Course Concept: “Darkness and the Mirror”

This course starts with a riddle: can a mirror reflect darkness? Part of your task this semester will be to find an answer to the riddle, by studying the history and the memory of the holocaust. Your first clue as to what this riddle means is in the structure of the course, laid out below.

Course Requirements

Class participation: The class week will usually be divided between lecture and discussion, with the lecture usually falling on Tuesday and the discussion on Thursday. Lectures will be designed to lay out the most important empirical information, as well as introduce and explain more complicated concepts—and they often move fast, and cover a lot of material. You are expected to keep up. There will be a mid-term exam based on the lectures, though no final exam. The reading in this course is hefty: you are expected to actually read everything assigned. Whether you read every single word is up to you; what is most important is that you understand the main points of the reading and can talk intelligently about it during our class discussion. During discussion, you are expected to contribute to the conversation with either your informed opinions or questions about things you did not understand from reading or lecture. Remaining totally silent, or openly exhibiting bored or distracted/distracting behavior will result in a very low class participation grade (for grade breakdown, see below). If you are very shy or cannot speak in public for some reason, please come see me in private.

It is expected that you attend both Tuesday lectures and Thursday discussions. Attendance will be taken on both days of the week. You are allowed two (2) unexcused absences over the semester. Each unexcused absence past the second one knocks your class participation grade down one half, that is, from an A to a BA.

Extra-curricular activity: There will also be three activities outside the classroom this semester, and all are crucial to your grade. The first will be an explanation on doing primary document research here on campus and over the internet with a reference librarian from Waldo library. Attendance of this session is mandatory, and will count for 5% of your overall grade. You will be expected to conduct a significant amount of primary source research for your final papers. The second will be the viewing of a film related to the Holocaust, after which you will have to write a two-page, double-spaced opinion or reaction to the film to be handed in Thursday, Nov. 10th. Details are in the syllabus below. The third activity will be a trip to the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills, outside Detroit, to take place either on the 18th, 20th or 21st of November. This trip will last the entire day; its purpose is threefold. First, you will be expected to write a two-page, double-spaced reaction to the museum based on the issues we have been studying, to be handed in the following Thursday; second, it is a good learning experience, and you will have a tour and a chance to speak with a Holocaust survivor; third, we will visit the archives and library of the center where you will have a chance to experience doing archival research for your final papers. Participating in this trip and handing in your reaction paper will count for 10% of your grade.

Writing: There will be two writing assignments. The first, due in week six, will be a chance for me to get an idea of your writing abilities, as well as a chance for you to synthesize the information you have
been learning. This will be a 6-8 page, double-spaced paper, and you will be able to choose from among 3 topics that will be distributed in week three. This will count for 15% of your final grade. The second will be your final paper—this is a 10-12 page, double-spaced paper, based on both the course readings and your own research, on campus and at the archives. You will receive four topics to choose from on Thursday, Oct. 27, the session after your midterm. The paper will be due on Friday, Dec. 9th at noon in my mailbox or under my office door, 4418 Friedmann Hall. It will be worth 30% of your final grade. There will also be an opportunity for extra credit, worth an extra grade on your final paper, on the final week of the semester.

Grade Breakdown

First writing assignment = 15% of final grade.
Midterm exam = 15% of final grade.
Class participation = 20% of final grade.
Activity 1: primary resource tutorial = 5% of final grade.
Activity 2: film viewing/reaction paper = 5% of final grade.
Activity 3: field trip to Holocaust Memorial Center/reaction paper=10% of final grade.
Final Paper: 30% of final grade.

NOTE: for the activities, in most cases simply fulfilling the task will earn you full credit. That means coming to the library tutorial and not sleeping or surfing the web will earn you full credit, and writing a decent reaction paper will also earn full credit. The point of these activities is to actually do them.

Readings and materials

There are two required books for this course, available for purchase in the bookstore:


James E. Young *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning.* (Yale University Press, 1993).

There will also be a book assigned by Peter Novick called *The Holocaust in American Life,* of which the library owns an electronic copy (as well as one hard copy.) Be aware that normally only 5-10 users may view the electronic books at one time. Waiting until the night before to read it is probably a bad idea. A better idea is to print parts of it out well ahead of time.

Finally, there are a number of readings placed on “e-reserves.” You may access the e-reserves page at this URL: [http://www.docutek.library.wmich.edu/eres/](http://www.docutek.library.wmich.edu/eres/). There you will enter the instructor name—my last name—and select “Hist 4680”. It then asks you for a password: I will give this to you in class. Although it is more of a hassle than a regular coursepack, I have chosen to use e-reserves in consideration of the rising costs the average undergraduate now faces and the part that coursepacks play in these. Every reading other than your two required books will be found on e-reserves, with the exception of the Novick book.

Standard disclaimers

Academic Honesty:
You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Undergraduate Catalog (pp. 274-275) that pertain to Academic Integrity. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with me if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

Electronic Mail:

The only email address that should be used for communication between WMU students and WMU faculty and staff is the email address associated with a BroncoNet ID. This email address typically takes the form "firstname.middleinitial.lastname@wmich.edu." An example is buster.h.bronco@wmich.edu. Students cannot automatically forward email from this address to other addresses. Students can access this email account or get instructions for obtaining a BroncoNet ID at GoWMU.wmich.edu.

SYLLABUS

Part One: Darkness

Week One

Tuesday 8/30 Course Intro

Thursday 9/1 Lecture 1: Jewish Life, Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism in Europe

Week Two

Tuesday 9/6 Lecture 2: Hitler and the Birth of National Socialism

Thursday 9/8 Discussion 1 Reading: Excerpts from Mendes-Flohr & Reinhardz, The Jew in the Modern World. Up to page 367 (stop when it skips to Chapter XI “The Holocaust”)

Week Three

Tuesday 9/13 Lecture 3: Weimar, Jews and the Coming of the Third Reich

Thursday 9/15 Discussion 2: Reading: something on Weimar culture, storm of steel? Excerpts from Kaes, Jay et. al., The Weimar Republic Sourcebook and Wipperman, The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945 chapter two (pps. 23-43)

Receive Topics for First Writing Assignment

Meet for primary resource tour: Friday, Sept. 16, 11 am, first floor Waldo classroom.

Week Four

Tuesday 9/20 Lecture 4: The Third Reich from Rearmament to War
Thursday 9/22 Discussion 3: Reading Yahil *The Holocaust*, Chapters 3 & 4 (pps. 53-122); skim chapters 6-8 (pps. 123-240); *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* Chapter three (pps. 44-73).

**Week Five**

**Tuesday 9/27** Lecture 5: Genocide Stage 1- The SS Task Forces


**Week Six**

**Tuesday 10/4** Lecture 6: Genocide Stage 2 – Wannsee, Birkenau and the Factories of Death

**Thursday 10/6** Discussion 5: Reading Yahil chapters 13-15 (pp. 320-403) *Auschwitz* (excerpts). *First writing assignment due.*

**Week Seven**

**Tuesday 10/11** Lecture 7: Genocide Stage 3 – the slow death: life in the camps.

**Thursday 10/13** Discussion 6: Reading: Yahil chapter 16, (pps. 404 – 456) Lifton, *Nazi Doctors* (excerpt)

**Week Eight**

**Tuesday 10/18** Lecture 8: Resistance, Collaboration and Justice

**Thursday 10/20** Discussion 7: Reading Yahil chapters 17, 18 (pps 457); Paxton, *Vichy France* and *Nuremberg War Crimes Trial*, (excerpts).

**Week Nine**

**Tuesday 10/25** Midterm

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**Part Two: The Mirror**

**Thursday 10/27** Lecture 9: Coming to terms with the past in Europe, America and Israel  Reading: Novick, *Holocaust in American Life* (parts I-III)and Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*.

NOTE: To access the Novick book, type either his name or the title of the book into WestCat—click on the “electronic resource” version when the list of copies comes up, then follow the instructions.

*Receive topics for final writing assignment*

**Week Ten**

**Tuesday 11/1** Lecture 10: Explaining the unexplainable: Evil, humanity, morality and the individual after the Holocaust. *Receive film assignments.*

**Week Eleven**

**Tuesday 11/8** Lecture 11: Representing the incomprehensible: The Holocaust in Literature, Film and Art.


NOTE: All students will be assigned a film to view before Thursday’s discussion. Films will include *Schindler’s List*, *Shoah*, *Night and Fog*, *Holocaust* (TV series), *Last Days*. Each student MUST write down their opinions of the film (2 pages double spaced) and hand in these opinions on Thursday. Students will be assigned their film a week ahead of time; it is the responsibility of the students to arrange the viewing of the film (either as a group or handing it off individually). Some of the films are obviously too long to be viewed in their entirety for most busy students (*Holocaust* and *Shoah* are over 7 hours long); in this case you are expected to watch 2 hours of the film, more if you choose. *Shoah*, *Schindler’s List* and *Night and Fog* are available at the AV library in Sangren. I have a copy of *Holocaust*. *Last Days* is available at most video rental stores such as Blockbuster and Hollywood. Turning in your opinions counts for 5% of your grade.

**Week Twelve**

**Tuesday 11/15** Lecture 12: Closure and Authenticity: Holocaust Museums and Memorials.

**Thursday 11/17**  NO DISCUSSION  Reading: James Young, Parts I and II. Explore any of the following Holocaust Memorial/Learning sites:
US Holocaust Museum:  [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)
Jewish Museum, Berlin:  [www.jmberlin.de](http://www.jmberlin.de)
Yad Vashem:  [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)
Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, MI:  [http://www.holocaustcenter.org/](http://www.holocaustcenter.org/)
New Mexico Holocaust Center:  [http://www.nnholocaustmuseum.org](http://www.nnholocaustmuseum.org/)
Buffalo Holocaust Center:  [http://www.holocaustcenterbuff.com](http://www.holocaustcenterbuff.com/)
Dallas Holocaust Museum:  [http://www.dallasholocaustmuseum.org](http://www.dallasholocaustmuseum.org/)
El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center:  [http://www.elpasoholocaustmuseum.org](http://www.elpasoholocaustmuseum.org/)
Holocaust Museum Houston:  [http://www.hmh.org](http://www.hmh.org)
LA Holocaust Monument:  [http://www.laholocaustmonument.com](http://www.laholocaustmonument.com/)
LA Holocaust Museum:  [http://www.lamuseu1hofheholocaust.org](http://www.lamuseu1hofheholocaust.org/)
Simon Wiesenthal Center (LA):  [www.wiesenthal.com](http://www.wiesenthal.com)
Shoah visual history project (Steven Spielberg, LA):  [www.vhf.org](http://www.vhf.org)
Holocaust Education Center of Central Florida:  [http://www.holocaustedu.org](http://www.holocaustedu.org/)
Holocaust Memorial, Miami Beach:  [http://www.holocaustmmb.org](http://www.holocaustmmb.org/)
Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida:  [http://www.swflhm.org](http://www.swflhm.org/)
Florida Holocaust Museum (St. Petersburg):  [http://www.flholocaustmuseum.org](http://www.flholocaustmuseum.org/)
Fortunoff Video Testimony Center (Yale University):  [http://www.library.yale.edu/testimonies](http://www.library.yale.edu/testimonies)
Ann Frank Center (NY):  [http://www.annefrank.com](http://www.annefrank.com/)
Ioannina Greece Holocaust Museum (NY):  [http://www.kkjsm.org/holocaust](http://www.kkjsm.org/holocaust/)
Museum of Jewish Heritage (NY):  [http://www.mijhnye.org/index.htm](http://www.mijhnye.org/index.htm)
Virginia Holocaust Museum:  [http://www.va-holocaust.com](http://www.va-holocaust.com/)
Holocaust Center of Northern California (SF):  [http://www.holocaust-sf.org](http://www.holocaust-sf.org/)
St. Louis Holocaust Learning Center:  [http://www.hmlc.org](http://www.hmlc.org/)
Terre Haute, IN “C.A.N.D.L.E.S” (Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Laboratory Experiment Survivors):  [http://www.candles-museum.com](http://www.candles-museum.com/)

**Visit to Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills** MONDAY NOVEMBER 21. Leave 7:30 am, arrive 9:30 am, leave Museum 3:30 pm, arrive back 5:30 pm.
**Week Thirteen**  
**Tuesday 11/22**  
Lecture 13: Guilt and Collaboration / the Uses and Abuses of the History of the Holocaust

**Thursday 11/24**  
THANKSGIVING  (reading: Young, *Texture of Memory* parts III and IV.)

**Week Fourteen**  
**Tuesday 11/29**  
Lecture 14: The Backlash: The Historikerstreit, Bitburg, and Holocaust denial/Neonazism.

**Thursday 12/1**  
Discussion 11  
Reading: Baldwin, *Reworking the Past* and Lipstadt *History on Trial.*

Visit any of the following denial/revisionist websites:

- Ku Klux Klan: http://www.kkk.com/
- Christian Identity Movement: http://www.kingidentity.com/
- Carlos Whitlock Porter: http://www.cwporter.com/
- Adelaide Institute: http://www.adelaideinstitute.org/
- Stormfront: http://www.stormfront.org/forum/
- Ernst Zündel: http://www.zundelsite.org/

And any of the following denial refutation sites:

- Anti-Defamation League, Nizkor project: http://www.nizkor.org/
- Stop the Hate: http://stop-the-hate.org/.

**Hand in reaction paper for museum.**

Extra credit assignment: write a two-paged double-spaced (or more) paper in which you explain and answer the riddle posed at the beginning of the semester. Answer must display thoughtfulness and effort at explanation. Due by Friday, December 9th, noon. (Worth an extra grade on your final paper upon completion).

**Final papers due Friday, December 9th, at noon, in my mailbox on the 4th floor of Friedman Hall or under my door, 4418 Friedmann Hall.**