

## **Course Outline**

Course: *Jewish Responses to the Holocaust*

Location: HH

Time: Tues 2:30-5:20pm

Office Hours: Tuesday (by Appointment)

## **Course Description:**

The Holocaust (Shoah) is an event which has radically challenged Judaism on many different levels. The meaning of faith, history, and Jewish belief have all been put into question by the Shoah. The meaning of art, literature, and poetry, as well as the legacy of the enlightenment have also been put into question by this horrific event. Over the last two decades, the relation of the Holocaust to Israel and the future of the Jewish people have also been put into question by a group of theologians and political philosophers who see the relationship of the Shoah to Israel as deeply problematic; while other theologians and political philosophers see this problematic as a part of a larger program to ‘delegitimize’ Israel. In this course, we will address these questions by way of analyzing, discussing, and contrasting a variety of “Jewish” responses to the Shoah. These responses, spanning the period after the Holocaust to our own time, vary in content and form. The responses we will examine in this course will be drawn from different Jewish sources: philosophical, theological, filmic, artistic, and literary.

## **Grading:**

Students will be asked to keep a week-to-week journal which addresses the course material. The journal will be collected at the end of the term. It is worth 20% of the grade. Students will also be given two take-home assignments – at the middle and end of the term - worth 30% each. And the final essay will be worth 20%. The topics to be covered in each of the essay will be based on the material covered in the first and second half of the course. Possible topics will be provided; although students are at liberty to choose other topics not provided by the instructor.

## **NOTE ON AVOIDANCE OF ACADEMIC OFFENSES:**

**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](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (UW):** <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.

**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.

**Texts for the Course:**

- a) *A Holocaust Reader: Responses to the Nazi Extermination*, ed. Michael Morgan (HR)
  - b) *Badenheim 1939 – Aharon Appelfeld*
  - c) *Maus I and II – Art Spiegelman*
  - d) *Night – Eli Wiesel*
  - e) *Hope: A Tragedy – Shalom Auslander*
- Abbreviations for the texts to be read in the schedule

**Class Schedule/Readings:**

Class 1 – Introduction to Class – Before and After Auschwitz

- What makes a Jewish response to the Holocaust...Jewish?
- Precursors to the Holocaust – from Ancient Christianity to Emancipation and Modernity
- Contemporary anti-Semitism

## Class 2 – First Responses to the Holocaust

- HR: 19– 79 (Introduction – Optional) - Primo Levi, Jean Amery, Eli Weisel, and Martin Buber

## Class 3 – Holocaust and Theology I: Challenges to Jewish Faith

- HR: 79-158 – Berkowitz, Rubenstein, Greenberg, and Fackenheim
- Eli Weisel’s *Night*

## Class 4 – HR – Holocaust and Theology II (70s and 80s)

- HR: 159-171; 183-195; 250-270: Wyschogrod, Cohen, Fackenheim, and Jonas
- Eli Weisel’s *Night*

## Class 5 – Literary Responses – History, Fiction, and Retrospection - Part I

- Aharon Appelfeld – *Badenheim*

## Class 6 – Literary Responses – History, Fiction, and Retrospection – Part II

- Appelfeld – *Badenheim*
- (Take-Home Test 1)

## Class 7 – The Holocaust in the Graphic Novel

- *Maus I*

## Class 8 – Graphic Novel

- *Maus II*

## Class 9 – Postmodern Literary Responses to the Holocaust

- “Gimpel the Fool,” IB Singer, “The Tumblers” and “What do We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank,” by Nathan Englander, and *Hope: A Tragedy* (pp 1-42)

## Class 10 – A Literary Response – Comical Renditions of Anne Frank- Implications Part I

- *Hope: A Tragedy* – pp 43-110
- (Take-Home Test 2)

## Class 11 – Part II – Nov. 15th

- *Hope: A Tragedy* - pp. 111-193

- Class 12 – Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> - How can one tell jokes about the Holocaust? Comedy and Limits  
- *Hope: A Tragedy* – pp. 194-292  
- Watch – “*The Last Laugh*,” by Ferne Pearlstein

## Class 13 (Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>)

- Final Essays Due

- Journals Due
- Final Remarks \*

\* Note: All final essays and the second test must be uploaded to Waterloo LEARN