

JS233/RS272 Winter 2022
The Holocaust and Film

Instructor:

2:30-5:20

Time:

Tuesdays

Day:

Email:

TA:

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 (6-7 typed, double spaced pages) analyzing and responding to one of the class readings (25%).
- One major term paper (8-9 typed, double spaced pages) comparing and contrasting a choice of two films screened during the course (35%).
- Final Exam – Take home (on all films, class lectures and discussions and readings) (40%).

Required Text

All Course readings are posted on LEARN

Recommended Reading

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

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.

Contingencies for COVID

The pandemic may require changes in course delivery and can include any of the following contingencies:

- short-term (e.g., one-week) cancellation of in-person classes;
- a longer-term cancellation of in-person meetings;
- cancellation of in-person (midterm or final) examinations.

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. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

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](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

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. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Services

[Mental Health Services](#) aim is to provide holistic programming and services to help you lead a healthy and balanced life. We strive to provide a secure, supportive environment for students of all orientations and backgrounds.

Students suffering from problems with anxiety, depression, problems with sleep, attention, obsessions or compulsions, relationship difficulties, severe winter blues, etc., may make an appointment by phone or in person. Appointments are usually available within two days of initial contact with one of our medical doctors. All contacts are completely confidential.

Contact Health Services

[Health Services Building](#)

Call 519-888-4096 to schedule an appointment

Call 1-866-797-0000 for free 24/7 advice from a health professional

Contact Counselling Services

[Needles Hall Addition, NH 2401](#)

Call 519-888-4567 x 32655 to schedule an appointment

counserv@uwaterloo.ca

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Submissions of Assignments

-Drop boxes will be available on LEARN for submission of assignments

Penalty for Late Submissions

Any late submissions without legitimate and documented medical or other emergency 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.

Approximate Due Dates for Assignments-This is just an approximation so you know about when to expect them. The assignments will usually be handed out two weeks prior to due date at which time instructions will be clearly given and posted:

-First assignment approximately end of 4th week of class

-Second assignment approximately end of 8th week of class

Assistance for Improving Your Writing Skills

The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre works across all faculties to help students clarify their ideas, develop their voices, and write in the style appropriate to their disciplines. Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence.

Schedule of Classes: Films, Readings and Topics

Week 1: Cinematic Propaganda- Film in Preparation of the Holocaust

Film- *The Eternal Jew (Der Ewige Jude)*

Readings- Module#1- These are general readings on the subject of Film and Holocaust as well as historical background and should be read during the first few weeks of semester.

Module #2 on Learn

- _(a) Propaganda and the German Cinema (Welch)
- (b) The Triumph of Propaganda (Hoffmann)
- (c) A Cinematic reconstruction (Clinefelter)

Week 2

Film- (a) *Triumph of the Will (Riefensthal)*

Documenting the Holocaust

_____ (b) *Night and Fog (Resnais)*

Readings- Module #2- (a) Fascinating Fascism (Sontag)

-**Module #3** (b) Alain Resnais' *Night and Fog* (Colombat)
(c) Robin Wood

(d) Night and Fog Script

Week 3- Holocaust as Bureaucratic Enterprise

Film- *The Wannsee Conference*

Readings- Module#4

- a) Canby
- b) Scheman
- c) Wiesel
- d) Hilberg
- e) Conference Minutes

Week 4- The Grey Zone of The Camps

Film- Son of Saul

Readings - Module # 5

Week 5- Can the Holocaust be Funny?

Film- *Life is Beautiful (Benigni)*

Readings- Module# 6

- _ (a) Dreaming the Unthinkable (Hoberman)
- (b) Who Owns Auschwitz? (Kertesz)
- © In The Eye of the Beholder (Denby)
- (d) Flanzbaum
- (e) Gilman
- (f) Taylor

Week 6- Is There Redemption in the Holocaust

Film- *Schindler's List (Spielberg)*

Readings- Module #7

- (a) Bartov
- (b) Loshitzky

Week 7- Discussion and Review

Week 8- Judging the Perpetrators OR if not available Jojo Rabbit

Film *Judgment at Nuremberg*

Readings- Module # 8

- a) Doneson
- b) Gotschank
- c) Mintz

Week 9- Survival-Heroism or Fate?

Film- *The Pianist*

Readings- Module #9

- (a) *Redemptive and Other* (Geras)
- (b) *Schindler's List*, (Michael Oren)
- c) Badt
- d) Yacowar
- e) Tsiolkas
- f) Taylor**

Week 10- Documenting the Holocaust Without Documents-Representation Through Memory

Film- *Shoah* (Lanzmann) Excerpts

Readings- Module # 10-

- a) *In an Era of Testimony* (Felman)
- b) *Seminar with Claude Lanzmann*
- c) *From the Holocaust to 'Holocaust'* (Lanzmann)

Week 11- Digging Up a Sordid Past

Film- *The Nasty Girl* (Rosmus)

Readings- Module #11

- (a) Jacobowitz
- (b) *From Reality to Fiction* (Rosmus)

Week 12-

The Grey Zone or Fateless or Defiance or Inglorious Basterds

Readings- Module# 12 & # 13

Final Thoughts

FINAL TAKE HOME EXAM Posted and Explained LAST CLASS