

German 308
Fall 2006

The Holocaust in Text, Image and Memory

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Course Description and Objectives: This course will examine the Holocaust from various different perspectives. We will look at such topics as the origins and expressions of Anti-Semitism in central Europe, the political events and structures within which the Holocaust took place, the reality of ghettos and concentration camps, and efforts to resist the Nazis both within and outside of Germany. We will also study the period through its art: the bombastic style of official art in the Nazi era and how those individuals tortured and murdered by the Nazis strove courageously to express their suffering and their humanity. Finally, the course will address the world's varying attempts to remember the Holocaust, to give meaning to life in a post-Holocaust world, to preserve the memories of the Holocaust's victims and to keep the event and its significance for humanity alive. Our learning objectives for this course will be to develop a thorough sense of the significance of the events for the contemporary world, and for ourselves. We will first try to understand the events as they happened, and then problematize how the Holocaust has shaped our historical present.

Required Texts:

Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985.
Art Spiegelman, *Maus II*.
All other readings are posted on the course WebCT site.

Grading:

Class participation:	10%
Midterm:	25%
Quizzes:	5%
Group/partner reports:	5%
Study Questions:	30%
Final	25%

Explanation of Grading:

Class participation: To the extent possible, this course will be taught as a discussion course. Students are expected as far as possible to bring the assigned texts to class with them for each discussion session. Study questions (available on-line) are to guide your readings. Please take notes on your readings, so that you can contribute to class discussions. You are expected to be in class for all sessions. While I realize that there may be legitimate conflicts, frequent and/or extended absences will hinder not only your ability to participate in class discussions, but also your opportunity to work with the course materials. Students may have **three** unexcused absences during the semester. For all other absences students will be required to notify me (via telephone or e-mail or in class) and provide credible excuses. (I reserve the right to require written excuses for medical or family reasons.) More than four absences for the semester will result in a 1/3 drop in your course grade (e.g. an “A-“ would drop to a “B+”). Further absences will also have an impact on your final grade. **Any student who misses more than 30% of class sessions will automatically fail.** The instructor reserves the right to count as an absence frequent or extreme tardiness.

Midterm: The midterm for this course will be a take-home essay exam. Guidelines on the questions will be provided well ahead of the scheduled exam.

Quizzes: There will be WebCT-based quizzes on the material from the Hilberg book. Questions for the quizzes will be based on material covered in the study questions provided for each chapter in the book. They will be “open book”, but you will have a limited time in which to answer the questions, so be prepared before you sit down to do the quiz.

Study Questions: This course is designed to help you work on your writing skills. Students will be required to turn in **six** 1-2 page papers based on study questions for the readings (other than the Hilberg book). You may write two essays on study questions from the same unit only once. That is to say: five of the six papers you write must be on texts from different thematic units. There are six: Anti-Semitism: Its History and Origins; Telling Stories; Ghettos and Camps; the Perpetrators; Resistance and the Immediate Aftermath; Remembrance [Papers should be double spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. The font should be either 10 or 12 point.] They must be turned in **before** the class discussion of the work in question. Students who are dissatisfied with their grades on these short papers may revise up to **four** of them. All revisions of papers must be received no later than November 27th.

Group/partner reports: Students will be giving two **very brief** oral reports in groups. The first one will be on a concentration camp. The second will be on a Holocaust museum or memorial. These should be about 10 minutes long! You may prepare fliers for the class to go along with your presentations or use power point. Presentations will be graded on the quality of information presented and your ability to offer intelligible, valuable material in a concise fashion.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of three sections: one short identification section, one short answer section, and one essay. The first section will be done during the regularly scheduled course final. The other two will be in take-home format to be returned at the time of

the final. Currently, our final is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12 at 9:00 am. Please, make your travel arrangements accordingly.

On the weekly schedule: The tentative schedule which follows is simply a guideline for your semester planning. I will post the next session's topics on WebCT under the same link as the syllabus.

Tentative Semester Schedule: (Please check WebCT for daily schedule updates!)

I. Anti-Semitism: Its History and Origins

Aug. 23-28:

Introduction/course logistics;

Film: *The Longest Hatred* [45 minutes – part one]

Hilberg: Chapter 1: Precedents and Luther, *On the Jews and their Lies*

II. Telling Stories – The Construction and Distribution of a German National Identity

Aug. 30-Sept. 20:

Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (excerpts)

Rosenberg (excerpts)

Hilberg, Chapter 2: Definition by Decree

Film: *Triumph of the Will*

Nazi art and music and video: Degenerate Art

III. The Ghettos and the Camps

Group Assignments: Concentration Camp Reports

Sept. 15-Oct. 13:

Discuss degenerate art and music

Hilberg: Chapter 3: Concentration

From a Ruined Garden (excerpts)

Hilberg: Chapter 4: Deportations

Olga Lengyel, *Five Chimneys* (excerpts) and Filip Müller, *Eyewitness to Auschwitz* (excerpts)

Müller and Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After* (excerpts)

Film: *Night and Fog*

Hilberg: Chapter 6: Killing Center Operations

IV. The Perpetrators:

Midterm is due at the start of class on Oct. 16

Oct. 16-27:

Hilberg: Chapter 7: The Nature of the Process

Rudolf Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz* (excerpts)

Hoess and Fiss, "The Interpreter"

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (excerpts)
Milgram and Stanford experiments

V. Resistance and the Immediate Aftermath:

Oct 30-Nov. 10:

Alexander Donat, "Jewish Resistance" and Josef Bor, "The Terezin Requiem"
Verdi, *Requiem*

Camp art and music and Hilberg: Chapter 8: Rescue

The Long Way Home

Lengyel, Müller, Delbo (on liberation)

VI. Remembrance:

Group/partner assignment: Report on a Holocaust museum/memorial

Nov. 13-Dec. 6:

Poetry: Tadeuz Borowski, selections; Paul Celan; Dan Pagis

Visual art: James Young, "Germany's Memorial Question: Memory, Counter-Memory and the End of the Monument"

Art Spiegelman, *Maus II. And here My Troubles Began*

Film: *Walk on Water* (103 minutes)