

# REPRESENTING THE HOLOCAUST

## Jewish 261-201

### For SOC (changes will be made, but books the same)

Prof. Rachel Baum



#### Your Teacher



Name: Dr. Rachel Baum

Wants to be called: Rachel, Prof. Baum, or Dr. Baum

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Office Hours: Tues, 3:30 - 5:00, and by appointment (can also do Skype, chat, etc)

Favorite book: *The Little Prince*



#### Accommodations

I'm here to help and will do whatever I can to support your success -- whether you are a returning student, a struggling writer, or the future President of the United States.

Students with a Visa from the Student Accessibility Center should give me their Visa within the first 2 weeks of the class.

Students will be called by whatever name and gender pronoun they desire. Please let me know if I should call you something different from what is on the roster.



Photo Credit: Flickr, "Surreal Name Given" by Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Holocaust remains one of the most horrific events in modern history. It is nearly impossible to comprehend the torture and murder of human beings on such a massive scale. Indeed, some people have said that the complexity and horror of the Holocaust cannot be represented. Yet there are many books, films, photographs, poems, paintings, and other representations of the event. Can such words and images help us to confront the Holocaust? To understand it? To prevent other genocides? To be better citizens of our country & the world?

This class provides a general background to the Holocaust, while also looking at the responsibility of representation, so important in our image-rich, social-media connected age.

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# THE COURSE

## WHAT TO DO>

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Check D2L regularly.** The hardest part of an online class is keeping up with the work, because you don't have a face-to-face class to remind you. Think of D2L as your classroom, and schedule it (and your course work) in your calendar.

**Forum Postings** (50 points each; 350 points total). Forums are the online version of in-class discussion. They are vital to our course, because they give you an opportunity to work through the issues of the course, and to engage in discussion about them with your classmates. They also offer me a chance to see your thinking about the issues and to talk with you about some of the key concerns of the course. You must respond to the question I have asked and your post must be a minimum of 300 words.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS>

### WHAT TO BUY

- Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know* (ISBN: 9780801883383). \$10, used
- Gerda Weissman Klein, *All But my Life*. (ISBN: 9780679729778) . \$6, used
- Art Spiegelman, *Maus II: A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began* (ISBN: 9780809015801) \$8, used

TOTAL COST .....\$24.

**Forum Responses** (15 points each; 2 required for each discussion for a total of 30 pts...210 points total). These are brief (minimum 150 words) responses to the posts made by your classmates. The more thoughtful you make these, the better class discussion will be. Say something substantive about the original post, rather than just using 150 words to say, "Good job!" You might ask for clarification about an issue, ask a question, or share an alternative view. For each forum, you must write **TWO** responses.

**Quizzes** (270 points). There are six quizzes throughout the semester. These are graded immediately on D2L. The first two, about the Berenbaum book (the history book) are worth 65 points each. The others are 35 points each.

**Final Exam** (120 points). Your final exam will be an essay that you will hand in on D2L. It is due May 16.

**"Dancing Auschwitz" post** (first week): 45 points

**Quiz on syllabus:** 5 points

## Flexible Learning Opportunities (Extra Credit)

### Up to 100 points total

I see extra credit as a way for students to take charge of their learning. Bomb a quiz? Forgot to do a discussion post? Do one or more of the below and get back on track.

1. Watch a Holocaust film from our class list (on D2L) and write a 1-2 page single-spaced paper about it. (up to 25 points each). Other films must be approved by me. Full assignment on D2L.

2. Attend Holocaust-related events/lectures and write a 1 page, single spaced paper about them (up to 50 points). Please approve the activity with me first, unless I have posted about it. Some activities are listed on page 10 of this syllabus.

3. Comment in our optional "thoughts & feelings" discussion forum in D2L. (5 pts)

4. Respond to someone's introduction in the first week (5 points)

5. Respond to someone's "Dancing Auschwitz" post in the first week (between 0 - 8 points available, depending on quality of response).

**All extra credit must be handed in on D2L by May 11, 2017**

## On the importance of enjoying life

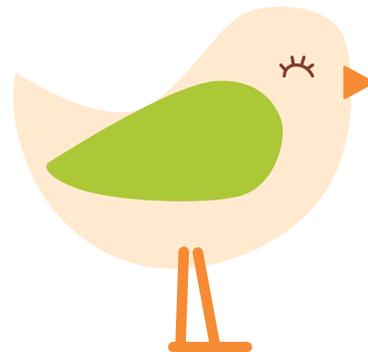
As the weeks go on, I will often give you the extra "homework" to "Do something life-affirming." It is intended as serious advice - even a requirement for succeeding in this class.

In this class, you will be looking directly at human evil, at how cowardice, group mentality, rationalization, political power, and other human traits lead to mass murder. This is hard work -- especially hard on the heart and spirit. Sometimes you will put down the work for this class feeling depressed, sad, or angry.

These are appropriate feelings to have about mass murder, and it is right to feel them. Some of you may find that this course raises issues for you related to things going on in your personal lives or in the world. Again, these are appropriate feelings. But we also have to find ways to counter them.

You will find that I am generally a happy person. I study a time of atrocity, and it gets to me, but the hidden gift of studying this time is that it has made me deeply appreciative of the many blessings in my own life -- a loving family, great friends, safety, and security.

So when I say, "Do something life affirming," I mean, do something that reminds you that life is really the best gift. That might mean hanging out with friends, calling a family member, climbing a mountain, working out, or rolling on the floor with your puppy. Whatever makes you happy to be alive will fulfill this "homework"!



## Grades

The grading for this course is based on 1000 points. Your final grade will be computed like this. You can keep track of your grade points on D2L.

950-1000 points = A

900-949 = A-

860 - 899 = B+

821 - 859 = B

800 - 820 = B-

760 - 799 = C+

721 - 759 = C

700 - 720 = C-

650 - 699 = D+

600 - 649 = D

Below 600 points = F

## Plagiarism (Don't cheat)

Plagiarism is claiming someone else's work as your own. The internet has made it easier to plagiarize, and sometimes people don't even realize that they are doing it. For example, if you look up a review of a film that we are studying and someone says something smart, and you take that idea and put it in your paper, you need to credit the source -- even if you are putting it in your own words. It's fine to learn from online sources -- just give those sources credit. If you use their exact words, those words need to be in quotation marks, with the source clearly noted. If you are unclear about how to do this, I'm happy to help.

I expect you to complete quizzes on your own and not to share questions or answers with anyone else in the course.

I have a zero-tolerance policy towards plagiarism and cheating in large part because they take up a lot of time, depress me, and chip away at the crazy optimism required to be a teacher. Also, cheating is just wrong. I will report the case to the dean of students and you will fail my course.

If you are thinking of cheating because you are overwhelmed with life, please talk to me or draw on the resources on the right. There is always a better way!

## Credit Hour Policy

Federal Law requires me to tell you how many hours you will spend on this course. Here is how I think it will break down:  
Reading/Watching: 90 hours  
Quizzes: 8 hours  
Writing/thinking: 34 hours

University Policy about these issues and others (e.g., students called to active military duty, discriminatory conduct, incompletes, etc) can be found at:  
<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>



This dog seems like a good reminder not to cheat, to seek help and support when you need it, to talk to your professor, and to take breaks for animal videos as needed. There will be no discrimination against cat people in this class, but I'm allergic, and personally prefer dogs.

## Help & Resources

If you're having challenges, don't go it alone -- there's help available!

1. If you're having technical issues, contact [help@uwm.edu](mailto:help@uwm.edu) or call 414-229-4040.
2. Make an appointment with me. You are welcome to email me, drop by office hours, or set up an appointment for a Skype session or phone call. I'm here to help!
3. Use the Writing Center. The Writing Center is a free resource for any stage of the writing process, from getting started to revising drafts to polishing a final essay. It's located in Curtin 127, x4339, and online tutoring is available as well!
4. Check out the resources of the Student Success Center. The Student Success Center is in BOL 120 and they offer a variety of help, from tutoring in certain subjects, to mentoring, to short courses on a variety of subjects. Stop by or spend time on their website to see all they do!
5. Go to Norris Health Center (x4716) for concerns about your physical or mental health.

UWM has offices with resources for Veterans, LGBT students, returning adult students, and more! Whatever your situation, don't hesitate to take advantage of all the help available -- that's what it's there for!

## What You'll Learn

A student successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Identify the major events of the Holocaust and describe the historical progression of the Nazi murder of the Jews of Europe
- Describe the major ethical, aesthetic, and representational concerns around representations of the Holocaust
- Recognize, evaluate, and analyze the complex moral context of the Holocaust, with particular attention to the roles of victim, perpetrator, and bystander
- Analyze a Holocaust text (literature or film) with particular attention to the ethical, aesthetic, and representational issues raised by the text.

## Why It Matters

We hear about Syrian refugees and we don't know what to do. Violence connected to racism and discrimination are in the news daily. Every day, we have to make decisions -- Is it always wrong to compare a political figure to Hitler, or is this comparison sometimes appropriate or even necessary? Is it appropriate to share graphic images of war in your Facebook feed? While we won't be able to answer all the important questions, learning about the Holocaust and considering the ethical issues of representation can help us to engage more complexly, thoughtfully, and ethically with these 21st-century issues.

## How do online classes work? How do I read the calendar?

After the first week, the course is divided into two-week units. Each unit is made up of the same general components: Reading and/or watching films, quizzes, and having online discussions with your classmates.

All of the reading and films are online, of course, as are the quizzes. Discussions happen in the discussion forums. You'll post a 300-minimum word post on a question that I ask, and then you'll respond to at least two of your classmates in a 150-minimum response. It's not exactly like having a face-to-face conversation, but in certain ways it can be better because you can really think about what you want to say.

Due dates always fall on Thursday and Sunday, after the first week. Other than that, you can schedule your time as is best for you. You just have to hand in the assignments and quizzes when they are due.

I strongly suggest that you put the course into your calendar, so you know when you will get the work done. The units follow a similar rhythm, so you will be able to block out time for the course. Do this not only for the assignments, but also for the reading, so you don't find yourself with a ton of reading to do last minute.

Assignments are always due by midnight on their due dates

Discussion forum questions are on D2L

## WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS & EACH OTHER (1/23 - 1/29)

### READ

1. Syllabus. Familiarize yourself with D2L. Post any questions to the "help!" forum -- Unless you don't know how to do that, in which case -- email me!

2. "Week One Lecture"

This is an easy week, so you can start next week's reading early. There's a lot of it, so pace yourself!

### WRITE/HAND IN

1. "Dancing Auschwitz" post. Before Sunday at midnight, please post your "Dancing Auschwitz" post to D2L. The full assignment is on D2L, under Discussions. This will start our thinking about the complexity of Holocaust representations.

You don't have to respond to anyone else's post, but if you do, you can get between 0 - 8 points of extra credit, depending on the quality of the response.

2. Introduction. Before Thursday at midnight, please go to the Discussions section of the site and post your introduction. Click on the blue link, "Introductions." There you can read my introduction and post your own. 5 points of extra credit if you respond to another person's post by Sunday, midnight.

### QUIZ

Quiz on syllabus to make sure that you know all the policies of the course. You can take it multiple times until you get a perfect score (this is the only quiz like this all semester). Due Sunday, Jan 29, but don't leave it that long.

## WEEKS 2 & 3: WHAT WAS THE HOLOCAUST? (1/30 - 2/12)

### READ

1. Lecture on the Holocaust
2. Berenbaum book, pp 2 - 72
3. Berenbaum book, pp 72 - 143
4. Lecture on the Death Camps

### WRITE/HAND IN

Nothing this unit

### QUIZ

1. Quiz #1 (on Berenbaum pp 2 - 72) due 2/5
2. Quiz #2 (on Berenbaum pp 65 - 143) due 2/12

## WEEKS 4 & 5: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ONE PERSON'S STORY? (2/13 - 2/26)

### READ/WATCH

1. Read Gerda Weissman Klein, *All But My Life*
2. Watch *One Survivor Remembers* (DVD, on D2L) and other Klein clips on D2L

### WRITE/HAND IN

1. Forum Post due Thurs, 2/23
2. Forum responses due Sunday, 2/26

### QUIZ

1. Quiz #3 on *All But My Life* and *One Survivor Remembers* due Thurs, 2/23

## WEEKS 6 & 7: THE ETHICS OF HOLOCAUST IMAGES (2/27 - 3/12)

### READ/WATCH

1. First week: Watch PPT on Holocaust Images. This PPT has audio on it, so you'll need to download it.
2. First week: Watch *Night and Fog* (video on D2L)
3. Second week: Watch lecture on *Shoah*.
4. Second week: Watch *Shoah* clips

### WRITE/HAND IN

1. First week: Forum post due Thurs, 3/2
2. First week: Forum response due Sunday, 3/5
3. Second week: Forum post due Thurs, 3/9
4. Second week: Forum response due Sunday, 3/12

### QUIZ

None

## WEEK 8: THE CHOICELESS CHOICES OF THE VICTIMS (3/13 - 3/19)

### READ/WATCH

1. Lecture on "The Gray Zone"
2. Scenes from *The Gray Zone*
3. Tadeusz Borowski, "This Way for the Gas, Ladies & Gentlemen."

### WRITE/HAND IN

none this week

### QUIZ

1. Quiz #4 due Sunday, 3/19

## SPRING BREAK: MARCH 20 - MARCH 26

### WEEK 9 : THE CHOICELESS CHOICES OF THE VICTIMS, CONTINUED (3/27 - 4/2)

#### READ/WATCH

1. Sara Nomberg-Pryztyk, "The Block of Death"
2. Sara Nomberg-Pryztyk, "Esther's First Born"

#### WRITE/HAND IN

1. Forum post due Thurs, 3/30
2. Forum responses due Sunday, 4/2

#### QUIZ

1. none this week

## WEEKS 10 & 11: WHY DID THE MURDERERS BECOME MURDERERS? (4/3 - 4/16)

### READ/WATCH

1. Lecture on perpetrators
2. Christopher Browning lecture, "What We Know about the Perpetrators"
3. Excerpts from *The Good Old Days*
4. Bernard Gotfryd, "Helmut Reiner"
5. Film, to be determined

### WRITE/HAND IN

1. Discussion post due Thursday, 4/13
2. Discussion Response due Sunday, 4/16

### QUIZ

1. Quiz #5 due Thurs, 4/13

## WEEKS 12 & 13: WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN OF SURVIVORS? (4/17 - 4/30)

### READ/WATCH

1. Lecture on Art Spiegelman, *Maus*, and Second Generation Literature
2. Art Spiegelman, *Maus II: And Here My Troubles Began*
3. Videos and articles on D2L about Spiegelman & *Maus*

### WRITE/HAND IN

1. Forum Post due Thursday, 4/27
2. Forum response due Sunday, 4/30

### QUIZ

1. Quiz #6 due Thursday, 4/27

## WEEKS 14 & 15 : WHAT WILL WE DO WHEN THE SURVIVORS ARE GONE? (5/1 - 5/11)

### READ/WATCH

1. Materials on D2L

### WRITE/HAND IN

1. Forum post due Mon, May 8
2. Forum response due Thurs, May 11

**Final exam/paper due May 16th**

### QUIZ

1. None

## EVENTS FOR EXTRA CREDIT

\* Jeffrey Shandler, Rutgers University. "The Holocaust on American Television." Feb 5, 2 pm, 4th Floor, Golda Meir Library, UWM .

\* Howard Melton, Holocaust survivor. Interviewed by Ben Merens. Jewish Community Center, Whitefish Bay, March 19, 10 - 11:15 am.

\* Linda Hooper (principal from "Paper Clips"), Congregation Shalom, April 30, 2 - 3:15

\* Visit Jewish Museum Milwaukee (1360 N Prospect). Check their website to see their Holocaust-related events. (Student admission is \$2).

**There will be other events on campus & beyond to attend. If you want to go to something not mentioned and to receive extra credit, please add me about it.**