

*English 268 Introduction to Holocaust Studies*  
*English 269 Introduction to Women Writers*  
*International Studies 268 Literature of the Holocaust*  
*English 468 Holocaust Studies*  
*History 290/490 Literature of the Holocaust*  
*Women's Studies 495 Seminar*  
*Humanities 468 Holocaust Studies*

***LITERATURE OF THE HOLOCAUST***  
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*Liberated children at Auschwitz; when asked their names, they showed the numbers tattooed on their arms.*

Professor Carole Gottlieb Vopat, Ph.D.  
Professor of English & Women's Studies  
CA 214  
MW 11:00-1:30; 3:30-5:30, and gladly by appointment  
Phone: 595-2532  
e-mail: [carole.vopat@uwp.edu](mailto:carole.vopat@uwp.edu) (best way to reach me)

## **WELCOME!**

This is a new course, the first and only one on the Holocaust at Parkside, which is why so many departments besides English are cross-listing it; also, the study of the Holocaust is always interdisciplinary in nature.

One course—or even one lifetime--cannot cover all the aspects of the Holocaust; this particular course is devoted to literary art created by human beings in unspeakable conditions. The course focuses on literature (fiction, memoir, poetry) created by the victims of the Holocaust—written primarily by Jews, but by other victims also. The perpetrators left no literature, only propaganda. Nazi ideology, World War II, the history of anti-semitism, German and European history, and other topics will be discussed primarily as a means to provide a context for the literature that is our main concern. The course assumes no prior knowledge of either Jewish history and Judaism, the history of anti-Semitism, or the Holocaust. Rather, it sets out to provide an introduction to the beginnings of an understanding of an event whose enormity and cruelty can never be understood.

Although the literature of the Holocaust involves many overlapping perspectives—literary, historical, political, religious, philosophical, sociological, psychological, to name a few--our primary approach will be literary, structured by an awareness of the linguistic and narrative difficulties faced by post-Holocaust writers, many severely traumatized, who confronted the limits of language in expressing the inexpressible, and to us as readers, who can only inadequately discern the nature of the Holocaust experience.

*“Just as our hunger is not that feeling of missing a meal, so our way of being cold has need of a new word. We say ‘hunger’, we say ‘tiredness’, ‘fear’, ‘pain’, we say ‘winter’ and they are different things. They are free words created and used by free men who lived in comfort and suffering in their homes. If the Lagers had lasted longer a new, harsh language would have been born; and only this language could express what it means to toil the whole day in the wind, with the temperature below freezing, wearing only a shirt, underpants; cloth jacket, and trousers, and in one’s body nothing but weakness, hunger and knowledge of the end drawing nearer.”* Primo Levi, **Survival in Auschwitz**

The Holocaust is a course unlike any other subject in the university curriculum. It will make great demands on our hearts, minds and spirits. Our readings and discussions will focus unrelentingly on human suffering and human cruelty, often deliberately inflicted extreme cruelty, as revealed in what has been called “*the literature of atrocity*.” This course will be challenging for several reasons. First, it entails a fair amount of reading. Second, the information presented in this class is difficult to read and difficult to discuss. Students are encouraged to ask questions, and share thoughts and emotions; students are also encouraged to respect the memories of the victims, and to respect one another as we struggle to understand the inexplicable.

The events we will read about **did** happen. It is often difficult to accept and synthesize these facts; studying the Holocaust calls into question many of the basic values of Western Civilization, and challenges us to redefine the meaning of *human being*, for it was **ordinary people** who committed genocide. We will register our anguish, yet we will focus above all on the anguish of the victims of what is arguably the most extensive genocide that the world has ever seen; a unique event; the use of modern technology without moral or ethical bounds, a form of mass killing in a manner and scale that was unprecedented.

Be aware that people in the past were real, breathing human beings, not two-dimensional caricatures of heroes and saints, monsters and demons. We must complicate and deepen our responses to the Holocaust; to attempt to see the Holocaust as a human event, and both action and inaction as the (often excruciating) choices of *ordinary* people in *extraordinary* circumstances.

I want you to know that I am myself a Jew, and that there is nothing you cannot ask me, no remark or observation or criticism or judgment you cannot make. Do not be afraid to comment on the Jews; after all, they were neither all heroes nor all anti-heroes, although they were all victims. I know that no one taking this course is anti-semitic; I believe that anything may be aired and discussed in a college classroom.

### WORKING DEFINITION OF THE HOLOCAUST

The Holocaust refers to a specific event in 20<sup>th</sup> century history: the systematic, bureaucratic, annihilation of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and their collaborators as a central act of state during World War II. Beginning with racially discriminatory laws in Germany, the Nazi campaign expanded to the persecution and murder of all European Jews.

In 1933 the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million. Most European Jews lived in countries that Nazi Germany (the Third Reich) would occupy or influence during World War II. The Nazis established concentration camps to imprison Jews, other people targeted on ethnic or “racial” grounds, and political opponents. Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, beginning World War II. Over the next two years, German forces conquered most of Europe.

During the war years, the Nazis and their collaborators created ghettos (to isolate Jewish populations) and thousands of new camps for the imprisonment of targeted groups and forced labor. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) carried out mass-murder operations against Jews, Roma, and Soviet state and Communist party officials. More than a million Jewish men, women, and children were murdered by these units, usually in mass shootings. Between 1942 and 1944, Nazi Germany deported millions more Jews from occupied territories to extermination camps, where they murdered them in specially developed killing facilities using poison gas. At the largest killing center, Auschwitz-Birkenau, transports of Jews arrived almost daily from across Europe.

Although Jews were the primary victims of Nazi racism, others targeted for death included tens of thousands of Roma (Gypsies) and at least 200,000 mentally or physically disabled people. Germans were considered “racially superior” and the Jews and others deemed “inferior”: “life unworthy of life.” As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe, the Germans persecuted and murdered millions of other people. More than three million Soviet prisoners

of war were murdered or died of starvation, disease, or maltreatment. The Germans killed tens of thousands of non-Jewish Polish intellectual and religious leaders, and deported millions of Polish and Soviet citizens for forced labor. From the earliest years of the Nazi regime, homosexuals and others deemed to be socially unacceptable were persecuted. Thousands of political dissidents (including Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists) and religious dissidents (such as Jehovah's Witnesses) were also targeted. Many of these individuals died as a result of incarceration and maltreatment.

In the final months of the war, SS guards forced camp inmates to march hundreds of miles without shelter in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners. As Allied forces moved across Europe in a series of offensives, they began to encounter and liberate concentration camp prisoners. World War II ended in Europe with the unconditional surrender of German armed forces in the west on May 7 and in the east on May 9, 1945.

By war's end, close to two out of every three Jews in Europe had been murdered by Nazi Germany and its collaborators in the massive crime we now call the Holocaust. (USHMM)

As you will soon discover, if it wasn't clear already, it is impossible for those of us who are not victims to be able to understand what it was like for the victims. There is not a language that can make this happen. But this does not mean that we cannot attempt to imagine, attempt to grasp a form of human experience that is foreign to anything else. If the study of literature has anything to do with trying to understand our humanity, Holocaust literature can only serve to deepen us, for in spite of its horror, cruelty, and inhumanity, the Holocaust was perpetrated by human beings against other human beings. Furthermore, reading these texts, we might feel as if we are making a moral statement: We will never forget; we will never stand by, and let a catastrophe such as this happen again; we will accept responsibility for preventing the destructive whirlwinds of hatred and prejudice in our own time. This, your instructor hopes, is one of the most important legacies of the victims to whom this course is dedicated.

*"Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.... And action is the only remedy to indifference, the most insidious danger of all."*

--Elie Wiesel, Nobel Prize acceptance speech, 1986

***Do not be a perpetrator.***

***Do not be a victim.***

***Do not be a bystander.***

Yehuda Bauer

*"In concrete terms it amounts to little: An Italian civilian worker brought me a piece of bread and the remainder of his ration every day for six months; he gave me a vest of his, full of patches; he wrote a postcard on my behalf to Italy and brought me the reply. For all this he neither asked nor accepted any reward, because he was good and simple and did not think that one did good for a reward."*

--Primo Levi, **Survival in Auschwitz**

*They came for the communists, and I did not speak up because I wasn't a communist;  
They came for the socialists, and I did not speak up because I was not a socialist;  
They came for the union leaders, and I did not speak up because I wasn't a union leader;  
They came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.  
Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak up for me.*

---- Pastor Martin Niemoller, 1892-1984

## Course Requirements

### Required Texts:

THE WORLD MUST KNOW, 2nd edition, 2006, Michael Berenbaum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

ART FROM THE ASHES: A Holocaust Anthology, ed. Lawrence Langer, Oxford 1995

DIFFERENT VOICES: Women and the Holocaust, ed. Carol Rittner & John Roth, Paragon House 1993

NIGHT, Elie Wiesel, translated from French by Marion Wiesel, Bantam

SURVIVAL IN AUSCHWITZ, Primo Levi, trans. from Italian by S. Woolf, Touchstone 1958

MAUS: A Survivor's Tale, Vol. I: "My Father Bleeds History," and Vol. II: "And Here My Troubles Began," Art Spiegelman, Pantheon 1986 & 1991

### Optional Texts, available in the bookstore and on reserve in the library

Terence Des Pres, *The Survivor*, Oxford

Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History*, Meridian

Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, Yale

Raul Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews, student ed.*, Holmes & Meier

Inga Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust*, Cambridge

Ron Rosenbaum, *Those Who Forget the Past*, Random House

Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell*, Perennial

Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews*, 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, Bantam

Leni Yahil, *Holocaust*, Oxford

Neil J. Kressel, *Mass Hate*, Westview

Rubenstein and Roth, *Approaches to Auschwitz, revised edition*, Westminster

## On Reserve in the Library:

All of the required books, the optional books above, and the following optional texts are on 24-hour reserve for our class.

### Selected Historical background:

Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*

Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101*

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*

Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust*

David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust*

Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw*

Dalia Ofer and Lenore Weitzman, eds., *Women in the Holocaust*

### Selected Films

*Night and Fog*, Alain Resnais

*Schindler's List*, Stephen Spielberg

*The Pianist*, Roman Polansky

*The Grey Zone*, Tim Blake Nelson

*Europa, Europa*, Agnieszka Holland

*Fateless*, Lajos Koltai

*Shoah*, Claude Lanzmann

### Selected Literary Studies

Sidra Ezrahi, *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature*

Shoshona Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature*

Saul Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation*

Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*

Sue Vice, *Holocaust Fiction*

Efraim Sicher, ed., *Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auschwitz*

James Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*

### On Genocide

Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, *The Specter of Genocide*, Cambridge

Totten, Parsons and Charny, *Century of Genocide, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, Routledge

### Selected Web Sites:

Cybrary of the Holocaust. <http://remember.org/>

The Nizkor Project. <http://www.nizkor.org/>

Simon Wiesenthal Center. <http://www.wiesenthal.com>

Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust. <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/Holocaust/default.htm>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <http://www.ushmm.org/>

Women and the Holocaust: <http://www.theverylongview.com/WATH>

Yad-Vashem, the national Holocaust memorial of Israel <http://www.yadvashem.org.il>

*Note: be very careful where you go on the internet; hate and Holocaust denial are often disguised.*

### Moral Dilemmas; Ethical Choices

1. *Would you, as an 'ordinary' German, have hidden a Jew even if it meant putting your own family in danger and knowing that the Nazis rewarded those who turned in Jews?*
2. *The Jewish family in the house next door has been 'deported.' Would you take the items left in the empty house?*
3. *If you were a German railroad employee who knew that Jews were being deported to concentration camps, would you continue to work for the company?*
4. *Crammed into a cattle car with more than 80 Jewish men, women, and children on a train heading for Eastern Europe, towards an unknown destination and an uncertain fate, you find a chance to escape through a gap in the boards of the car. Knowing that the SS has warned that if one person escapes, half of those still inside the wagon would be shot, would you jump?*

### About **INTERNATIONAL STUDIES 268:**

This is a **General Education course in the Social and Behavioral Sciences**. As such it aims to add breadth and depth to your education in many ways; for example, among other goals, by strengthening your skills in **literacy**, your recognition and analysis of **ethical thinking**, and your awareness of **global perspectives**. In terms of **literacy and creative expression**, you will be reading texts translated from several languages, and writing essays on them, as well as regularly turning in papers regarding your responses to readings, concepts, films, discussions, etc., presented in the course. You will write a narrative (within a documented historical framework) telling the story of a person caught in the Holocaust.

You will recognize and analyze, without presuming to judge, the excruciating **moral dilemmas**, sometimes called "**choiceless choices**," faced by the victims of the Shoah, as delineated in their writings. You will become familiar with the actions of those victims in "**the Gray Zone**," who faced the "choice" of collaborating with the perpetrator in order to survive (e.g., kapos, the Sonderkommando, the Judenrat). Students will also reflect upon and discuss the ethics involved in being a bystander in the presence of evil actions. Students will consider the motivations and actions of perpetrators and collaborators, recognizing, for example, the roles of ideology, peer pressure, anti-Semitism, racism. Students will reflect on the turning point when a bystander moves to become a rescuer.

You will learn to view the Holocaust in a **global perspective**. You will study the outcome of unchecked, government sponsored racism, and recognize what results when a society seeks to annihilate multiculturalism and diversity. Students will recognize the racism and xenophobia of peoples and nations, and understand the importance of individual and social accountability, in remembering, learning, and acting to prevent human suffering. You will understand that "never again" has been only a comforting slogan in the face of repeated genocides and "ethnic cleansing" since the Shoah. Through our readings and discussions, you will learn ways to recognize and respond to genocide and persecution. At the same time, you will learn that education alone does not prevent people—doctors, lawyers, professors, judges—from committing atrocities; and that you must never cease from scrutiny, vigilance, and action in the face of radical evil.

You will demonstrate your mastery of these general education goals through your writings, readings, and discussions of the literature of the Holocaust.

**(More information on General Education at the end of the syllabus.)**

## Resistance and Moral Courage During the Holocaust (1933-1945)

*To Resist was...*  
*to smuggle a loaf of bread,*  
*to teach in secret,*  
*to cry out warning and shatter illusions,*  
*to rescue a Torah Scroll,*  
*to forge documents,*  
*to smuggle people across borders,*  
*to chronicle events and conceal the records [diaries, documents]*  
*to hold out a helping hand to the needy,*  
*to contact those under siege and smuggle weapons,*  
*to fight with weapons in the streets, mountains and forests,*  
*to rebel in the death and concentration camps,*  
*to rise up in the ghettos in revolt.*

### - The Ghetto Fighters' House



Emanuel Ringelblum's Oneg Shabbat archive, Warsaw Ghetto

### **EUPHEMISMS FOR MURDER**

<p><i>Special handling</i>  <i>Deportation</i>  <i>Deportation to the east</i>  <i>Resettlement</i>  <i>Liquidation</i>  <i>Final solution of the</i>  <i>Jewish problem</i>  <i>relocation</i>  <i>Transport</i>  <i>Selection</i>  <i>Extermination</i>  <i>Appropriate treatment</i>  <i>Evacuation</i>  <i>Thinning out</i>  <i>Pacification</i></p>	<p><i>Action</i>  <i>Special pacification</i>  <i>Removal</i>  <i>Having-been-migrated</i>  <i>Cleansing</i>  <i>Worked through</i>  <i>Final goal</i>  <i>Total solution</i>  <i>Conclusive solution</i>  <i>Bath arrangements</i>  <i>Auxiliary equipment</i>  <i>Undressing room</i>  <i>Transit camp</i>  <i>Labor Camp</i>  <i>Disinfection</i></p>	<p><i>Operations</i>  <i>Special operations</i>  <i>Removal of hostile</i>  <i>elements</i>  <i>Special measures</i>  <i>Reduction</i>  <i>Containment</i>  <i>Severest measures</i>  <i>Migration</i>  <i>Natural reduction</i>  <i>Maximum efficiency</i>  <i>Processing</i>  <i>Finishing off</i>  <i>Installations</i>  <i>Rooting Out</i></p>
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## Basic Requirements for this course:

1. *Attendance and promptness.* I expect that you will attend all classes, health and weather permitting. If you are absent, get in touch with someone else in class (*not your professor*) to find out what you have missed, and to *be sure that you are fully prepared for the next class.* You will not pass this course unless you have attended most of the class sessions. Be aware that missing one of our classes is the equivalent of missing a week's worth of work. Disappearance after the break will count as an absence. More than one absence will affect your grade. There are no excused absences, except with a doctor's note. Students who have missed more than three weeks of class, for whatever reason, must withdraw from the course.

Arrange your schedule so that you are prompt and don't disrupt the class by coming late. *Chronic* lateness will affect your grade.

2. *Preparedness.* **The readings are the heart of the course.** You will have each assignment thoroughly read and completed by the date it is due. Of course a literature class requires a lot of reading. If you don't think that you can keep up with the workload, you may want to consider taking a different course.
3. *Class participation.* Everyone must contribute to class discussions during each class meeting. Eager talkers will be handsomely rewarded! Steady contributions to discussions and questions will make your grade skyrocket!
4. *Basic classroom manners.*
  - Turn off all cell phones and pagers.
  - Do not conduct private conversations or pack up books and papers while the professor or other students are speaking.
  - Once class has begun, remain alert and focused; do not doze or do homework. Do not leave the room. *Concentrate fiercely!*
  - Do not arrive late or leave early. Return promptly from breaks. Failure to return after the break will count as an absence.
  - Do not bring food into the classroom.
  - If you bring drinks, clean up after yourself.
  - Do nothing, in short, that interrupts the focused attention of the professor and the class.

Important! In this course we will be discussing the cold-blooded torture, persecution, suffering and mass murder of approximately 11 million people, six million Jews and five million others. While we will make time to find reasons to smile once in awhile, understand that there are certain student behaviors that will be regarded as disrespectful of the seriousness of the course subject matter and to the memory of these 11 million souls. Be advised that I will not tolerate the above behaviors. I want to stress that I would prefer to have enrolled in this course only students who are genuinely interested in the subject matter and prepared to undergo the rigors of studying the Shoah.

5. **Late work** will be graded down.

6. **Students with disabilities** requiring accommodations in this course (in reading, writing, quiz-taking, class discussion, etc) are urged to contact me as soon as possible, after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will need to register with Disability Services in WYLL D175 (595-2610 or 595-2372).

7. **Final grade** will be based on work done over the course of the entire semester, including quizzes, papers, exams, attendance, class discussion and effort.

8. **Plagiarists** will fail the course.

9. **If you are shy:** students are always welcome to come to my office to speak to me, or to talk to me after class. I also know that some students are reluctant, for whatever reasons, to do so. You are invited to leave notes to me regarding the material or the course; please bring to my attention any questions, concerns, suggestions, responses, complaints, praises—really, anything at all you want me to know. Notes may be signed or unsigned. If you would like a response, of course sign your note. Above all: don't simmer, don't hurt, don't remain confused, and if you are unwilling or unable to speak, please write. Notes can be left on the desk in the classroom, or under my office door.

9. **Flexibility:** I am negotiating to have survivors of the Holocaust address our class; based on previous experience, this may happen at the very last minute. Accommodations must be made regarding the advanced age of our speakers. Listening to and speaking with a person who actually underwent the Holocaust, will take precedence over any of our other activities. Prepare to be flexible about the schedule.

*During the war it seemed that, for years, until we reached a ripe old age, we would not cease telling of the horrors of the war. There were people who remained alive only because of the power of that hope: after the war, they would tell.... Immediately after the war, the desire was overturned. People were filled with silence. Everything that happened was so gigantic, so inconceivable, that the witness even seemed like a fabricator to himself. The feeling that your experience cannot be told, that no one can understand it, is perhaps one of the worst that was felt by the survivors after the war....*

*--Aharon Appelfeld, "After the Holocaust"*

## QUIZZES

There will be a brief (10 minute) quiz at the beginning of each class session to test your preparedness. Quizzes will be based on the required readings, and will consist of objective questions (identification of characters; plot details; definitions, etc.). There will also be one essay question. Quizzes will be graded P (pass), F (Fail) or 0 (quiz not taken). *All* quizzes count. They are how I know you have been doing your homework, thinking about the material, and are ready to participate in class. They are very important.

You are expected to take each quiz with the class; since quizzes will be given in the first 10 minutes of class, you must arrive on time.

***Your professor respects honesty. If you haven't completed the reading, say so on your quiz paper.***

If you have failed the quiz yet faithfully and carefully completed the reading, come talk to me as soon as possible. There's been a snafu somewhere.

*Discussion before the quiz:* At times I may divide you into small groups before the quiz and have you discuss the material with your classmates. This generally helps break down barriers among people, makes them more comfortable speaking up in the larger class, gives people a change, and a chance to learn from other students. All students must contribute to group discussions. Again: your professor appreciates honesty—if you haven't done the reading and can't participate, tell me.

*No make-ups on quizzes. Missed quizzes are recorded as 0 (zero), which is the equivalent of an F.*

## Written Work

### 1. ***Narrative paper.***

The lives of those murdered in the Holocaust have left few or no traces. I invite you, therefore, to imagine the life of a person caught up in the events of the Holocaust; e.g., within the time leading up to the day of her deportation to her death or liberation; or as he stands on the ramp at Auschwitz or lives in a ghetto or rides in the boxcars or passes on the Aryan side. Based on your reading of survivor accounts, write **a researched and documented** narrative (supported by a knowledge of historical context, and of the characteristics of Holocaust literature as we have been discussing them this term) of a person living and/or dying during one of the phases of the Holocaust--perhaps someone found in one of the photographs in the Berenbaum text or mentioned in the work of one of our writers.

Your writing will be imaginative—empathetic, really—but not false. You must consult not only the texts for this course, but several of the recommended or optional texts on library reserve. Do not fake it. Place your narrative in an historically accurate context. Imagine this person as yourself.

Such individual focus will exemplify the suffering of those who perished in the Holocaust, and it will perhaps enable you to find an appropriate emotional response. One of the purposes of the course will be to supply you with context and vocabulary to write your narrative with appropriate thoughtfulness, so that the life you trace and imagine will be strictly within the context of the sources we will be reading.

*400-level students: minimum 4000 words + list of works consulted (do not include our texts). Include word count.*

*200-level students: minimum 2000 words+ list of works consulted (do not include our texts). Include word count.*

**Exact due date and more precise directions will be given later in the semester.**

### 2. ***Brief response papers***

Short, informal essays assigned from time to time, asking you to reflect on your feelings, views, ideas, reactions, etc., to the course material. These will be graded

in the same manner as the quizzes (P, F, O). Papers must be typed. More directions to follow.

### 3. *Analysis paper*

This will be a formal, literary analysis of a work or works about or by women in the Holocaust, due on the final day of class. More directions will be given later in the course.

Those registered for credit in History may choose to write on the historical context within a work or works about or by women in the Holocaust.

*Midterm and Final Exams* may be given. Stay tuned.

Anything in this syllabus is subject to change—always in the direction of less, rather than more work.

*At last, some good news:*

**Anyone can get an A!**

*Regardless of your grades on exams and papers! You will ace the course if*

- *you have perfect attendance;*
- *have passed all quizzes*
- *have made steady and sincere contributions to class discussions all semester long.*

I consider then that no matter what your grades, you have done your best, and am pleased to give you my respect and an A.

*"I was there for about two years. Time there is not the same as it is on earth. Each moment there moves at its own speed. The inhabitants of this planet had no names. They did not dress as we dress here. They were not born here, nor did they give birth. They breathed by other laws of nature. I believe with all my heart that as in astrology, the stars influence our fate. So the ash-planet Auschwitz stands over this earth and influences it."*

Ka-Tzetnik 135633, on Auschwitz

Zelda

זלדה

#### Everyone Has a Name

לכל איש יש שם

Everyone has a name  
given to him by God  
and given to him by his parents

לכל איש יש שם  
שנתן לו אלוהים  
ונתנו לו אביו ואמו

Everyone has a name  
given to him by his stature  
and the way he smiles  
and given to him by his clothing

לכל איש יש שם  
שנתנו לו קומתו ואופן חיוכו  
ונתן לו האריג

Everyone has a name  
given to him by the mountains  
and given to him by his walls

לכל איש יש שם  
שנתנו לו ההרים  
ונתנו לו כתליו

Everyone has a name  
given to him by the stars  
and given to him by his neighbors

לכל איש יש שם  
שנתנו לו המזלות  
ונתנו לו שכניו

Everyone has a name  
given to him by his sins

לכל איש יש שם  
שנתנו לו חטאיו  
ונתנה לו כמיהתו

and given to him by his longing

לכל איש יש שם  
שנתנו לו שונאיו  
ונתנה לו אהבתו

Everyone has a name  
given to him by his enemies  
and given to him by his love

לכל איש יש שם  
שנתנו לו חגיו  
ונתנה לו מלאכתו

Everyone has a name  
given to him by his feasts  
and given to him by his work

לכל איש יש שם  
שנתנו לו עונות השנה  
ונתן לו עיוורונו

Everyone has a name  
given to him by the seasons  
and given to him by his blindness

Everyone has a name  
given to him by the sea and  
given to him  
by his death.

לכל איש יש שם  
שנתן לו הים  
ונתן לו

*(Translated from Hebrew by Marcia Falk, quoted from  
"Generations of the Holocaust" by Bergmann and Jugovy)*

### For reflection and response, for ideas or inspiration for your papers:

1. Look at the quotation by Levi on pg 2 of the syllabus. Can language portray the evil of the Holocaust? What are the limits of language?
2. Aharon Appelfeld says that he had to write fiction because if he remained true to the facts, nobody would have believed him. "The reality of the Holocaust surpassed any imagination."  
According to Elie Wiesel, testimony is the most powerful tool we have for remembering the Holocaust.  
Discuss the importance of literature and testimony in understanding the Holocaust. What can literature accomplish that history, for example, cannot?  
  
Appelfeld says that literature is a person's private language. Does that statement contradict or support the importance of literature as testimony? Can literature be "true"? Is a person's diary more true? Or her memoirs?
3. What is meant by "the literature of atrocity"?
4. How have those who have experienced atrocity conveyed that experience to others who have not?
5. Discuss the claim that the literature about the Holocaust undermines a number of commonly held religious and philosophical beliefs; for example:
  - That suffering has some ultimate meaning, that it somehow ennoble the spirit and redeems the soul;
  - That it is possible to survive with dignity (what if one's own survival meant another person's certain death?);
  - That there exists a basic goodness in all human beings (what if there are some individuals who are spiritually and emotionally fulfilled by violence and the torture of others?).
6. Should the Holocaust be represented at all? Does aesthetic pleasure dilute the event? Is the proper reaction silence? Is it even possible to represent

an event of such magnitude and horror? Some maintain that any representation will be incomplete; falsifying; trivializing. It will be "Holocaust kitsch." Or Holocaust pornography.

- How can one present within the traditional structures of literary form, a work that will be true to the incomprehensibility and unfathomability of the Holocaust. Art transfigures moral chaos into aesthetic form; this might misrepresent that chaos and create a sense of meaning and purpose in the experience of the Holocaust.
7. The "literature of atrocity" is concerned with an order of reality which the human mind had never confronted before, and whose essential quality the language of fact was simply insufficient to convey. Given atrocities of human behavior, how is one to respond? How is one to interpret? How is one to understand a reality that includes such phenomenon? And does the audience have the capacity to understand a reality which contradicts all accepted definitions of the real and the normal?
- Who has the authority to write about the Holocaust? –particularly now that survivors are passing away?
  - Can the Holocaust be represented as comedy?
  - Is it ethical to convert the suffering of the victims into works of art?

### **REDEMPTION**

- The Holocaust had to happen so that---
- "happy ending" ("Schindler's List"?)
- reader taking away "a lesson," "hope," affirmation?
- Theodicy: where was God? Does God exist?

*Yet there are those who feel that writing itself can be seen as a counterforce to nihilism, an answer to barbarism, a last-ditch means of preserving the human in the face of a viciousness poised to destroy it. What remains is less than what perished but more than that which wanted to conquer and prevail. We do have the books while the night has nothing but itself.*

*Literature is not only a means of telling the story but a means of commemorating and suggesting new insights into human suffering and inspiration.*

### **What is genocide?**

Mass murder, like war, massacre, mass rape, and other such atrocities has occurred throughout history in all parts of the world. Mass killings are as old as time. However, the term '**genocide**' was coined by a Polish-Jewish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin, in 1944 to describe the annihilation of European Jewry. In 1945 the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg charged top Nazis with "crimes against humanity." The word "genocide" was used in the indictment but as a descriptive, not legal, term.

In 1948 with the great effort of Lemkin, the United Nations approved **The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide**, distinguishing genocide from other

forms of mass violence., and establishing genocide as **an international crime**. It defines genocide as:

any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

*In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century alone, dozens of genocides—accounting for over 23 million deaths—occurred, including in East Timor, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Bangladesh. On October 20, 2006 survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides called upon the U.N. to declare the current mass killing in Darfur in western Sudan a genocide.*



*In memory of the Holocaust martyrs*

## International Studies 268

### ***General Education, Measurable Outcomes***

#### **Communication**

*Literacy and creative expression:* As delineated earlier in the syllabus, students will read complex and demanding literary texts, and produce various types of writing about them: journals, essays, narratives. They will also take weekly quizzes that test their reading and comprehension.

#### **Reasoned Judgement**

*Ethical thinking:* as indicated in the syllabus, students will recognize and analyze ethical issues and actions as set out in their readings, and considered in their own journals and essays.

#### **Social and Personal Responsibility**

*Global perspective:* as explained in the syllabus, through their readings students will study the actions of various governments and individuals, as well as the putative causes of the Shoah and the genocides that followed it. Through reading, discussion, and writing, students will recognize the results of racism and xenophobia in individuals and nations, and understand the importance of individual and social accountability, in remembering, learning, and acting to prevent human suffering.

### **Scoring Rubrics:**

#### ***Communication/Writing:***

##### **Advanced/Excellent:**

- uses concepts and understandings from class experiences and readings to demonstrate integration of ideas with personal reflections and insights. Questions and concerns about topics are discussed. Journal entries are frequent, comprehensive, and meaningful.
- writing is essentially error free in terms of mechanics
- models the style and format appropriate to the assignment
- demonstrates thoroughness and competence in documenting sources
- flows smoothly from one idea to another
- sentences and words are chosen to communicate ideas clearly
- writer's decisions about focus, style/tone, and content make reading a pleasurable experience

##### **Competent/Good:**

- uses concepts and understandings from class experiences and readings, but doesn't sufficiently integrate ideas with personal reflections and insights. A few questions and concerns about topics are discussed. Journal entries are occasional, yet thoughtful
- writing follows normal conventions of spelling and grammar, with only a few errors
- consistently uses appropriate conventions for style and format and demonstrates thoroughness and competence in documenting sources
- sentences are structured and words chosen to communicate ideas clearly
- sequencing of ideas within paragraphs and transitions between paragraphs are clear and easy to follow
- writer's decisions about focus, organization, style/tone, and content communicate clearly and effectively
- purpose and focus of the writing are clear, and organization and content achieve the writer's purpose
- writing follows requirements for the assignment

##### **Adequate/Average:**

- uses concepts and understandings from class and reading experiences. Readings are insufficiently integrated. Personal comments are briefly mentioned. Questions and concerns about topics are rarely discussed. Journal entries are occasional and not very reflective.
- errors in spelling, grammar, and mechanics, syntax and other writing conventions sometimes distract the reader
- writing does not consistently follow appropriate style and/or format
- source documentation is incomplete or unclear
- syntax and/or diction sometimes interfere with clarity
- sequencing of ideas within paragraphs and transitions between paragraphs need improvement

- writer's decisions about focus, organization, style/tone, and/or content interfere with clear, effective communication
- purpose of the writing is not fully achieved
- all requirements of the assignment are not always fulfilled

**Below Average/Marginal:**

- does not use concepts and understandings from class. Class readings are not integrated. Personal comments are not mentioned. Questions and concerns about topics are not discussed. Journal entries are sporadic at best.
- numerous errors in spelling, grammar, and/or syntax interfere with comprehension
- style and/or format are inappropriate for the assignment
- documentation is missing or writing is plagiarized
- syntax, diction, lack of transitions and/or sequencing of ideas make reading and understanding difficult
- writer's decisions about focus, organization, style/tone, and/or content interfere with communication
- purpose of the writing is not achieved
- requirements of the assignment have not been fulfilled

***Ethical thinking***

**Excellent/Good:**

- demonstrates high level of awareness, understanding and appreciation of complex moral dilemmas
- demonstrates high level of understanding and appreciation of various ethical concepts distinct to the Shoah, such as "choiceless choices," and "the grey zone"
- demonstrates high level of awareness and understanding of the roles and ethical choices of perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers
- demonstrates a high level of awareness and understanding of the contributions of ideology, peer pressure, racism, and altruism to moral decisions
- demonstrates high level of awareness, understanding and appreciation of the responsibility of a society and of an individual to social justice

**Competent/Average:**

- demonstrates a growing level of awareness, understanding and appreciation of the complex moral dilemmas
- demonstrates growing level of understanding and appreciation of various ethical concepts distinct to the Shoah, such as "choiceless choices," and "the grey zone"
- demonstrates growing level of awareness and understanding of the roles and ethical choices of perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers
- demonstrates a growing level of awareness and understanding of the contributions of ideology, peer pressure, racism, and altruism to moral decisions
- demonstrates growing level of awareness, understanding and appreciation of the responsibility of a society and of an individual to social justice

**Deficient/Underdeveloped:**

- demonstrates limited level of awareness, understanding and appreciation of the complex moral dilemmas
- demonstrates limited level of understanding and appreciation of various ethical concepts distinct to the Shoah, such as "choiceless choices," and "the grey zone"
- demonstrates limited level of awareness and understanding of the roles and ethical choices of perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers
- demonstrates a limited level of awareness and understanding of the contributions of ideology, peer pressure, racism, and altruism to moral decisions
- demonstrates limited level of awareness, understanding and appreciation of the responsibility of a society and of an individual to social justice

## **Social and Personal Responsibility**

### *Global perspective*

#### **Excellent/Good:**

--demonstrates a high level of awareness, understanding and appreciation of the outcome of unchecked, government sponsored racism, and recognizes what results when a society seeks to annihilate multiculturalism and diversity.

--demonstrates a high level of awareness and understanding of racism and xenophobia of individuals and nations, and of the importance of individual and social accountability, in remembering, learning, and acting to prevent human suffering

--demonstrates a high level of awareness and understanding of genocides and "ethnic cleansing" since the Shoah, and of ways to recognize and respond to genocide and persecution

--demonstrates a high level of realization of and commitment to personal and social scrutiny, vigilance, and action in the face of radical evil.

#### **Competent/Average:**

--demonstrates a growing level of awareness, understanding and appreciation of the outcome of unchecked, government sponsored racism, and recognizes what results when a society seeks to annihilate multiculturalism and diversity.

--demonstrates a growing level of awareness and understanding of racism and xenophobia of individuals and nations, and of the importance of individual and social accountability, in remembering, learning, and acting to prevent human suffering

--demonstrates a growing level of awareness and understanding of genocides and "ethnic cleansing" since the Shoah, and of ways to recognize and respond to genocide and persecution

--demonstrates a growing level of realization of and commitment to personal and social scrutiny, vigilance, and action in the face of radical evil.

#### **Deficient/Underdeveloped:**

-- fails to demonstrate awareness, understanding and appreciation of the outcome of unchecked, government sponsored racism

--does not recognize what results when a society seeks to annihilate multiculturalism and diversity.

--does not understand racism and xenophobia of peoples and nations, nor the importance of individual and social accountability, in remembering, learning, and acting to prevent human suffering

--has little awareness and understanding of genocides and "ethnic cleansing" since the Shoah, nor of ways to recognize and respond to genocide and persecution

--has little or no realization of and commitment to personal and social scrutiny, vigilance, and action in the face of radical evil.