Course Description

This course will examine how the Holocaust (the greatest single human tragedy of the 20th century) has been portrayed in feature films and documentaries. Our guiding questions will include: Do cinematic attempts to capture the horror of the Holocaust faithfully convey its scope, or do they end up trivializing it? Subjects of our study will include feature-length films such as Schindler's List (1993), The Pianist (2003) and Life is Beautiful (1998), as well as documentaries such as Shoah (1985) and Night and Fog (1955), among others. We will explore problems of representing historical tragedy and catastrophe via a medium of popular culture such as cinema, and we will try to decide what should count as “success” or "failure" in such representations.

Course Requirements

- Attendance and participation in all course sessions throughout the semester.
- All reading assignments
- One minor term paper (6; typed, double spaced pages) analyzing and responding to one of the class readings (25%).
- One major term paper (9-11 typed, double spaced pages) comparing and contrasting a choice of two films screened during the course (30%).
- Final Exam – Take home (on all films, class lectures and discussions and readings) (45%).

Required Text

Course Kit (CK) to be purchased at the bookstore.

Recommended Reading

Primo Levi  The Drowned and the Saved
Annette Insdorf  Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust
Andre P Colombat  The Holocaust in French Film
Yosefa Loshitzky, ed.  Spielberg’s Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler’s List
Judith Doneson  The Holocaust in American Film
Ilan Avisar  Screening the Holocaust: Cinema’s Images of the Unimaginable
Jeffrey Shandler  While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust
Donald Welch  Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945
Alan Mintz  Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America

Web Site

An important website that contains a wealth of material and useful links is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum - http://www.ushmm.org/

Cross-listed course:

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

Academic Integrity:

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

**Academic Integrity Office (University):** http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.
Submissions of Assignments
Assignments are expected to be handed in, in class on the date due. If you can't make the class on that date an alternative drop off location will be designated on the assignment.

Penalty for Late Submissions
Any late submissions without legitimate medical excuse will be subject to a penalty of a 25 percentage reduction in grade for each day it is handed in past the deadline.

There will be no exceptions to this rule.

Schedule of Films, Readings and Topics

Week 1: Cinematic Propaganda - Film in Preparation of the Holocaust
Film- The Eternal Jew (Der Ewige Jude)
Reading- (a) Propaganda and the German Cinema (Welch)
( b) The Triumph of Propaganda (Hoffmann)
CK, pp. 1-60

Week 2
Film- (a) Triumph of the Will (Riefensthal)
Documenting the Holocaust
(b) Night and Fog (Resnais)
Reading- (a) Fascinating Fascism (Sontag)
( b) Alain Resnais’ Night and Fog (Colombat)
CK, pp. 61-97

Week 3- Holocaust as Bureaucratic Enterprise
Film- The Wannsee Conference
Reading- CK, pp. 98-114

Week 4- Judging the Perpetrators
Film- Judgment at Nuremberg
Reading- CK, pp.115-126
FIRST ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week 5- Can the Holocaust be Funny?
Film- Life is Beautiful (Benigni)
Reading- (a) Dreaming the Unthinkable (Hoberman)
( b) Who Owns Auschwitz? (Kertesz)
( c) In the Eye of the Beholder (Denby)
CK, pp. 127-141

Week 6- Is There Redemption in the Holocaust
Film- Schindler’s List (Spielberg)
Reading- (a) Bartov
( b) Loshitzky
Week 7 - Discussion and Review

Week 8 - Survival-Heroism or Fate?
Film - The Pianist
Reading - Redemptive and Other (Geras)
Schindler’s Liszt, (Michael Oren)
CK, pp. 163-173

SECOND ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week 9 - Documenting the Holocaust Without Documents-Representation Through Memory
Film - Shoah (Lanzmann) Excerpts
Reading - In an Era of Testimony (Felman)
Seminar with Claude Lanzmann
From the Holocaust to ‘Holocaust’ (Lanzmann)
CK, pp. 202-242

Week 10 - Shoah (continued)

Week 11 - Digging Up a Sordid Past
Film - The Nasty Girl (Rosmus)
Reading - (a) Jacobowitz
(b) From Reality to Fiction (Rosmus)
CK, pp. 174-201

Week 12 - The Grey Zone or Fateless or Defiance
Final Thoughts
CK, pp. 243-end of course kit.

FINAL TAKE HOME EXAM HANDED OUT IN LAST CLASS