

CJS 430

Testimonies and Cultural Expressions of the Holocaust

Instructor: Prof. Rachel F. Brenner
Days and Times: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 11:00-11:50
367 Van Hise
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Course Description

The continuing presence of the Holocaust in today's cultural world picture reflects both the pervasive consciousness of the event and, concurrently, its persisting elusiveness. Although the story of the Jewish genocide will remain forever incomplete, fragments of the Holocaust experience reach us in the form of testimony. Diaries and photographs were found in ghettos, witnesses and rescuers left reports, liberated camps were filmed, survivors told and recorded their stories, and perpetrators revealed their actions at the Nazi trials. This course explores the Holocaust testimony, its cultural representations, and its educational significance. First, we shall examine survivors' recollections of their Holocaust experience. How do the survivors construct their testimonial narratives? What is their rationale for telling the story? Is it possible to integrate the memory of the Holocaust experience into the postwar life? How does the videotaped oral testimony differ from a written narration of the experience? Then we shall focus on the cultural representations of the event and their educational significance. We shall consider the representations of the Holocaust in film, fiction, poetry, drama, and comics. What do the post-Holocaust writers and artists reveal about the emotional impact of the event? What do they teach us about human nature and the role of moral education? How has the consciousness of the Holocaust affected our sense of moral responsibility? We shall emphasize the universal implications of the Holocaust legacy, while focusing on the importance of maintaining Holocaust consciousness in view of the proliferation of genocidal events in today's world.

Requirements and Expectations

Attendance: You are expected to attend *all* classes. Please make sure that you are **always** on time.

Late arrival to class or absence will be excused **only** due to illness or family emergency. In case you must be absent, you need to let me know ahead of time. Unexcused absences will affect your grade.

It is **your responsibility** to find out and complete the materials you have missed.

Attitude: Your attitude is part of your grade. It includes being in class *on time*, deferring from using electronic devices during class time, concentration on the subject matter, and active participation.

The class is based on students' active participation and discussions based on the materials assigned for each class. You are expected to complete all the reading requirements for each class and submit a one paragraph (up to 6-8 sentences long) summary of the issues or problems that each of the assigned readings raises. In case there are more than one text to read, submit a paragraph for each. The paper must be **dated and typed double-space**. Please place the summary on my desk **before the beginning of the class. I will not accept papers at any other time.** Our discussions will be based on your careful and analytical preparation of the texts. You should be ready to present the main ideas in the texts and critique them in class.

You are required to make one oral presentation of about 5-8 minutes about an event or an experience which reminds of or can be associated with the Holocaust. It might be world news, materials studied in other courses, books or articles that you have read, films or programs that you have watched, works of art you have seen etc., You should discuss the issue and explain why it is important. To what extent has your knowledge about the Holocaust helped you understand the ethical, aesthetic, ideological, political significance of your topic?

There will be two short essays (2-3 pages). We have been fortunate to have been assigned Writing Fellows (WF) who will be working with you on the essays. For each WF essay you submit the **first version** of the essay. I collect these essays in class. The WF will read your essay carefully within a week, make comments, and have a conference with you the following week to discuss your writing and make suggestions for revision. You will revise the essay and submit within two weeks **both the first version and the revised version with a cover page on top explaining the changes.**

The first version of the essay is **typed double-space, appropriately documented**, of quality of what you would turn in for grading. I purposely do not call the text you will be discussing with the WF "a draft;" it will be the best possible **version** of an essay you could produce on your own. When you hand in the **final version**, you will write an explanation how you have rewritten the paper with the WF's comments in mind. Please be sure to show respect for the help you are receiving and treat the meetings with the Fellow very seriously.

The final (4-5 pp.) essay should draw upon materials studied throughout the semester and your research. It should show ability to document bibliographical sources. You will make an oral presentation 5-8 minutes long focusing on the issue/problem/idea in the course that you have found of particular interest. The presentations will take place toward the end of the semester in preparation for the final essay. The presentation should raise concepts, ideas and facts for questions and discussion. The critique of your peers will help you to finalize the essay outline.

There will be no classes on Jewish Holidays.
Instead, there will be special assignments

You are required to attend the following events and write a report (1 p.) which will

1. Summarize the thesis of the event,
2. Explain the argument of the event
3. Present your evaluation of the event.

Make sure that you put the dates of the events in your calendars to avoid conflicts.

--- Supper and film screening followed by discussion in Hillel

Broken Branches

A grandmother's retelling of her family's experiences in the Holocaust, utilizing animation to bring her stories to life.

Hillel Foundation for Jewish Student Life, 611 Langdon, Madison

--- The Tobias lecture will be given by Prof. Omer Bartov on October 26 at 4 p.m

--- The students will watch four Holocaust films and discuss them in class. The films are put on reserve in College Library

--*Schindler's List / In Darkness*

--*Life is Beautiful / Defiance*

Required Texts:

Available in the University Bookstore:

Robert Skloot, *If the Whole Body Dies: Raphael Lemkin and the Treaty against Genocide*

Art Spiegelman, *Maus* Part I and II

Cynthia Ozick, *The Shawl*.

You will find the other texts on Electronic Reserve [R]

A course reader is available at Social Science Copy Center,

Social Science Building. Sewell Hall, Room 6120, 1180 Observatory Drive

Please note

- I reserve the right to modify the schedule of the **syllabus** and change the **evaluation** scale.

- Any work that is in violation of the UW Code of Honor will be graded as 0 or Fail. For more information about how to avoid plagiarism and about proper paraphrasing and quoting, see <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>

- The use of your laptop should be limited to noting down the main points of the class. Your focus should be on the ongoing discussion and on participation which is a very important component of our study. No other electronic devices are allowed.

- Extensions on papers, essays, and the exam **will not be granted**. No late work will be accepted.

- Please let me know within the first two weeks of the semester about the dates on which you will need relief due to religious observance.

Grading

Summaries	15%
Class participation	10%
Attendance and Attitude	5%
Presentation	10%
Short essays	30%
Lectures reports	10%
Final essay and presentation	20%

SYLLABUS

Students are expected to bring the assigned texts for every class

- W. Sept. 2 Course Explanation
 F. Sept. 4 Historical Introduction to the Holocaust
 M. Sept. 7 Labor Day – no class

I. The Problems of Bearing Witness

- W. Sept. 9 Aharon Appelfeld, “Individualization.” [R]
 Annette Vieviorka, “On Testimony.” [R]
 F. Sept. 11 Dori Laub, “Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening.” [R]
 M. Sept. 14 **Rosh Hashana – No class**
 W. Sept. 16 Audio-taped Ruth Elias’s testimony and discussion – part I

II. Survivors’ Reflections on the Holocaust Experience

- F. Sept. 18 Lawrence Langer “Deep Memory: The Buried Self” [R]
 Charlotte Delbo, “Days and Memory.” [R]
 M. Sept. 21 Jean Améry, “Resentment.” [R]
 W. Sept. 23 **Yom Kippur – no class**
 F. Sept. 25 Ruth Klüger, “The Camps.” [R]
 M. Sept. 28 Primo Levy, “Shame.” [R]
 Primo Levy, “You Who Live Safe.” [R]
 W. Sept. 30 Eli Wiesel, “A Plea for the Dead.” [R]
 Livia E. Bitton Jackson, “Coming Age.”
 F. Oct. 2 Summary and Review
 M. Oct. 5 **Prof. Teryl Dobbs guest lecture**

First Version of First Essay due – make appointments with Writing Fellows

III. In the Camps: Women's Perspective

- W. Oct. 7 Joan Ringelheim, "The Unethical and the Unspeakable: Women and the Holocaust." [R]
- F. Oct. 9 Charlotte Delbo, "Lulu." [R]
An audio-taped interviews and discussion
- M. Oct. 12 Gisella Perl, "A Doctor in Auschwitz." [R]
- W. Oct. 14 **No class**
- F. Oct. 16 Ruth Elias's videotaped interviews – part II
- M. Oct. 19 Discussion of the videotapes

Final version of first essay due

IV. Testimonies by Non-Jewish Witnesses of the Holocaust

- W. Oct. 21 Jan Karski, "The Ghetto." [R]
- F. Oct. 23 Karski's testimony in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*
Screening and discussion
- M. Oct. 26 **No class – Evening Lecture by Prof. Omer Bar Tov**
- W. Oct. 28 Tadeusz Borowski, "Introduction,"
"This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen." [R]

Representation of the Holocaust in Art and Literature

- F. Oct. 30 Ida Fink, "A Scrap of Time." [R]
- M. Nov. 2 Ida Fink, "The Table." [R]
Class reenactment

First Version of Second Essay Due – make appointments with WF

- W. Nov. 4 Poems by Abraham Sutzkever, Dan Pagis, and Nelly Sachs
- F. Nov. 6 Poems (cont.)
- M. Nov. 9 Prof. Rand Valentine's Lecture

- W. Nov. 11 Cynthia Ozick, *The Shawl*, Part I
- F. Nov. 13 Cynthia Ozick, *The Shawl*, Part II
- M. Nov. 16 **no class –
Dinner and Screening of the Film “Broken Branches”
5:30 at Hillel, 611 Langdon St, Madison**
- W. Nov. 18 Discussion of *Broken Branches*
- F. Nov. 20 *Maus I*
- M. Nov. 23 *Maus II*
- Final Version of Second Essay due**
- W. Nov. 25 Summary and Review
- F. Nov. 27 **Thanksgiving – no class**
- M. Nov. 30 Discussion of *Schindler’s List* and *In Darkness*
- W. Dec. 2 Discussion of *Life is Beautiful* and *Defiance*
- F. Dec. 4 Robert Skloot, *If the Whole Body Dies: Raphael Lemkin and the Treaty against Genocide*
Introduction to *The Theatre of the Genocide: Four Plays about Mass Murder in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Armenia.*
- M. Dec. 7, W. Dec. 9, F. Dec. 11, M. Dec. 14 – presentations of essay outlines

Bibliography

Works used in the course

Hartman, Geoffrey H. *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Karski, Jan. *Story of a Secret State: My Report to the World*. London: Penguin Classics, 2011 [1944].

Levi Neil and Michael Rothberg, *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003.

Langer, Lawrence. *Art from the Ashes: A Holocaust Anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Ozick, Cynthia. *The Shawl*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

Rittner Carol and John K. Roth, *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust*. New York: Paragon House, 1993.

Shapiro, Robert Moses. *Individualizing the Holocaust through Diaries and Other Contemporaneous Personal Accounts*. Hoboken: Ktav, 1999.

Skloot, Robert. *The Theatre of the Genocide: Four Plays about Mass Murder in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Armenia*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

Rober Skloot, *If the Whole Body Dies: Raphael Lemkin and the Treaty against Genocide*. Madison: Parallel Press, 2006.

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

Selected Bibliography - Works pertinent to our study

Agamben, Giorgio. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and Archive*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone Books, 2002.

Berger, L. Alan. *Children of Job: American Second-Generation Witness to the Holocaust*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.

Bernard-Donals, Michael and Richard Glejzer, Eds. *Witnessing the Disaster: Essays on Representations and the Holocaust*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Brenner, Rachel Feldhay. *Writing As Resistance: Four Women Confronting the Holocaust: Edith Stein, Simone Weil, Anne Frank, Etty Hillesum*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

---- "Teaching the Holocaust in the Academic Setting: Educational Mission(s) and Pedagogical Approaches." *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, vol. 8, n. 9 (Autumn 1999): 1-27.

---"The Second Generation and the Post-Holocaust Culture: The Fear of the Story and Its Legacy of Historical Responsibility," *Dapim: Studies on the Shoah* (2012) [English and Hebrew] vol. 26, 125-151 [English and Hebrew]

Card, Claudia. *Confronting Evils: Terrorism, Torture, Genocide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Eaglestone, Robert and Barry Langford, eds. *Teaching Holocaust Literature and Film* (London: Palgrave, 2008)

Garbarini, Alexandra. *Diaries and the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Friedlander, Saul. *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution."* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Hartman, Geoffrey, ed. *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Hirsch, Marianne and Irene Kacandes, eds. *Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2004.

Lauckner A. Nancy and Miriam Jokiniemi. *Shedding Light on the Darkness: A Guide to Teaching the Holocaust*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2000.

Mosse, George. *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

---- *German Jews beyond Judaism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Novick, Peter. *The Holocaust and Collective Memory*. London: Bloomsbury, 1999.

Ofer Dalia and Leonore J. Weitzman, eds. *Women in the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Shapiro, Robert Moses, ed. *Holocaust Chronicles: Individualizing the Holocaust through Diaries and Other Contemporaneous Personal Accounts*. Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1999.

Schweber, S. & Findling, D. (in press). *Teaching the Holocaust*. Denver, CO: Alternatives in Religious Education.

Weissman, Gary. *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.