

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

COM 349
Fall 2005

TEXTS AND IMAGES OF THE HOLOCAUST
Professor Froma I. Zeitlin

SYLLABUS

More than half a century later, the Holocaust remains one of the most traumatic events of modern Western experience. The shock of the catastrophe sets up a tension between a desire to efface, forget, or disbelieve and an even stronger imperative to record, reveal, and remember what the imagination could not have invented. This seminar will explore a range of responses to this historical crisis through the study of a variety of texts and films drawn from different nationalities, languages, genres, and points of view. Using documents, memoirs, fiction, historiography, and cinematic images, along with visits from survivors, we will focus on themes of bearing witness and the work of memory on the one hand, and on the other, we will confront the potential contradictions between aesthetic and ethical imperatives and the conditions of representation itself when faced with the unrepresentable. Weekly film showings in addition to seminar.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and INFORMATION

Attendance at seminars is MANDATORY. Only ONE unexcused absence allowed. Films are also obligatory. Since most are on video or DVD (shown on large screen), in case of dire emergency only, they can be viewed in the Language Resource Center, located in E Pyne 011 (or borrowed from instructor). <http://www.princeton.edu/~lrc>

WEEKLY SEMINAR (Thursdays 1:30-4:20): EPyne 127

FILM SHOWINGS: Monday evenings at 7:30. E Pyne 010. Most film programs run about two hours or so. A few sessions are longer. Other members of the Princeton community are welcome, so you may bring your friends.

PROGRAM NOTES for each film will be distributed in the class session (Thurs) preceding each showing (Mon). They will also be posted on our website (under COURSE DOCUMENTS). Please read beforehand and keep for use in your film journals.

REQUIRED BOOKS available from Micawber Books (for list, see end of syllabus and on our website under COURSE DOCUMENTS)

RESERVE BOOKS: listed on our Website (under COURSE MATERIALS) and on Library Web Page. All required books are on reserve. There are a number of other works on the reserve list that are optional and for browsing and consultation.

COURSE PACKET: There is no course packet to purchase. All these assignments are conveniently available as PDF files on the course website in COURSE DOCUMENTS under the rubric, ASSIGNED OR RECOMMENDED ARTICLES. Also, virtually all

these materials can be found in electronic form (ECR) on the appropriate library website. In both cases, the material can (and should) be downloaded and printed.

OTHER: Occasional handouts distributed in class. These Word documents can also be found by individual title in COURSE DOCUMENTS.

WEB PAGE. To access the web page, go to Academics on the Princeton home page. Click on Blackboard, and log in. Find COM 349. Documents may be downloaded or printed directly from the screen for your use, including PDF files of assigned articles. All course announcements, information, documents, etc. are or will be posted. Note the heading, External Links that provides access to other Holocaust resources, introductory materials, documents, photos, maps, general information, and some film links. Please make use of these resources, especially when recommended for specific assignments.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: Important Deadlines

1. One-two page weekly comments/questions/reactions on the assignment at the time of the seminar [for use in class discussion and for your own record of reading]. These will not be graded officially, but will be collected and evaluated. You may submit to me by file attachment [with your name on the file heading] but bring your own copy to class.

2. Brief report and evaluation of background history reading (3 pages) of Landau: due Mon. Oct 11. Last possible day: Fri. Oct 14.

3. Midterm paper (8 pages): Topic of student's choosing in consultation with the instructor. DUE Tues, Nov 8; LAST EXTENSION DEADLINE: Fri, Nov 11. No questions asked; no further adjustment. Plan your time accordingly.

4. Film Journal (approx. 15 pages) : DUE Fri, Dec 16. LAST EXTENSION DEADLINE IS Mon, Jan. 9 (ALTHOUGH DISADVISED).

5. Final Paper/Project (10-12 pages): topic of student's choosing in consultation with instructor. Due Dean's Day, Tues, Jan 17. LAST POSSIBLE DATE: Thurs Jan. 19. NB: you may write the midterm or final paper on a film, if you wish, but not for both assignments.

SYLLABUS

Historical background: Ronnie Landau, The Nazi Holocaust : Introduction, Part I, "Background and Context" (chs 1 and 3: you may skip ch 2); Part II: The Holocaust: A History; Part III: Themes, Issues and Protagonists. Appendices: highly recommended. This background material to be completed within the first four weeks of the term and submission of brief report: summary and evaluation (3 pages). Do not leave this until the last week, but read week by week as on the syllabus.

Recommended Readings: for orientation and consultation throughout the term: in ECR (Electronic Course Reserves):

Literary Criticism: Art 'After Auschwitz.'

Aharon APPELFELD, "Individualization of the Holocaust," in *Holocaust Chronicles* (NY 1999) 1-8.

Sidra De Koven EZRAHI: "The Holocaust and the Shifting Boundaries of Art and History," *History and Memory* 1.2 (1989) 77-97.

Irving HOWE, "Writing and the Holocaust," in *Writing and the Holocaust*, ed. Berel Lang (NY 1988) 175-199.

Naomi MANDEL, "Rethinking 'After Auschwitz': Against a Rhetoric of the Unspeakable in Holocaust Writing," *Boundary 2* 28.2 (2001) 203-28.

Michael ROTHBERG, "Introduction" (partial), *Traumatic Realism* (Minneapolis 2000) 1-13.

Witnessing:

Dori LAUB, "Bearing Witness: or the Vicissitudes of Listening," and "An Event without a Witness: Truth, Testimony, and Survival.," in *Testimony* (NY 1992) 57-92.

1. Thurs Sep 15: Introduction and Orientation :

Film clips shown in class, Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*.

Paul Celan, "Todesfuge", poem. Dan Pagis, "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car.15

FILM: Sep. 19: *The Shop on Main Street* (Czech) 1965 [feature] 128 min Hedi Margolius KOVALY, "Under A Cruel Star," in *Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, Aftermath*, ed. Omer Bartov (NY 2000) 219-31. (ECR)*

2. Sep 22. There is a Place on Earth: Auschwitz I

NIGHT. Elie Wiesel.

Terrence DES PRES "The Will to Bear Witness," from *The Survivor* (1976) 28-54 (ECR)
"Excerpts from the Death Dealer: from the Confessions of Rudolph HOESS, Commandant of Auschwitz" 181-86 (ECR)

Landau: chs 1 ,3, 4

FILM: Sep 26 *The Boat is Full* (Swiss) [feature] 100 min.

3. Sep 29: Memory of the Offense: Auschwitz II

SURVIVAL AT AUSCHWITZ. Primo Levi.

Terrence DES PRES, "Excremental Assault," from *The Survivor*, 203-20 (ECR)

Primo LEVI, "Shame," from *The Drowned and the Saved*, 52-67 (ECR)

Primo LEVI, "Vanadium" from *The Periodic Table* (1984), 211-23 (ECR)

Landau: chs 5, 6, 7

*FILM: Sunday, Oct 2: Life is Beautiful (1997) Italy [feature film]

See recommended essays on our External Links.

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/yale_journal_of_criticism/toc/yale14.1.html

Yale Journal of Criticism, spring 2001: Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Imre Kertesz, Helene Pflanzbaum, Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi.

4.Oct 6: A Question of Gender: Auschwitz III

NONE OF US WILL RETURN. Charlotte Delbo in Auschwitz and After.

Tadeusz BOROWSKI, "This Way for the Gas, Ladies & Gentlemen," the lead story from THIS WAY FOR THE GAS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, 29-49 (ECR).

Gisela PERL: "Gisela Perl: A Doctor in Auschwitz," from Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust,, eds. Rittner and Roth, 104-18 (ECR)

Landau: chs 8, 9, 10

FILM: Oct. 10: Trial of Adolf Eichmann (1997)

Der ewige Jude (1940) (Nazi Propaganda Film)

David WELCH, "The Image of the Jew" from The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda, 280-306 (ECR)

External Links: Eichmann Trial (PBS) on the film; <http://www.pbs.org/eichmann/>

<http://www.holocaust-history.org/der-ewige-jude/>

<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/ww2era.htm>

***5. Fri Oct. 14: Confronting the Perpetrators**

INTO THAT DARKNESS. Gitta SERENY. [Part V, 289-333: OPTIONAL]

From Donald NIEWYK, ed. The Holocaust: ch 4: The Motivations of the Killers (ECR)

Robert Jay LIFTON, "The Nazi Doctors." 152-67.

Christopher BROWNING, "Ordinary Men." 168-83

Daniel GOLDHAGEN, "Hitler's Willing Executioner," 184-97:

"Once Again I've Got to Play General to the Jews" from the war diary of Blutordensträger Felix LANDAU in "The Good old Days," 185-203 (ECR)

"Extracts from the Speech of Heinrich HIMMLER" 130-40 (ECR)

FILM: Oct. 17: Schindler's List (1993) American [feature film] 197 min

6. Oct 20. An Allegory of Difference

THE PAINTED BIRD, Jerzy Kosinski

Handout (See COURSE DOCUMENTS)

FILM: Oct 24: Europa, Europa (1990) (Germany/France/Poland) [feature] 100 min.

7. Oct 27: Graphic Transgressions and the Mediation of Memory

MAUS I, MAUS II, Art Spiegelman.

FALL BREAK: MIDTERM PAPERS (8 pages) DUE Tues, Nov 2; Last extension deadline: Friday, Nov 5. No questions asked; no further adjustment. Plan your time accordingly.

FILM: Nov 7: Fighter (2000) USA, English/Czech [documentary] 91 min

8. Nov. 10: The Price of Survival

LOVE IN A TIME OF SORROW: Fanya Gottesfeld Heller.

Class discussion with the author.

FILM: Nov. 14: : Partisans of Vilna. 1986. USA. English/multilingual [documentary] 130 min.

9. Thurs Nov 17: The Ghetto and Ethical Dilemmas

KING OF THE JEWS. Leslie Epstein.

Primo LEVI, "The Gray Zone" from The Drowned and Saved, 22-51(ECR)

Handouts: Ethical Dilemmas of the Ghetto: Leslie Epstein: King of the Jews; Film: Partisans of Vilna"

Optional: From Donald Niewyk, ed. The Holocaust: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation, 2d ed.. Part III RESISTANCE

"The Problem of Jewish Resistance," 107-09, and three excerpts:

1. Raul Hilberg: "Two Thousand Years of Jewish Appeasement" 110-16;

2. Yehuda Bauer, "Forms of Jewish Resistance," 116-32

3. Isaiah Trunk, "Why the Jewish Councils Cooperated," 133-47.. (ECR)

Rachel Hines, "Rachel Hines: "The Great Delusion: Chaim Rumkowski's Attempt to Save the Jews of Lodz." Concord Review (2002) (ECR)

FILM: Nov. 21: Sunshine (1999) Hungary/Germany/Canada/Austria. [Feature] 180 min

Film: Nov 28: Gloomy Sunday (1999) German//Hungarian [Feature] 112 min

Or Watermarks (2004) Israel/US [documentary] 80 min or Unlikely Heroes 120 min

10. Nov 18: Mourning Voices

FUGITIVE PIECES, Anne Michaels

Handout

FILM: Dec 5: Enemies: A Love Story: (1989) (USA) [feature] 119 min

11. Dec 8: Guilty Innocence

NIGHTFATHER, Carl Friedman

THE DARK ROOM, Rachel Seiffert, Part II

FILM: Dec 12: Because of That War Israel [Documentary] 90 min

12. Dec 15: Germans & Jews

HESTER AMONG THE RUINS, Binnie Kirshenbaum

Handout: Kirshenbaum Preface

Visit with the author.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Delbo, Charlotte. Auschwitz and After: Yale Univ Pr;:

Denes, Magda.. Castles Burning: Touchstone

Epstein, Leslie. King of the Jews Handsel.

Friedman, Carl. Nightfather: Persea

Heller, Fanya G Love in a World of Sorrow : Devpra

Kirshenbaum, Binnie. Hester Among the Ruins. Harvest

Kosinski, Jerzy. The Painted Bird: Grove Press;

Landau, Ronnie . The Nazi Holocaust: Ivan R Dee, Inc.

Levi, Primo. Survival in Auschwitz: Touchstone

Michaels, Anne . Fugitive Pieces Vintage

Seiffert, Rachel The Dark Room Vintage

Sereny, Gitta. Into That Darkness: Knopf,

Spiegelman, Art. Maus I, Maus II: Pantheon,

Wiesel, Elie Night: Bantam Books

RECOMMENDED:

Dwork, Deborah & Robert Jan van Pelt Holocaust: A History . Norton