GER 435: Representing the Holocaust  
(Crosslisted with JNE 4351)

Course Info:
Instructor: Dr. Erin McGlothlin  
Office hours: Monday 3-4 p.m.; Friday 2-3 p.m.  
Class time: Wednesday, 4-6:30  
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Course Description:
As the Holocaust recedes into the historical past, our knowledge of the event becomes increasingly dominated by literary and cinematic representations of it. This course will investigate artistic mediations of the Holocaust, focusing in particular on questions of ethics, aesthetics and history. The seminar will concentrate on two objectives. First, we will examine the various debates and controversies surrounding the issue of artistic representation of the Holocaust and discuss some of the theoretical and philosophical texts that have formed the core of Holocaust Studies by critics such as James Young, Dominick LaCapra, Marianne Hirsch and Sidra Ezrahi. Second, we will explore the ways in which literature and film, both fictional and documentary, have attempted to narrate the events of the Holocaust. We will examine exemplary responses to the Shoah in a variety of genres by writers and filmmakers such as Primo Levi, Jean Améry, Jurek Becker, Aaron Appelfeld, Liana Millu, Claude Lanzmann and Alain Resnais. Central to our exploration of these texts will be issues of representation, authenticity, appropriateness and uniqueness, the role of memory, the problems and limits of language, questions of trauma, the phenomenon of postmemory, and the development of post-Holocaust German and Jewish identities. Readings and discussions in English. Designed for graduate and advanced undergraduate students; undergraduate enrollment only with approval of instructor.

Texts:
All texts are available at the bookstore, with the exception of those marked “ERES.” To access and print these texts, go to: http://eres.wustl.edu/courseindex.asp and look up my name under the instructor prompt. Click on the link for German 435. At the password prompt, type in “representation”.

Books in English for all students:
Art Spiegelman  
Maus I & Maus II  
Aaron Appelfeld  
Badenheim 1939  
Primo Levi  
Survival in Auschwitz  
Tadeusz Borowski  
This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen  
Martin Amis  
Time’s Arrow

Books in German for graduate students in German:
Edgar Hilsenrath  
Der Nazi und der Friseur  
Jurek Becker  
Jakob der Lügner  
Peter Weiss  
Die Ermittlung  
Jean Amery  
Jenseits von Schuld und Süße  
Ruth Klüger  
weiter leben

Translations of German books above for graduate students from other departments and for undergraduates:
Jean Amery  
At the Mind’s Limits  
Jurek Becker  
Jakob the Liar  
Ruth Kluger  
Still Alive

Recommended, but not required, for both groups:
Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg  
The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings

Film Screenings:
Over the course of the semester, we will view five films that have become critical for our understanding about how the Holocaust can be represented cinematically. I will screen these films on certain Monday evenings beginning at 6 p.m. in Ridgley 219. If you are unable to attend the screenings, you will need to arrange to view them on your own; the films are held on reserve in Olin Library and can be viewed there.
**Attendance:**
Attendance is mandatory for all students. I expect you to come to class having read and thought about the assignment. Unexcused absences will be recorded and will affect your participation grade. **If you wish to be excused because of sickness, family emergency or religious holiday, you must contact me by phone or e-mail before you miss the class in question.**

**Requirements for Graduate Students:**

**Oral presentation:**
Because the literature on the theory and practice of artistic representation of the Holocaust is so massive and varied, there is no way we can read even a small portion of it in class. For this reason, I am assigning oral presentations to the graduate students so that the class can become familiar with pertinent issues in the field of Holocaust Studies in a more efficient way. Each graduate student will choose a particular topic, read the articles I have assigned for that topic, and then report briefly on them (ca. 10-15 minutes at most). For your presentation, you should prepare a handout for the class that lists the articles’ respective bibliographical information, identifies the critical issues and questions they raise, and summarizes their particular arguments. These handouts will then be utilized by your fellow students to determine relevant critical scholarship that can help them with their final papers. Please try to keep your presentation brief and to-the-point; you are not expected to explain everything in your handout. If you have questions about this assignment, I will be happy to meet with you outside class to discuss the presentation.

**Critical paper:**
For your course paper (15-20 pages), you may write on any of the literary works we’ve read in class or additional works that fit the parameters of the course. You will of course be expected to consult and make reference to the secondary literary on your topic; however, this assignment is designed to go beyond a mere review of the existing literature. Most of all I expect you to find a part of the text that puzzles or especially interests you, compose critical questions that address this problem, and develop an analysis that attempts to explain it. I will grade your paper according to language and style, organization, construction of argument and sophistication of interpretation. You are welcome to come to me to discuss possible topics. A formal 1-page abstract of your ideas and plans for the paper (in standard conference paper abstract format) will be due on 4/9. Your final paper is due on Friday, 5/7.

**Grade Breakdown:**
- Participation and attendance: 15%
- Oral presentation: 30%
- Paper abstract: 10%
- Final critical paper: 55%

**Requirements for Undergraduate Students:**

**Response papers:**
The three response papers (2-3 pages each) will be due on 2/6, 2/26, and 3/26 and will focus on one or more texts we’ve read/viewed in the course (critical, literary or filmic). You will not need to perform any research for these papers; rather, I’m interested in your personal response to both the texts and the representational questions they raise.

**Research paper:**
The final research paper (10-12 pages) will be due on April 23. You may focus on any of the texts we read in the course, including those you've written about in a response paper. In this assignment, you will want to review and discuss the relevant scholarship on your chosen text(s). You are encouraged to make use of various tools in your research, including the handout summaries provided during the graduate student presentations (which will direct you to particular scholarly articles) and targeted help from the German Studies and Jewish Studies librarians. You will need to hand in a short proposal (1 half-page) for the paper on 4/2 and then meet with me shortly afterward to discuss your topic and research plans.

**Grade Breakdown:**
- Participation and attendance: 15%
- 3 response papers: 30%
- Final paper proposal: 5%
- Final paper: 50%
Syllabus

Wednesday, January 16  
**Introduction**  
Readings:  
Englander, “The Tumblers” (ERES)  
Wiesel, “Trivializing Memory” (ERES)

Wednesday, January 23  
Readings:  
Epstein, “Writing about the Holocaust” (ERES)  
Young, “Introduction: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation” from *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (ERES)  
Young, “Names of the Holocaust: Meaning and Consequences” from *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (ERES)  
Trezise, “Unspeakable” (ERES)  
Mandel, “Rethinking ‘After Auschwitz’: Against a Rhetoric of the Unspeakable in Holocaust Writing” (ERES)  
USHMM, “History of the Holocaust: An Overview” (ERES; for background knowledge)  
USHMM, “Chronology of the Holocaust” (ERES; for background knowledge)  

Presentation:  
Aesthetics and the Holocaust

Monday, January 28, 6-6:45 p.m., Ridgley 219  
**Screening of Night and Fog (1955, directed by Alain Resnais, 32 minutes)**

Wednesday, January 30  
Readings:  
Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*  
Ezrahi, “Questions of Authenticity” (ERES)  

Presentation:  
Problems of Testimony and Witnessing

Wednesday, February 6  
Readings:  
Borowski, *This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*  
Millu, from “Under Cover of Darkness” and “Scheiss Egal” from *Smoke over Birkenau* (ERES)  
Ezrahi, “Representing Auschwitz”  

Presentation:  
Gender and the Holocaust I  
Assignment:  
Undergraduate response paper due!

Wednesday, February 13  
Reading:  
Amery, *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne / At the Mind’s Limits*  

Presentations:  
Resources for Research (by German Studies librarian Brian Vetruba and Jewish Studies librarian Deborah Katz)  
Trauma and the Holocaust

Monday, February 18, 6-8 p.m., Ridgley 219  
**Screening of clips from Shoah (1985, directed by Claude Lanzmann)**

Wednesday, February 20  
Readings:  
poetry selections (ERES)  
Felstiner, “Translating Paul Celan’s ‘Todesfuge’: Rhythm and Repetition as Metaphor” (ERES)  
Felman, “The Return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah” (ERES)  

Presentations:  
Holocaust Poetry  
Film and the Holocaust

Wednesday, February 27  
Reading:  

Presentations:  
Gender and the Holocaust II  
Holocaust Memorials  
Assignment:  
Undergraduate response paper due!
Monday, March 3, 6-9:30 p.m., Ridgley 219  
Screening of Schindler's List (1993, directed by Steven Spielberg, 3 hours 17 minutes)

Wednesday, March 5  
Readings: Weiss, *Die Ermittlung / The Investigation* (ERES)  
Hansen, “Schindler's List Is Not Shoah: Second Commandment, Popular Modernism, and Public Memory” (ERES)  
Presentation: Documentary Theater

Wednesday, March 12  
SPRING BREAK!

Wednesday, March 19  
Reading: Appelfeld, *Badenheim 1939*  
Presentations: Fiction vs. History  
The Problems of Backshadowing

Monday, March 25, 6-8 p.m., Ridgley 219  
Screening of *Life is Beautiful* (1997, directed by Roberto Benigni, 1 hour 56 minutes)

Wednesday, March 26  
Reading: Becker, *Jakob the Liar / Jakob der Lügner*  
Presentation: Humor and the Holocaust  
Assignment: Undergraduate response paper due!

Wednesday, April 2  
Reading: Spiegelman, *Maus I: My Father Bleeds History*  
Fresco, “Remembering the Unknown” (ERES)  
Presentations: Postmemory  
Visual Culture and Photography  
Assignment: Undergraduate paper proposal due!

Wednesday, April 9  
Reading: Spiegelman, *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began*  
Raczynow, “Memory Shot Through With Holes” (ERES)  
Presentations: Generational Writing  
Fantasies of Witnessing and Identification  
Assignment: Graduate paper abstract due!

Monday, April 14, 6-8 p.m., Ridgley 219  
Screening of *The Grey Zone* (2001, directed by Tim Blake Nelson, 1 hour 48 minutes)

Wednesday, April 16  
Reading: Amis, *Time's Arrow*  
Presentations: Representing Perpetration  
Holocaust Memorials and Museums II

Wednesday, April 23  
This last class is for German-speaking graduate students only – the rest of the students are free  
Reading: Hilsenrath, *Der Nazi und der Friseur*  
Presentation: The Holocaust and German Literature
List of Graduate Student Presentations (all articles on ERES)

1/23
Aesthetics and the Holocaust
Weissberg, “In Plain Sight”
Wolff, “The Iconic and the Allusive: The Case for Beauty in Post-Holocaust Art”

1/30
Problems of Testimony and Witnessing
Laub, “Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening”
van Alphen, “Testimonies and the Limits of Representation” from Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory

2/6
Gender and the Holocaust I
Schoenfeld, “Auschwitz and the Professors”
Horowitz, “Gender, Genocide, and Jewish Memory”

2/13
Trauma and the Holocaust
Brodzki, “Teaching Trauma and Transmission”
LaCapra, “Trauma, Absence, Loss”
Caruth, “Introduction: The Wound and the Voice” from Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History
Weigel, “The Symptomatology of a Universalized Concept of Trauma: On the Failing of Freud’s Reading of Tasso in the Trauma of History”

2/20
Holocaust Poetry
Nader, “Introduction” to Traumatic Verses: On Poetry in German from the Concentration Camps, 1933-1945
Gubar, “The Holocaust is Dying” from Poetry After Auschwitz: Remembering What One Never Knew

Film and the Holocaust
Hirsch, “Introduction to Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust” from Afterimage: Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust
Prince, “The Poetics of Screen Violence”

2/27
Gender and the Holocaust II
Bos, “Women and the Holocaust: Analyzing Gender Difference”
Heineman, “Sexuality and Nazism: The Doubly Unspeakable?”

Holocaust Memorials and Museums I
Young, “Introduction: The Texture of Memory” from The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning
Young, “The Countermonument: Memory against Itself in Germany” from The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning
Young, “The Sites of Destruction” from The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning

3/5
Documentary Theater
Young, “Documentary Theater, Ideology, and the Rhetoric of Fact” from Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation
Garloff, “Critique and Distance” from Words from Abroad: Trauma and Displacement in Postwar German Jewish Writers
3/19
**Fiction vs. History**
Horowitz, "Introduction: The Idea of Fiction" and “The Figure of Muteness” from *Voicing the Void: Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction*
van Alphen, “History’s Other: Oppositional Thought and Its Discontents” from *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory*

**The Problems of Backshadowing**
Bernstein, “Against Foreshadowing” and “Narrating the Shoah” from *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History*

3/26
**Humor and the Holocaust**
Des Pres, “Holocaust Laughter?”
Ezrahi, “After Such Knowledge, What Laughter?”

4/2
**Postmemory**
Hirsch, "Introduction: Family Frames” and “Mourning and Postmemory” from *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*

**Visual Culture and Photography**
Bathrick, “Teaching Visual Culture and the Holocaust”
Zemel, “Emblems of Atrocity: Holocaust Liberation Photographs”
Zelizer, “Gender and Atrocity: Women in Holocaust Photographs”

4/9
**Generational Writing**
Weigel, ““Generation’ as a Symbolic Form: On the Genealogical Discourse of Memory since 1945”
Suleiman, “The 1.5 Generation: Thinking About Child Survivors of the Holocaust”

**Fantasies of Witnessing and Identification**
Weissman, “Introduction: To Feel the Horror” from *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust*
Bernstein, “Promiscuous Reading: The Problem of Identification and Anne Frank’s Diary”
Eaglestone, “Holocaust Reading: Memory and Identification in Holocaust Fiction, 1990-2003) from *The Holocaust and the Postmodern*

4/16
**Representing Perpetration**
McGlothlin, “Theorizing the Perpetrator in Bernhard Schlink’s *The Reader*and Martin Amis’s *Time’s Arrow*”
Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism”
Loewy, “Faustische Täter? Tragische Narrative und Historiographie”

**Holocaust Memorials and Museums II**
Young, “Germany’s Holocaust Memorial Problem – and Mine”
Young, “Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin: The Uncanny Arts of Memorial Architecture”

4/23
**The Holocaust and German Literature**
Schlant, “Introduction” from *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust*
Hofmann, “Shoah in der Literatur der Bundesrepublik: Adorno und die Folgen”
Eke, “Konfigurationen der Shoah in der Literatur der DDR”