NE 496a – C LIT 410

LITERATURE AND THE HOLOCAUST

5 credits

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By examining fiction, poetry, memoir, diaries, monuments and aspects of popular culture, this course explores representations of the Holocaust. Among the topics to be covered: bearing witness and survivor testimony; the shaping of collective memory; the second generation; Holocaust education and children's literature; gender and the Holocaust; fantasy and humor in literary responses to catastrophe.

Required Texts

Lawrence Langer, ed. *Art from the Ashes*
Anne Frank, *The Diary of A Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*
David Grossman, *See Under: Love*
Jane Yolen, *Briar Rose*
Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide*

Coursepack (RAMS Copy Center)

Course Requirements

Students are expected to complete the reading assignments on time, to participate in class discussion, and to hand in brief in-class writing assignments on a regular basis. There will be a mid-term and three short papers (750-1000 words each). In addition, students will complete a project. The project will include a class presentation and a 6-8 page report (1500-2000 words). Students are encouraged to work in small groups (2-3 people).

This is a W course, which means that there will be not only a significant amount of writing, but also revision, editing, and reworking of essay assignments.

Final grades will be determined as follows.

Midterm: 15%
Essays: 50%
Project: 20%
Class participation and in-class writing: 15%

Students are expected to have or to acquire basic knowledge of Holocaust history. Class discussions will assume such knowledge and so the midterm also covers this background material. One way to prepare is to read Doris Bergen’s *War and Genocide*. *****Be sure to have this read this before week 6 of the course!!

Guest speakers: in cooperation with the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center, Holocaust survivors and others who experienced the Holocaust personally are invited to address the class.

**Policies**

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8914. If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the instructor and discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

In cases of academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, the offending student will be penalized in accordance with the policy of the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Cell phones:** Turn off all cell phones during class!!

Please keep a copy of all graded work. This is very useful in case the instructor’s record of grades is lost or damaged, or in case the student wishes to discuss a grade. Protect yourself by keeping a copy.

**Part I: Introduction – The Shaping of Collective Memory**

Dan Pagis, poems. In Langer, pp. 586-591
Zelda, “Every Man Has a Name”
James Young, “*The Texture of Memory* (1993), pp. 335-349

**Suggested Reading:**
Part II: Literature of the Holocaust

Avraham Sutzkever “For My Child,” in Langer, p. 578 + “I Lie in This Coffin”
“Painters of Terezin,” in Langer, pp. 679-692
Jankiel Wiernik, “One Year in Treblinka” in Langer, pp. 18-51
“Ghetto Folklore” in David Roskies, *The Literature of Destruction*, pp. 399-403
Yizhak Katzenelson, “Song of Hunger,” “Songs of the Cold”
Itsik Vittenberg, “Youth Hymn”
Leah Rudnitsky, “Birds are Drowsing”

Anne Frank – *Diary of a Young Girl*, pp. 1-100

**Assignment: Essay #1 – Close reading of a poem or other text**

*Suggested reading:*

David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse* (1983), pp. 196-224

Part III: Literature of the Holocaust and its Reception

Anne Frank – *Diary of a Young Girl*, pp. 100-332
Film: “The Diary of Anne Frank” (1959)

*Suggested Reading:*

Part IV: Memoir and Bearing Witness

Guest Speaker
Film: Nava Semel’s “The Rat Laughs”

Suggested reading:

**Assignment: Essay #2 – summary of a secondary reading

Part V: Fiction, Witness, Gender

Aharon Appelfeld, “Tzili” in Langer, pp. 273-342
Cynthia Ozick, “The Shawl“

Suggested reading:

Part VI: Surviving Generations

**Midterm quiz

David Grossman, See Under: Love - “Momik”

Suggested reading:

Part VII: Humor and the Fantastic in Holocaust Representation

Suggested reading:


**Assignment #3: Thematic analysis**


Part VIII: Children’s Literature

Jane Yolen, *Briar Rose*

Film: “Life is Beautiful”

Suggested reading:


Part IX: Student Projects

Suggested Projects

1. Compare and assess syllabi of courses on the Holocaust and literature at the college/university level.

2. Contact local schools and report on curriculum – this could include public or private elementary or secondary schools, or synagogue/other religious schools.

3. Interview children’s librarians on juvenile literature and the Holocaust.
4. Read and review additional literary texts, especially Aharon Appelfeld: *Story of a Life*; Cynthia Ozick, “Rosa”; David Grossman, *See Under: Love* (Chapter 2); or additional selections in *Art from the Ashes*.

5. Review additional survivor testimony, such as Claude Lanzman’s “Shoah”, Spielberg’s internet archive, “Never Again, I Hope.”

6. Review of “Schindler’s List” and/or “Holocaust” mini-series.

7. Holocaust remembrance around the world, including visit to Washington State Holocaust Resource Center – interview the director, examine exhibits, library and resources.

8. The Wilkomirski (*Fragments*) scandal.
Additional Secondary Sources

**Historical Background**

Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*
Raoul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jewry*
Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945*
Walter Lacqueur and Judith Tydor Baumel, eds. *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*
Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945*
Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know: A Mosaic of Victims: Non-Jews Persecute and Murdered by Nazis*
Martin Gilbert, *Atlas of the Holocaust*

**Literary and Cultural Interpretation and Criticism**

Alvin Rosenfeld, *A Double Dying*
Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination, Admitting the Holocaust, Preempting the Holocaust*
David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse*
Yosefa Loshitzky, *Spielberg’s Holocaust*
Sara Horowitz, *Voicing the Void*
Hilene Flantzbaum, *The Americanization of the Holocaust*
Alan Berger, *Children of Job*
Naomi Sokoloff, *Imagining the Child in Modern Jewish Fiction*
S. Lilian Kremer, *Women’s Holocaust Writing*
S. Lillian Kremer, ed. *Holocaust Literature: An Encyclopedia of Writers and their Works*
Edward Alexander, *The Resonance of Dust*
Adrienne Kertzer, *My Mother’s Voice*

Additional Primary Sources

**Anthologies**
Saul Friedlander, *Out of the Whirlwind*
Laurel Holliday, *Children in the Holocaust and World War II*
Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, *Different Voices*
David Roskies, *The Literature of Destruction*

**Others**

Louis Begley, *Wartime Lies*
Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*
Charlotte Delbo, *None of Us Will Return*
Yaffa Eliach, *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*
Imre Kertesz, *Fateless*
Jerzy Kosinski, *The Painted Bird*
Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
Uri Orlev, *The Island on Bird Street*
Georges Perec, *W or the Memory of Childhood*
Andre Schwarz-Bart, *The Last of the Just*
William Seebald, *The Emigrants*
Art Spiegelman, *Maus*
Elie Wiesel, *Night*

Hana Volavkova, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*