monument,” *Representations*, v. 26 (Spring 1989), pp. 69-106; Jonathan Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration 1945-1979* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003)

11/21: Discussion: Memorialization in Germany: Post-Cold War

Reading to be completed by 11/21: Jenny Edkins, “Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial,” in *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 135-49; Watch video on the *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*; James Young, “Germany’s Holocaust Memorial Problem – And Mine,” *At Memory’s Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 153-224; Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, “Deconstructivism and the Holocaust: Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe,” in *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*, ed. Claudio Fogu, et al., (Cambridge, MA, 2016), pp. 283-303; Alex Cocatas, “Blow Up the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe,” *Tablet*, April 21, 1917.

Brief Paper 5 due 11/21 by 9:35

11/23-11/25 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

11/28: What is a Holocaust Museum?

11/30: The Politics of Museums: Yad Vashem

Reading to be completed by 11/30: Roni Stauber, *The Holocaust in Israeli Public Debate in the 1950s* (London, 2007), pp. 19-29, 133-48; Amos Goldberg, “The Jewish Narrative in the Yad Vashem Global Holocaust Museum,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, v. 14, n. 2, (2012), 187-213; James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), Introduction and Part II.

12/2: The Politics of Museums: The US Holocaust Memorial Museum

Reading to be completed by 12/2: Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), Chapter 4. Visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Site at the following

<https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/museum-exhibitions>

and go through the “Americans and the Holocaust,” tour:

<https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/museum-exhibitions/americans-and-the-holocaust/tour>

12/5: Discussion: A Final Question

Reading to be completed by 12/5: Dara Horn, *People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present* (New York: Norton, 2021), 182-92.

12/7: REVIEW FOR FINAL

