

English 161-01: Holocaust Memoirs: Reading, Writing, Mapping (HL)
TTH 11:30-12:50 HOL 209
University of Redlands
Spring 2013

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The Holocaust, or Nazi Genocide, comprised a complex set of events whose scope and scale radically challenge our ability to understand them. This course will approach the topic first and foremost up close, through literature: individual, first-person, eyewitness survivor accounts, mainly written but also oral. We will read a variety of survivor memoirs, listen to and watch video testimonies, and possibly documentary film, to try and comprehend the suffering and fortitude of various individuals who survived genocidal persecution. We will explore how listening to these stories transforms us into active “witnesses.” The course will thus introduce you to Holocaust memoir, film, and testimony, and some history of the events that compose it.

At the same time that we go up close, we will also read from a distance, putting these stories in context by zooming out to consider the immense space and time of genocidal persecution – the geographic landscapes, vast cities and countries, as well as the number of days, weeks and years involved. To gain a more global perspective, therefore, we will attempt to map – manually and digitally – various aspects of the information we glean from the accounts we hear. In this way, the course will introduce you to spatial thinking – how to interpret stories, problems, phenomena, individual and collective experiences in terms of the spaces in which they take place. We will experiment with a variety of digital and online tools, alone and together in groups, to help us find different and creative ways to gain spatial perspective on this challenging material. (Technological experience is not necessary).

This course will be difficult, but exciting. As we confront challenging, often disturbing material, we will do a fair amount of writing to help us articulate our reactions, and ease discussion. We will try to establish, early on, an open and comfortable learning environment, so that each of us can contribute to discussion, and rely upon one another as we process these harrowing accounts. In addition to required readings and viewings, assignments include a combination of analytical essays, individual and group digital exercises, and a final, cumulative, digital mapping project.

Course Goals

I have in mind three major goals for this course:

1. Literary Analysis: to discover the particular characteristics and strategies distinguishing literary language and writing; to develop **our own** interpretations of what we read and our arguments about them
 - by practicing the skill of close, critical reading (what literature scholars call “explication”).
 - by presenting oral and written interpretations.
 - by developing unique argumentative thesis statements in our papers.

According to the University *Catalog* (2009-11), students completing the HL will demonstrate:

- skills in the analysis of literary forms and conventions;
- the capacity to build effective arguments that defend a critical position both orally and in writing;
- the ability to situate texts within shifting historical and ideological contexts (57).

2. To expand and develop our spatial thinking skills:
 - in terms of concepts like scope, scale, place and placement, confinement, freedom, embodiment, and home
 - in terms of visual representations, such as maps
 - in relation to concepts of time
 - as expressed in language
3. To discover those aspects of the experience of human suffering that cannot be represented in terms of space, that cannot be represented visually, or mapped, and what we learn in the process of trying to map them.
4. To discover the ethical dimensions and obligations demanded of us when we read and listen to first-person Holocaust accounts.

Required Texts

All books for the course are on sale at the University Bookstore, and on reserve at Armacost Library:

Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*
Ruth Kluger, *Still Alive*
Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
Art Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus* (Volumes I and II combined)
Elie Wiesel, *Night*

Required Websites (All sites can be accessed from any web browser on computers in the Jones Computing Center, or any laptop)

1. The USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive Online:

<http://vhaonline.usc.edu/about/archive.aspx>

Please familiarize yourself with this site. As part of our semester-long, final project assignment, we will be viewing, studying and exploring video Holocaust testimonies by Holocaust survivors on this site. We will all need to register individually on this site with a username and password in order to access the Holocaust testimonies and complete the assignment (we will go over this in class, but it is also self-explanatory on the site).

2. Google Drive: https://www.google.com/intl/en_US/drive/start/index.html

If you don't already have a Google or Gmail account, you will need to set one up to access "Google Drive." Click on the link above, and then click "Sign up" in the top, right-hand corner to register and establish an account. We will also go over this in class.

3. ArcGIS Explorer Online: <https://www.arcgis.com/about/>

We will be using this site later in the semester to create our online digital maps (via the University of Redlands subscription). We will have in-class tutorials on how to register and use this site, so don't worry for now. Feel free, however, to explore it if you are curious. You can learn more about ArcGIS Online here:

http://resources.arcgis.com/en/help/arcgisonline/#/What_is_ArcGIS_Online/010q0000007400000/

Recommended Texts (on reserve and in my office; some pdf files will be posted to Moodle course site; I will also distribute a separate, extended bibliography)

Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*
Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*
Lucy Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader*
Henry Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Beyond Testimony*
Hilberg, Raul, *The Destruction of the European Jews*
Primo Levi, *The Awakening* and *The Drowned and the Saved*

Course Requirements and Grading

1. Paper assignment 1 (15%).
2. Paper assignment 2 (15%).
3. Final project to be completed in four stages over the course of the semester, including study and research of video testimony, final presentation, and reflective statement on process (50%).
4. Participation: includes attendance, participation in discussion, possibly short, written reading responses or pop quizzes. (20%)

All assignments above will be distributed and explained in class.

All written assignments, including research summaries, literary analyses and reflection statements must be typed, double-spaced, and formatted according to [MLA guidelines](#). We will discuss these guidelines during the semester. **Late assignments will not be accepted**; students who do not turn in an assignment at the beginning of class the day it is due will receive an F for that assignment. If you know that you will have to miss class the day an assignment is due, arrange to turn it in early in my mailbox or have a friend turn it in for you on the due date. I do not accept papers by email; rather, we will use digital tools for online paper submission. If a problem arises with an assignment or due date, we should always discuss it together, and as far in advance of the due date as possible.

Class Participation

This class is conducted as a seminar, rather than a lecture, and thus demands your full participation. **THIS IS YOUR COURSE**, and in it, we will learn together, and from one another. Your ideas will spark the ideas of others, so you must share them! And, most ideas don't begin brilliantly—discussion helps develop them. Good participation includes both listening and asking questions of others, as much as contributing your own ideas. Especially with difficult material, we need to engage one another, honor our differences, and treat each other's ideas with respect. Preparation for class is essential. Please read all required assignments on time (by the date listed below), in full, and **BRING YOUR BOOKS TO CLASS**, as well as all marginal notes, comments, and questions for discussion. When announced, it may be helpful to bring a laptop for digital group work. Please follow the reading schedule below, and feel free to read ahead!

Attendance and Lateness

Regular attendance is mandatory. You cannot participate if you are not here. Of course, I expect each of you to come to class of your own volition—out of sheer excitement and anticipation. More than 2 absences will result in your participation grade being lowered by one letter grade. More than 4 absences will result in your course grade being lowered by one letter grade. More than 6 absences is grounds for failing the course. If exceptional circumstances arise, if you discuss them with me immediately, and if your attendance has otherwise been regular, I may excuse up to 2 absences. Roll will be called at the beginning of class, and 2 instances of lateness will count as 1 absence. If you arrive after roll has been called, it is your responsibility to let me know that you were present after class that same day.

Attendance is your responsibility. Unless you need to discuss an ongoing issue or a major health problem with me, I do not need to know why you miss class. If you choose to email me, that is a fine courtesy, but please do not expect a response. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed and be exceptionally prepared for the following session. Feel free to come to office hours once you have completed the missed work. I will not accept extra assignments to compensate for absence.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:

Ideas are considered “intellectual property” within the academic community; academic honesty in both individual and collaborative work forms the backbone of this community. Each of us, as a member of this community, is responsible to nurture and sustain a climate of honesty. “Plagiarism”—the use of another’s words or ideas, or a paraphrase of others’ work, without proper attribution—is the highest academic violation.

As defined by the University of Redlands official policy, “Plagiarism occurs when the words of another are reproduced without acknowledgment or when the ideas or arguments of another are paraphrased and presented in such a way as to lead the reader to believe that they originated with the writer.” Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- “offering as one’s own work the words, ideas, or arguments of another person without appropriate attribution by quotation, reference, or footnote”
- “acquiring from other persons, commercial organizations, or other sources (e.g., electronic sources)—or using unauthorized assistance and submitting as one’s own work—term papers, research papers, computer files, or comparable documents prepared in whole or in part by others than oneself”
- “presenting the same or substantially the same written work—term paper, research report, essay or the like—as part of the course requirement for more than one course, without the express prior written permission of each instructor involved.

Plagiarism is unacceptable and will result in one or more of the following consequences: failing the assignment, failing the class, suspension from school, or permanent dismissal from the University. I will report all instances of plagiarism to the Dean’s Office without hesitation. The entire Redlands policy on Academic Honesty, including procedures for addressing violations, can be reviewed in the university *Catalog*, pages 13-20. Often, plagiarism is unintentional, so please feel free to ask me any questions that arise about citation. We will discuss plagiarism further in class.

Special Needs:

Students with learning, physical, or psychological disabilities, or with chronic illnesses, should contact me privately to discuss your needs. It’s important to coordinate requests for accommodations through Amy Wilms, the Assistant Dean of Academics and Student Life (x. 8108).

Email:

Emails with faculty and throughout the University are formal correspondence. Please use forms of address appropriate to a formal letter, and email me only when necessary. You can expect to receive a response within 24 hours. Please check your Redlands account regularly as course updates and messages will go to this account.

Moodle:

Please familiarize yourself with our course website. I will use it to post all relevant course information (texts, reading schedule, assignments, etc.), as well as to provide helpful links with relevant articles and photos related to

Holocaust history, or biographical information about authors. Please make use of the links for the glossaries of definitions and terms. For course announcements, I will tell you in class, post to Moodle, and/or send an email. If you come across any informative websites related to course material, please let me know and I'll gladly link them to our course site.

Classroom Etiquette:

Please turn off and put away all laptops and cell phones before entering class, unless otherwise instructed. If you are using a laptop to access course texts, or at the recommendation of Student Services, please discuss this with me privately. Anyone found text-messaging, emailing, or engaging in any use of phones or laptops not related to the course will be asked to leave immediately and will be considered absent for the day. While beverages are acceptable, I prefer that you eat, use the rest room, etc., before or after class to avoid disrupting discussions. If you do need to leave the room, please do so quietly. Frequent interruptions of class will affect your participation grade.

Course Schedule (texts to be read by the day indicated; schedule is **subject to change** to allow flexibility of course pace and assignment progress; any changes will be announced in class or by email):

[M] = The material is posted to Moodle

Week 1: **Introduction: “Timescapes”: Oral, Written and Visual Holocaust Accounts**
Tues. 1/8 Key Terms, Historical background, Intro to mapping and oral testimony
Thurs. 1/10 READ: Henry Greenspan, “Survivor Accounts,” *Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (2011) [M]; Anne Knowles, et al., “Geographies of the Holocaust” (2009) [M]

Week 2: **Introduction to Mapping Project; MAUS, Vol. I**
Tues. 1/15 READ: Spiegelman, *MAUS, Volume I*, Ch. 1-2
 In class: Mapping assignment, intro to VHA Online; choosing a testimony
Thurs. 1/17 READ: Spiegelman, *MAUS, Volume I*, Ch. 3-4

WEEKEND: **BEGIN PHASE ONE: WATCH VIDEO TESTIMONY; TAKE NOTES, ETC.** (see assignment).

Week 3: **MAUS, Vol. II**
Tues. 1/22 Spiegelman, *MAUS, Volume II*, 5-6
Thurs. 1/24 Spiegelman, *MAUS, Volume II*, 1-2

Week 4: **MAUS, Vol. II**
Tues. 1/29 Spiegelman, *MAUS, Volume II*, 3-4
Thurs. 1/31 Spiegelman, *MAUS, Volume II*, 5; **PHASE ONE DUE IN CLASS**

Week 5: **NIGHT**
Tues. 2/5 *Night*, 1-43; In-class mapping demo: Wiesel’s journey
Thurs. 2/7 *Night*, 44-80

Week 6: **NIGHT; TURNING TESTIMONY INTO “DATA”**
Tues. 2/12 Lab tutorial: Google Docs and data spreadsheets – **LOCATION TBA**
WED. 2/13 **PAPER #1 DUE; BEGIN PHASE TWO: GROUP MEETINGS IN MY OFFICE**
Thurs. 2/14 *Night*, 81-109; **GROUP MEETINGS IN MY OFFICE AFTER CLASS**

Week 7: ***SURVIVAL IN AUSCHWITZ***
Tues. 2/19 Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 1-86
Thurs. 2/21 *Survival in Auschwitz*, 87-100; Brief in-class group work – completing data spreadsheets
Friday 2/22 **PHASE TWO DUE: COMPLETED DATA SPREADSHEETS**

Week 8: *SPRING BREAK*
Tues. 2/26 NO CLASS: Read Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 101-173
Thurs. 2/28 NO CLASS: Read Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 101-173

Week 9: ***SURVIVAL IN AUSCHWITZ; DIGITAL MAPPING***
Tues. 3/5 Discuss Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 101-173
Thurs. 3/7 **BEGIN PHASE THREE: LAB TUTORIAL – ARCGIS EXPLORER ONLINE – LOCATION TBA**

Week 10: ***AUSCHWITZ AND AFTER***
Tues. 3/12 Tadeusz Borowski, “This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen” [M]; In-class group work: ArcGIS Explorer Online
CONTINUE DEVELOPING YOUR LEG OF JOURNEY ON DIGITAL MAP
Thurs. 3/14 Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*, 1-59

Week 11: ***AUSCHWITZ AND AFTER***
Tues. 3/19 Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*, 60-93
Thurs. 3/21 Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*, 94-114; In-class Auschwitz mapping exercise
Fri. 3/22 PAPER #2 DUE

Week 12: ***STILL ALIVE***
Tues. 3/26 Ruth Klüger, *Still Alive*, pp. 1-60
Thurs. 3/28 Ruth Klüger, *Still Alive*, 61-112
Fri. 3/29 PHASE THREE DUE – digital submissions

Week 13: ***STILL ALIVE; FINAL PRESENTATION PREP***
Tues. 4/2 READ: Ruth Klüger, *Still Alive*, pp. 113-170; **PHASE FOUR:** In-class tutorial and prep for final ArcGIS Presentations
Thurs. 4/4 CLASS CANCELLED

Week 14: ***STILL ALIVE***
Tues. 4/9 Ruth Klüger, *Still Alive*, 171-214
Thurs. 4/11 LAST DAY OF CLASS; Kluger, conclusion; In-class group meetings

TUESDAY, APRIL 16TH, 9AM: PHASE FIVE: FINAL PRESENTATIONS AND REFLECTIONS DUE