

**Jewish Studies 230 / Literature in Translation 247 / Slavic 245**  
**REPRESENTING THE HOLOCAUST IN POLAND**

Professor: Halina Filipowicz  
Office: 1454 Van Hise Hall  
Office hours: Tuesdays, 5:30-7:00  
E-mail: [hfilipow@wisc.edu](mailto:hfilipow@wisc.edu)

**Course description**

The events of the Holocaust remain unthinkable or incomprehensible to many people. To them, the events of the Holocaust are as morally and intellectually baffling now as they were 70 years ago.

“No matter who they are,” writes Doris L. Bergen, a historian of the Holocaust, “people want answers, guidelines, something firm to hold on to in the swirl of disorientation and nausea that is a common reaction to study of the Holocaust. Almost never can history fulfill that desire; the who, what, and how questions that historians can resolve unequivocally turn out to be only the tip of the iceberg of why. Many people leave a historical presentation resolved to turn elsewhere with their big questions - to philosophy, religion, psychology, or literature.”

The literary critic Ruth Franklin agrees: “We need literature about the Holocaust not only because testimony is inevitably incomplete, but because of what literature uniquely offers: an imaginative access to past events, together with new and different ways of understanding them that are unavailable to strictly factual forms of writing.”

Dan Stone, a historian of the Holocaust, goes even further. He argues that historians, too, “gain a great deal from reading Holocaust fiction. Not necessarily for empirical accuracy, but for their insights into the nature of Nazism and the Holocaust [...].”

This course is for students who turn to literature with their questions about the Holocaust.

Specifically, **the aim of this course** is to examine how the Holocaust has been remembered and represented in poetry, prose fiction, essay, and memoir by Polish and Polish Jewish authors.

The course focuses on literary analysis and requires active reading: analyzing the material, questioning it, writing a response to it, and discussing it. Students should expect weekly readings and discussions as well as long lectures.

If you have had little experience doing literary analysis, it is strongly recommended that you take a non-credit mini-course on literary analysis, offered by the Writing Center early in the semester.

**Please note:** This course is not about the history of the Holocaust. If you are interested in the

history of the Holocaust, you may want to read books such as *The Holocaust and History: The Known, the Unknown, the Disputed, and the Reexamined* (2002) edited by Michael Berenbaum and Abraham J. Peck; *The Holocaust: Roots, History, and Aftermath* (2008) by David M. Crowe; *The Routledge History of the Holocaust* (2011) edited by Jonathan C. Friedman; *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (2010) edited by Peter Hayes and John K. Roth; *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (2009, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) by Doris L. Bergen; *The Third Reich at War* (2009) by Richard J. Evans; *Histories of the Holocaust* (2010) by Dan Stone; *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (2015) by Nikolaus Wachsmann.

Saul Friedländer's two-volume work, published between 1997 and 2007, is a brilliant and comprehensive account of what we now call the Holocaust: *Nazi Germany and the Jews: The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939* (1997) and *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945* (2007).

Other important books on the history of the Holocaust include: *History of the Holocaust* (1982) by Yehuda Bauer; *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (2000) by Christopher R. Browning; *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe* (1993) by Saul Friedländer; *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1985) by Raul Hilberg; *The Holocaust History* (1987) by Michael R. Marrus; *How Could This Happen: Explaining the Holocaust* (2014) by Dan McMillan.

Yet another useful book is *The Holocaust: A Reader* (2005) edited by Simone Gigliotti and Berel Lang. It includes the minutes of the Nazi leaders' Wannsee conference in January 1942 and a chapter on the evolution from mass killings in the summer and fall of 1941 to the "Final Solution" in 1942.

### **Required books**

Jerzy Andrzejewski, *Holy Week* (Ohio UP)

Michal Glowinski, *The Black Seasons* (Northwestern UP)

Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*

**Please note:** In this course, the only acceptable edition of Gross's book is an expanded edition, published by Penguin Books in 2002.

Hanna Krall, *The Subtenant; To Outwit God* (Northwestern UP)

Halina Zawadzka, *Living in Fear on the Aryan Side* (Heritage Books)

### **Course credits**

This course is offered for 3 credits only. If you have registered for 4 credits, you will need to drop the fourth credit.

## **Course policy**

1. This course is open to eligible students.
2. Students are expected to come to class on time and to stay from the beginning to the end of each class session, participating fully in class discussions. Attendance and active participation are vital and count toward the final grade.
3. You are allowed three absences. You may use them in any way you wish. There is no need to notify me about your absence(s). However, if you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out from your classmates what was covered in class.
4. Required books and handouts should be brought to class to facilitate analysis.
5. There are no make-up exams in this course.
6. All writing assignments should be submitted in hard copy. Electronic submissions will not be accepted.
7. Late writing assignments will not be accepted. You will receive a grade of F for a writing assignment that was not submitted on the due date.
8. When you use published and/or unpublished sources (books, articles, classmates' presentations, instructors' lectures and comments, etc.), you need to acknowledge these sources in your papers. Failing to acknowledge these sources amounts to plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in a serious penalty: a grade of F for the course.
9. Laptops are allowed for note-taking. All other electronic devices - cell phones, iPods, etc. - must be turned off during class.
10. Recording lectures and class discussions in this course is not permitted.
11. Eating during class is not permitted.

## **Requirements and assessment**

Attendance and active participation (including one in-class presentation): 20%.

Two exams (six-week and twelve-week): 50%.

A short research paper: 10%.

A long research paper (i.e., final paper): 20%.

I grade exams on the basis of:

\*\* your familiarity with course material

- \*\* your ability to identify and explore connections between texts
- \*\* your ability to discuss those aspects of assigned readings that were not covered in class
- \*\* your ability to use textual detail from assigned readings to support your argumentation.

For information how I grade papers, please see a handout entitled “Explicit Grading Criteria.”

Overall, the grading in this course is based on:

- \*\* your knowledge of course material
- \*\* the quality of your research (breadth, depth, originality)
- \*\* attendance and active participation.

Graduate students who take this course as SL 799 are exempted from the exams. Instead, they will read additional materials of their own choice and write a publishable research paper, approximately 15-20 pages long, due during the finals week. Graduate students who have taken Polish language courses are required to use all primary sources and at least a few secondary sources in Polish in their final papers.

### **Introduction to the course**

This course begins with a recognition that the Holocaust has been represented differently in different countries.

In Israel, representations of the Holocaust have stressed the significance of the Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943 as a starting point of a new national history that celebrates Jewish self-assertion, resistance, and heroism. As Ruth Linn points out in her book, *Escaping Auschwitz*, however, the Israeli narrative about the Holocaust in actuality includes three narratives: “Most Jewish victims went ‘like sheep to the slaughter’; a few succeeded in redeeming Jewish honor by resisting in the Warsaw Ghetto or fighting as partisans; and the world remained silent.”

American representations of the Holocaust focus on the United States as a haven for refugees and a liberator of the Nazi camps. (Many Americans believe, incorrectly, that Auschwitz was liberated by U.S. troops.) Moreover, American representations of the Holocaust tend to downplay its dark and depressing aspects and to emphasize values such as innocence and hopefulness.

In Soviet accounts, the Holocaust lost its ethnic specificity and was subsumed under a general communist critique of fascism and capitalism.

How has the Holocaust been represented in Poland? Or, more specifically, how have Polish and Polish Jewish writers represented the Holocaust? This is the question that we will explore in this course.

The following information provides a general background for this exploration.

Nazi authorities designated Poland to be the center of the mass extermination of European Jews. German troops and their auxiliaries killed many different groups of people; however, only Jews were regarded by Nazi Germany as a worldwide threat and targeted for complete annihilation.

Poles reacted to the persecution and extermination of Jews in many different ways. Scholars (e.g., Barbara Engelking in her book *Holocaust and Memory: The Experience of the Holocaust and Its Consequences*, originally written in Polish and published in Poland in 1994) have demonstrated that while some Polish men and women were engaged in rescuing Jews, many other Poles were, for various reasons, indifferent to the fate of their Jewish neighbors; there were also Poles who became, in one way or another, perpetrators.

Prior to the Polish publication of Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* in 2000, the Polish media, popular culture, textbooks, and other sources presented both Jews and Poles as victims of the Holocaust. It was not denied that Nazi Germany wanted to exterminate all Jews, but it was claimed, even in history textbooks, that Nazis planned to exterminate the entire Polish population as well. To support such claims, more attention was given to concentration camps (where Poles constituted a large group of prisoners) than to extermination camps, and the difference between the two categories of camps became blurred for the generations of Poles born after the war. Moreover, Auschwitz was appropriated as a symbol of Polish suffering under Nazi rule.

Because of the persistent and widespread emphasis on Polish wartime suffering, the postwar generations of Poles never fully understood the extremely vulnerable position of Jews during World War II.

Given this general context, how have Polish and Polish Jewish writers attempted to speak to their readers about controversial issues and uncomfortable questions surrounding the Holocaust? This question will be explored throughout the course.

### **Post-1989 European contexts**

At the end of World War II in 1945, there was much that many Europeans wanted to forget. As a result, there was a lot to retrieve from collective amnesia after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the redrawing of the map of Europe, and the admission of new member states to the European Union.

This process of challenging and modifying interpretations of the European past with regard to World War II is still unfolding.

In particular, there has been a growing awareness in the European Union since the 1990s that the memory of the Holocaust is fundamental to European identity, a lesson to remember in order to build a more tolerant and democratic Europe. As might be expected, different countries have responded to this idea in different ways.

For example, the Swedish national self-image has undergone a radical change, largely thanks to the Swedish government's Living History project that was launched in 1997. The goal of this initiative was to reevaluate Sweden's role during the Nazi era and to complicate the often oversimplified image of Sweden as a neutral bystander nation in a Europe torn by war. The Living History project acknowledged, for instance, that Sweden exported iron ore to Nazi Germany, that it allowed German troops to move across its territory, and that it issued "J"-stamped passports to Swedish citizens of Jewish background. The Living History's information campaign has led Sweden to acknowledge its politics of concessions toward Nazi Germany and to accept a shared collective guilt for the Holocaust.

### Course outline

Please be sure to keep up with reading assignments and to bring required books and handouts to class.

**Please note:** Study questions and summary questions are your homework. The study questions provide the starting point for class discussions.

**A note about comparative topics:** The goal of comparative topics is to bring out both similarities and differences.

### Week

- 1 Introduction (Tuesday)  
Pre-Holocaust literature (Thursday)

Aleksander Swietochowski: "Chava Ruby" (in *Stranger in Our Midst*; handout)

**Study questions:** (1) What qualities does Chava have? Make a list of at least **five** traits that characterize her.

(2) How can we explain the fact that the narrator in Swietochowski's short story respects and even admires Chava, but despises her husband, Simcha?

(3) Identify the Polish characters who help Chava succeed.

(4) Who is Franek? Compile all the information you can find about him in the short story.

- 2 Pre-Holocaust literature (Tuesday)  
Reading period (Thursday)

Maria Konopnicka: "Mendel Gdanski" (in *Stranger in Our Midst*; handout)

**Study questions:** (1) Compile information about the attackers in this short story.

(2) What precisely does the watchmaker hold against Jews?

(3) Why does Mendel become deeply disillusioned with the Polish community (see p. 235), even though several Poles did try to protect him and his grandson? Is he being ungrateful or unfair?

**Summary question:** Compare Aleksander Swietochowski's "Chava Ruby" and Maria Konopnicka's "Mendel Gdanski." (Do not compare the biographical notes about the authors.)

3 Pre-Holocaust literature  
Swietochowski; Konopnicka

4-5 Controversies over Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*  
A short research paper is due on **Tuesday, 9 February**.

**Reminder:** In this course, the only acceptable edition of Gross's book is an expanded edition, published by Penguin Books in 2002.

**Study question:** Identify and discuss at least three strengths and at least three weaknesses of Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors*.

**Lecture:** (1) How does Jan T. Gross structure his argument? (2) How does the ending of the English translation of *Neighbors* (see p. 114) differ from the ending of the Polish original?

**Introductory note:** *Neighbors* was originally written and published in Polish in 2000. The translation of *Neighbors* into English, undertaken by Gross himself, has resulted in a different version of the book. In the English version, Gross has introduced some changes in the structure of his argument and in the amount and kind of detail provided in the main text and the endnotes. He has also changed the ending (see p. 114).

**A short research paper:** Read Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors* carefully and write a short **formal** paper (700-800 words; typed with double spacing) on the following theme:

Identify and discuss **four** topics or issues that you have learned about by reading Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors*.

Support your statements with relevant quotations from *Neighbors* and provide page numbers for them. Be sure to integrate the quotations into your discussion. It is acceptable to use the pronoun "I" in formal papers.

5-6 Representing the Holocaust through poetry  
Tadeusz Rózewicz: "The Survivor" (handout)

Czeslaw Milosz: "Campo di Fiori" (handout)  
Wislaw Szymborska: "Still" (handout)

**Please note:** The original Polish title of Szymborska's poem, "Jeszcze," does not refer to stillness or motionlessness, but to continuity or a lack of change (i.e., to something that still occurs or persists). In the English translation, the title is ambiguous.

**Introductory note:** The three poems deal with the Holocaust, but a specific situation is different in each poem. Rózewicz's poem invokes mass executions ("hacked-up bodies"); Milosz's poem takes place during the Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943; Szymborska's poem is a reaction to mass deportations to death camps. However, each poem grapples with the same classical question: how to represent the Holocaust? Should it be depicted as silence because the Holocaust defies any attempt at aesthetic representation, and so to try to represent the Holocaust through art and literature would be to reduce the real scale of this historical catastrophe, to make its atrocities more palatable, and to betray the memory of the dead? Or should the Holocaust be depicted in all its horror and ugliness?

**Study questions:**

- (1) We expect Holocaust survivors to be dizzy with gratitude for life. And yet some Holocaust survivors have been reluctant or unwilling to speak about their experience. Why? In Rózewicz's poem, however, the survivor does speak. Why does he speak? How does he speak?
- (2) A leading scholar of Holocaust literature has argued that "much of our language about the Holocaust is designed to console instead of confront. [...] When we speak of the survivor instead of the victim [...], we draw on an arsenal of words that urges us to build verbal fences between the atrocities of the camps and ghettos and what we are mentally willing - or able - to face" (Lawrence L. Langer, *Admitting the Holocaust*). Rózewicz's poem does speak about the survivor rather than the victim. Would it be justified to say, then, that this particular poem is designed to console rather than confront? What do you think?
- (3) Regarding Milosz's poem: find biographical information about Giordano Bruno. What purposes does the story of Bruno serve in the poem?
- (4) Regarding Szymborska's poem: Why does the speaker refer to names rather than persons? How do you understand the title of the poem?
- (5) Regarding all three poems: What kind of language does each poet use: ordinary? straightforward? complex? austere? ornamental? What literary devices does each poet use? What are the implications of using these particular literary devices for concerns about writing poetry after Auschwitz?

**Summary question:** Compare the three poems.

7 Survival in Nazi-occupied Poland (group presentations)  
**Tuesday, 1 March**

The starting point for your group presentation is as follows: The year is 1941. The place is a Polish town or city under Nazi occupation. You, your spouse (or relatives), and your three children have been forced to move into a ghetto established by Nazi authorities. The living conditions in the ghetto are such that thousands of people are dying of starvation and disease every month, but the penalty for leaving the ghetto is death. In this devastating environment, children are the most vulnerable part of the population. You have just enough financial resources as well as Polish contacts on the so-called Aryan side (i.e., outside the ghetto) to smuggle one of your children out of the ghetto and thus to try to save him/her.

How do you select one child out of three? How do you justify your selection? Consider issues such as age, gender, physical appearance, proficiency in Polish, familiarity with Polish customs and traditions (such as celebrating namedays rather than birthdays), and familiarity with Catholic prayers and rituals.

How do you proceed with smuggling a child out of the ghetto? Or, do you come up with alternative plans? If you do, how do you proceed with an alternative plan?

Your presentation may be in the form of a narrative or a dialogue. Each group will have 10-15 minutes for a presentation. It is acceptable to use note cards to keep presentations well structured.

To get started on this project and to find some preliminary ideas, read Michal Glowinski's *The Black Seasons* and Halina Zawadzka's *Living in Fear on the Aryan Side* several weeks in advance of the scheduled discussion of these books later in the semester

Please note that each presentation will be graded as a group project; therefore, make sure that each contribution to your group project is equally strong and that all the contributions are well integrated.

7

**Six-week exam: Thursday, 3 March**

Format: essay questions.

8 Controversies over Hanna Krall's *To Outwit God*

Hanna Krall: *To Outwit God* (in the volume *The Subtenant; To Outwit God*)

**Study questions:** (1a) When Hanna Krall's interview with Marek Edelman was first published in Poland in 1976, many readers protested. Why? When Krall's book was translated into Hebrew and published in Israel in 1982, it sold very poorly. Only several hundred copies were sold. Many people refused to buy the book. Why? To begin to address these questions, it is necessary to ask: What do readers typically expect from narratives about heroic resistance such

as the Warsaw ghetto uprising?

(1b) Identify and discuss at least four potentially offensive scenes or sections in *To Outwit God*. What is Edelman's point in talking about the Warsaw ghetto uprising in this particular way even though he runs the risk of offending, antagonizing, or alienating readers?

(2) How much does Edelman talk about his work as a cardiologist and about his patients? How much does he talk about his memories of the Warsaw ghetto uprising? What are the implications of this particular textual distribution?

(3) In the interview, Krall is constantly trying to pry information from Edelman, but he often responds with "After all, it doesn't matter [...]. Can't all of you understand that none of it matters anymore?!" (p. 144), or "After all, it doesn't matter at this point" (p. 237), or "And besides, [...] what does it matter? [...] What difference does it make today?" (p. 238). What are we to make of these and other similar statements?

(4) Many American readers have complained that *To Outwit God* lacks structure: the narrative jumps back and forth; it is disjointed, repetitive, and disorienting. Is there a way to justify this lack of an orderly or linear structure?

9 Representing the Holocaust in survivor memoirs

Michal Glowinski: *The Black Seasons*

Halina Zawadzka: *Living in Fear on the Aryan Side*

**Study questions:** (1) While living "on the Aryan side," Michal Glowinski and Halina Zawadzka witnessed and/or experienced a broad spectrum of Polish reactions to the Nazi persecution and extermination of Jews during World War II. Describe at least three Polish reactions recorded in *The Black Seasons* and at least three Polish reactions recorded in *Living in Fear on the Aryan Side*.

(2) The memoirist has a dual obligation: to respect facts, the factual truth, but also to tell his/her story in the most interesting, most memorable, most meaningful way possible. How specifically do Glowinski and Zawadzka tell their stories? How do they structure their narratives? What crucial details do they include and highlight? What details, in your opinion, are missing from their memoirs? What details, in your opinion, should have been included, but are not part of these memoirs?

(3) The English title, *The Black Seasons*, is an accurate translation of the Polish title (*Czarne sezony*). But both versions of the title raise many questions: Why seasons rather than, say, years? Why black rather than, say, dark or bleak? Why black rather than bloody? (After all, there is a reference to an "enormous pool of blood" after an execution in the Warsaw ghetto, p. 11.) What are the implications of the title of Glowinski's book?

(4) The Polish title of Zawadzka's book is *Ucieczka z getta* (*Escape from a Ghetto*). Regardless of who (author? translator? editor? publisher?) chose a different title for the American edition, what are the implications of the change from *Escape from a Ghetto* to *Living in Fear on the Aryan Side*?

## Spring recess: 19-27 March

10 Representing the Holocaust in survivor memoirs  
Glowinski; Zawadzka

**Summary question:** Compare Michal Glowinski's *The Black Seasons* and Halina Zawadzka's *Living in Fear on the Aryan Side*.

10-11 Representing the Holocaust through prose fiction  
Jerzy Andrzejewski: *Holy Week*

**Study questions:** (1) Identify Polish reactions to the Nazi persecution and extermination of Jews that Andrzejewski's novella reveals.

(2) What are the implications of the recurrent references to Polish suffering under Nazi occupation (see especially pp. 13, 17, 38-39, 65-66)?

(3) Why does Irena Lilien refuse to barter sexual favors for male protection, even though male protection might save her life? In other words: what can she possibly gain by resisting male sexual overtures?

(4) Consider "the curse scene" (pp. 124-25). Why does Irena Lilien curse all Poles, even though Jan and Anna Malecki did attempt to rescue her?

**Summary question:** On the one hand, Joan Ringelheim (in "Thoughts about Women and the Holocaust," in the volume *Thinking the Unthinkable: Meanings of the Holocaust*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb) points out that there is some evidence to suggest that more women than men were deported from ghettos to concentration camps. On the other hand, Nechama Tec (in "Hiding and Passing on the Aryan Side: A Gendered Comparison," in the volume *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman) offers the following, tentatively phrased, conclusion: "On balance, it seems that on the Aryan side [Jewish] women had more options than [Jewish] men - and tried to take advantage of them." What do Michal Glowinski's *The Black Seasons*, Halina Zawadzka's *Living in Fear on the Aryan Side*, and Jerzy Andrzejewski's *Holy Week* tell us about the options that Jewish men and women had on the so-called Aryan side? (Since Glowinski was still a child during the war year, consider his parents when you discuss *The Black Seasons*.)

11-12 Representing the Holocaust through prose fiction  
Zofia Nalkowska: *Medallions* (excerpts, handout)

**Study questions:** (1) How do you understand the title of this collection of short stories: *Medallions*?

(2) How do you understand the epigraph to *Medallions*: "People dealt this fate to people." (or,

more simply, “People prepared this fate for people.”)?

(3) In the short story entitled “The Cemetery Lady,” identify sources of the cemetery lady’s antisemitic prejudice.

(4) In the short story entitled “By the Railway Track,” identify the person who is the first to find the wounded Jewish woman.

(5) Describe the Polish characters’ reactions to the Jewish woman in “By the Railway Track.” How do the Polish policemen react? Why does an old village woman hide milk and bread under her kerchief? Who kills the Jewish woman? Why?

**Summary question:** Jerzy Andrzejewski’s *Holy Week* and Zofia Nalkowska’s “The Cemetery Lady” and “By the Railway Track” focus on the suffering of the Jewish people in German-occupied Poland during World War II. Do you agree with this statement? Do you disagree with it? Make an argument either for or against this statement. Be sure to support your argument with specific details.

**Please note:** The epigraph to *Medallions* has been the subject of ongoing controversy. In 1984, Henryk Grynberg, a leading Polish Jewish writer, entitled one of his essays “People Dealt This Fate to Jews.” He subsequently argued (in a 2002 article) that a more appropriate epigraph to Nalkowska’s book would be: “People dealt this fate to Jews.” In a polemical response to Grynberg, the anthropologist Joanna Tokarska-Bakir (in an article published in 2003) criticized Grynberg for adopting a Jewish nationalist stance. The literary critic Kinga Dunin (in an article published in the journal *Krytyka Polityczna* in 2003 after it was rejected by leading Polish magazines) suggested that a more appropriate epigraph would be: “Poles (in cooperation with Nazis) dealt this fate to Jews.”

13

**Twelve-week exam: Tuesday, 19 April**

Format: essay questions.

13-15

Individual conferences to discuss outlines or drafts of the final paper (Tuesdays and Thursdays) Conferences will be held in my office (1454 Van Hise Hall). Please bring **a hard copy** of your outline (or draft) and your bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

Final papers (i.e., long research papers) are due in my office on or before **Friday, 13 May, at 6:00 p.m.**

**Please note:** Only papers submitted in hard copy will be accepted.

There is no final exam in this course.

### **Final paper (i.e., long research paper)**

The final paper should be in the form of a formal essay. It should be typed with double spacing. It should have a title, logical organization, smooth prose, correct grammar and spelling, and page numbers.

The length of the paper should be 1,800-2,400 words. This word count includes a bibliography.

The topic of the paper is your choice. The paper should engage issues that have been discussed in class, while enabling you to broaden and/or deepen your understanding of these issues.

Your research for the paper should cover both primary and secondary sources.

Novels, short stories, poems, plays, literary essays, diaries, memoirs, and autobiographies count as **primary sources**.

**Secondary sources** are scholarly books and articles that provide historical background and conceptual/analytical tools, enabling you to contextualize and interpret your primary sources.

With regard to **primary** sources, you have three options:

1. using one or more of the primary sources that were discussed in class;
2. using new primary sources (i.e., primary sources that were not covered in class);
3. using a mix of new primary sources and some of the primary sources that were discussed in class.

Each of these options will affect the number of **secondary** sources to be used.

If you choose option 1, you need to use **at least three secondary sources** (books and/or articles) to contextualize and interpret your primary sources.

If you choose option 2 or 3, you need to use **at least two secondary sources** (books and/or articles) to contextualize and interpret your primary sources.

Please note that one of the challenges of writing this paper is a seamless integration of your secondary sources into your discussion of your primary sources. As you develop your argumentation, you need to establish a dialogue between your primary and secondary sources.

Your bibliography should list all the primary and secondary sources that you have used. For the bibliography, use a standard format (see MLA, Chicago, or social sciences guidebooks to documenting sources).

Your paper should have a well-formulated and well-developed thesis, with plenty of textual evidence to back it up.

Your thesis statement should clearly identify a specific problem that you want to investigate in the paper.

To formulate a thesis, you need to be explicit and precise, for example, “In this paper, I want to test a hypothesis that Jan Kowalski’s novel, *Holocaust*, focuses on Polish suffering rather than Jewish suffering during World War II,” or “In this paper, I propose to investigate how Jan Kowalski represents Polish and Jewish characters in his novel entitled *Holocaust*,” or “In this paper, I will explore how Jan Kowalski depicts male and female characters in his novel *Holocaust*,” or “In this paper, I will compare the treatment of gender issues in two novels: Jan Kowalski’s *Holocaust* and Maria Grynberg’s *Shoah*.”

If you want to explore two related theses, say so. One way of saying this is: “In this paper, my general thesis is that Jan Kowalski’s novel, *Holocaust*, is sensitive to gender issues. A secondary thesis of my paper is that the sensitivity to gender issues in this novel only rarely extends to Jewish male characters.” A somewhat different way of saying this is: “In this paper, my core thesis is ...; my secondary thesis is ....” Or, “In this paper, my principal thesis is ...; my secondary thesis is ....”

Your thesis statement should be followed by a sentence introducing your textual evidence, for example, “While my textual evidence comes primarily from Kowalski’s novel, I will also draw on Zofia Nalkowska’s short story entitled ‘By the Railway Track,’” or “While my discussion is based mainly on Kowalski’s and Grynberg’s novels, my additional evidence comes from articles by sociologists and psychologists such as Ann Smith and John Norton.”

As a general rule, authors of effective papers:

- \*\* clearly state a thesis that identifies a specific problem to be investigated
- \*\* introduce evidence
- \*\* contextualize and interpret the evidence to develop a well-structured argument that will prove (or disprove) the thesis
- \*\* integrate primary and secondary sources while developing an argument
- \*\* treat each important point thoroughly before moving on to the next main point
- \*\* use the conclusion to present the logical culmination of your argument.

**Reminder # 1:** It is acceptable to use the pronoun “I” in formal papers.

**Reminder # 2:** Only papers submitted in hard copy will be accepted.

**Reminder # 3:** Final papers are due in my office (1454 Van Hise Hall) on or before Friday, 13 May, 6:00 p.m.