**Holocaust Representations**

**ENGL 3325: Advanced Readings in World Lit (CRN 14165)**

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# Office: Irby 430 Time: TTH 9:25-10:40

# Office Hours: MWF 10:30-12, or by appointment Place: Irby 201

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CAcQjRxqFQoTCNrw4eLMs8cCFQPNgAodQjkPng&url=http://www.theholocaustexplained.org/ks3/what-was-the-holocaust/&ei=1KbTVdo2g5qDBMLyvPAJ&bvm=bv.99804247,d.eXY&psig=AFQjCNEYjufJPNEfXZLhmyyObD7YFTwuDg&ust=1440020374007729)

**“Even in [the camps] one can survive, and therefore one must want to survive, to tell the story, to bear witness; and that to survive we must force ourselves to save at least the skeleton, the scaffolding, the form of civilization. We are slaves, deprived of every right, exposed to every insult, condemned to certain death, but we still possess one power, and we must defend it with all our strength for it is the last — the power to refuse our consent.”**

**-- Primo Levi**

**Course description:** Obviously, the Holocaust was a horrific event in human history. The depravity of the Final Solution was such that, despite the intense pain and disgust that accompany any attempt to represent the German atrocities, the people who survived the attempted genocide developed the mantra: We must never forget. With that in mind, the actual act of remembering, of testimony, of representing the Holocaust becomes a fundamental defense against future crimes against humanity. In that way, representations of the Holocaust simultaneously remind us what it is to be human and the central and vital role of storytelling/literature in that humanity.

As a testament to the importance of literature-as-testimony, there is an amazingly diverse set of texts that represent the Holocaust: memoirs, novels, poems, short stories, plays, and films (documentary and fictional). This course works through a series of Holocaust representations in a variety of genres in order to allow students to both bear witness to the triumph of the human spirit in the face of what can only be called evil and to consider the ways that the events depicted in the texts push the generic and philosophical limits of storytelling. In the end, the class pushes on the role and utility of writing and reading as these actions help construct and define not only our collective cultural consciousness but also our fundamental humanity.

**Learning Outcome:** This section of the syllabus is required at the university. It’s where I’m supposed to tell you (and, perhaps, your parents) how you’re getting your money’s worth in this class. The standard learning outcome for a world literature class, which this is, is that you will practice making connections and associations between a diverse set of texts from faraway places and your world. In that way, you will engage with people and ideas outside your comfort zone and, thus, expand your experience and understanding. In addition to that, you will develop a critical toolbox that will allow you to strengthen your ability to analyze complex works and to organize and express those analyses in verbal and written form. Throughout the semester, you will practice reading various texts, forming ideas, observations, and arguments about them, and delivering those ideas, observations, and arguments in clear, concise, and effective essays. **Writing will be an important part of this class, and the ability to write well in** **Standard Academic English is vital to your success.**

And that’s all true. But there’s another outcome that I’m shooting for. I honestly think that this class is going to make you a better person—that once experienced, some things can’t be unknown. You’re all about to become witnesses. And while much of what you’ll see is shocking and appalling, grappling with it is going to make you … more human. Which may not be possible, but it really feels like it is.

**My Policies.**

**Participation**: It comprises 15% of your final grade. That means that I expect everybody to participate in our discussions. Seriously, you do *not* want to listen to 75 straight minutes of my talking head every Tuesday and Thursday. That said, we will explore a wide range of texts and topics in class; not only would it be impossible for all of you to agree on everything, it would be boring. I highly encourage you to disagree with one another, and I highly highly encourage you to disagree with me. All I ask (actually, I don’t ask, I demand) is that you disagree with one another (and me) in a **constructive** manner that fosters conversation rather than shuts it down. Show respect for one another’s views, opinions and ideas.

In keeping with the idea that this is a safe space to share and test out ideas, I encourage you all to speak to one another in our discussions. That is, not all comments have to go through me at the front of the room. Let ideas bounce around the room—address one another directly. This will be best accomplished if you learn each other’s names.

Small but not insignificant point: In order to truly participate productively in class, you need to have done the assigned readings. I will often begin class with a quiz—this will let me know whether or not you’re doing the readings, and it will also serve as a jumping-off point for our discussions. The quizzes will be impossible to pass if you don’t complete the reading (but easy to pass if you do) and count as part of your participation grade. So do the readings.

**Attendance:** If you intend to make a premium grade (A or B), you should attend class as frequently as possible, preferably every class day. Your final grade for this course will drop two points for every absence after three, except in rare situations. Infrequent absences caused by illness or accident, family death, official university functions, or inclement weather are acceptable, but you need to bring documentation of the reason to receive this consideration. If you should miss 6 or more classes, I will strongly recommend that you drop the class.

**Late arrivals/Early departures:** Avoid these at all costs; if it’s unavoidable, be as considerate as possible to your classmates.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*!!!!!!Cell Phones!!!!!!\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

 

Hear this now: Cell phone interruptions drive me nuts—seriously, they give me facial tics. So please turn off and stow all cell phones before class. Seriously, I don’t even want to see your cell phone. Really. Prove to yourself that you’re not addicted to the little monster: spend our 75 minutes out of its presence (#giveyourthumbsarest).

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. All assignments are due on the day indicated on the syllabus, at the start of class. Period.

**Assignments and Grade value:**

\*Essay 1 (10/1) 25% \*Final Essay (12/8) 30%

Personal Projects (2) (10/20, 11/17) 20%

SWAs (short writing assignments) 10% Participation 15%

\*You cannot pass the class without completing **both** essays.

# Grades: Ahh, grading! Here’s the rub. One of the major sticking points between teacher and student comes down to a potential disparity in goals. My goal is that you develop as a thinker, reader and writer. Often (I didn’t say always, so don’t be offended!), your goal is to obtain a grade that will make you happy. See the potential conflict? Honestly, if I thought that handing out A’s were the best way to improve your thinking/reading/writing, I’d do it. Unfortunately, everything about your academic training to this point has worked in an opposite direction. In our system, I tie a carrot (grade) to a stick and dangle it in front of you as you pull the millstone. Sorry. I didn’t invent the system, but it’s where we work. On the bright side, in my experience, it’s relatively rare for the grade not to reflect the effort of the student.

Extra credit opportunities **may** be offered throughout the semester, but they exist in order to enhance your engagement with the college and our material, not to explicitly improve a student’s grade (though, of course, they will improve your grade). What I’m saying here is, don’t ask me to devise extra extra credit opportunities to make up for missed or poor work.

**University Policies.**

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act:**The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans withDisabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

Students should familiarize themselves with all policies included in the Student Handbook, particularly the **Sexual Harassment Policy** and **Academic Policies**. You are responsible for acting in accordance with these university policies. If you have any questions about these policies and how they pertain to you, do not hesitate to ask me for clarification.

**Title IX disclosure**: If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved.  Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation.  Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances.  The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator.  For further information, please visit:  <https://uca.edu/titleix>.  *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

**Emergency Procedures:** Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Course Texts:** Course Packet (I will email you the document; you will print it), Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Italy, 1958), Georges Perec, *W or the Memory of Childhood* (France, 1988), *The Wilkomorski Affair* (Switzerland, 2001)**,** Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After* (France, 1985)**,** W.G. Sebald, *The Emigrants* (Germany, 1996)**,** Imre Kertesz, *Fateless* (Hungary, 1992)**,** Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (Poland, 1967), Elie Wiesel, *The Trial of God* (France, 1979)**,** Alain Resnais,*Night and Fog* (France, 1955), Pawel Pawlikowski, *Ida* (Poland, 2013)

\*all dates are for the English translation.

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1. Introductions.**

Th 8/20. IMUR … this is …

**Week 2. Unit I: Documenting the Holocaust. Historical Contexts**

T 8/25. What is the Holocaust? (kind of an important question)

**Read:** “The Last Years of the Holocaust, 1943-1945” (Packet)

\***Due:** SWA 1

Th 8/27. What is the Holocaust, con’t

**Screen (in class):** *Night and Fog* (Alain Resnais, 1955)

**Week 3. Unit I. Inside the lager. Literature as History & testimony: the Memoir**

T 9/1. **Read:** *Survival in Auschwitz* (Primo Levi, 1958)

\***Due:** SWA 2

Th 9/3. **Read:** *Survival in Auschwitz*

**Week 4. Unit I. Inside the lager. Literature as History & testimony: Memoir/Short story**

T 9/8. **Read:** *Survival in Auschwitz* & “The Gray Zone” (Packet)

Th 9/10. **Read:** *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (Tadeusz Borowski, 1967)

Due: SWA 3

**Week 5. Unit I. Inside the lager. Literature as History & testimony: Short story/Novel**

T 9/15**. Read:** *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*

Th 9/17. **Read:** *Fateless* (Imre Kertesz, 1992)

Due: SWA 4

**Week 6. Unit I Inside the lager. Literature as History & testimony: the Novel**

T 9/22. **Read:** *Fateless*

Th 9/24. **Read:** *Fateless*

Due: SWA 5

**Week 7. Unit II. Outside the lager. Memory projects/Memory crises, or the Holocaust and identity**

T 9/29. **Read:** “Memory Shot Through With Holes” (Packet)

Th 10/1. **Read:** *W or the Memory of Childhood* (Georges Perec, 1988)

\*\***Due: Essay 1**

**Week 8. Unit II. Outside the lager. Memory projects/Memory crises, or the Holocaust and identity**

T 10/6. **Read:** *W or the Memory of Childhood*

**\*Due:** SWA 6

Th 10/8. **Read:** *W or the Memory of Childhood*

**Week 9. Unit II. Outside the lager. Memory projects/Memory crises, or the Holocaust and identity**

T 10/13. **Discuss:** *Ida* ((Pawel Pawlikowski, 2013) \***Due:** SWA 7

Th 10/15. **Discuss:** *Ida*

**Week 10. Unit III. Sublimating the lager. The Holocaust and/as art**

T 10/20. **Read:** *The Trial of God* (Elie Wiesel, 1979)

\*\***Due:** Personal Project 1

Th 10/22. Fall Break. No class.

**Week 11. Unit III. Sublimating the lager. The Holocaust and/as art**

T 10/27. **Read:** *The Trial of God*

\*\***Due:** SWA 8

Th 10/29. **Read:** “Cultural Criticism and Society” (Packet) and *Auschwitz and After* (Charlotte Delbo, 1985)

**Week 12. Unit III. Sublimating the lager. The Holocaust and/as art**

T 11/3. **Read:** *Auschwitz and After*

\***Due:** SWA 9

Th 11/5. **Read:** *Auschwitz and After*

F 11/6: **Screening:** *Because I was a Painter* (*Parce que j'étais peintre***) (**Christophe Cognet, 2013)

**Week 13. Unit IV. Legacy (and appropriation) of the lager. The cultural afterlife of the Holocaust. Who’s … allowed to represent it … and how?**

T 11/10. **Discuss:** *Because I was a Painter*

\***Due:** SWA 10

Th 11/12. **Read:** *The Emigrants* (WG Sebald, 1996)

**Week 14. Unit IV. Legacy (and appropriation) of the lager. The cultural afterlife of the Holocaust. Who’s … allowed to represent it … and how?**

T 11/17. **Read:** *The Emigrants*

**\*\*Due:** Personal Project 2

Th 11/19. **Read:** *The Emigrants*

**Week 15. Unit IV. Legacy (and appropriation) of the lager. The cultural afterlife of the Holocaust. Who’s … allowed to represent it … and how?**

T 11/24. **Read:** *The Wilkomorski Affair* (Switzerland, 2001)

Th 11/26. **Thanksgiving! No class. Eat, drink, be merry. And be kind to your mom; she misses you.**

**Week 16. Unit IV. Legacy (and appropriation) of the lager. The cultural afterlife of the Holocaust. Who’s … allowed to represent it … and how?**

T 12/1. **Read:** *The Wilkomorski Affair* (Switzerland, 2001) \***Due:** SWA 11

Th 12/3. **Read:** *The Wilkomorski Affair* (Switzerland, 2001)

**\*\*\*\*Final Essay Due: T 12/8!!!**