

English 268 Introduction to Holocaust Studies
International Studies 268 Literature of the Holocaust
English 468 Holocaust Studies
History 268/468 Literature of the Holocaust
Women's Studies 495 Seminar
Humanities 468 Holocaust Studies

LITERATURE OF THE HOLOCAUST

SPRING 2014



Liberated children at Auschwitz; when asked their names, they showed the numbers tattooed on their arms.

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Professor of English

CA 214

MW 12:30-1:30; 4:30-5:15; 8:50-9:15pm, and gladly by appointment

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WELCOME!

This is the first and only course on the Holocaust at Parkside---a hybrid course that ought rightly be called **Introduction to the Survey of Holocaust Studies**. Despite all the departments that claim it, this is a single three credit course taught by a professor of literature with extensive training in the history of the Holocaust. One course—or even one lifetime--cannot cover all or even most of the aspects of the Holocaust; indeed, aspects of the Holocaust proliferate the more scholars understand and uncover, and the more national archives are opened. One of the “aha!” moments of this class for you may be your realization of the magnitude, scope, and breadth of the event; its implications; and its aftereffects that reverberate and will reverberate past our lifetimes.

To avoid disappointment, I will introduce you to the course by first telling you what this course is **not**:

- it is not a study of German or European History;
- or World War II;
- or The Third Reich;
- or Hitler;
- or the Nazi Party;
- nor theology, ethics, the psychology of perpetrators and rescuers, the response of the Allies; genocide;

or so many other topics studied under the rubric of the Holocaust. Should you wish to learn more, I have included some excellent sources for your research, now or later.

Oftentimes, people do not know exactly what is meant by "The Holocaust."

WORKING DEFINITION OF THE HOLOCAUST

The Holocaust refers to a specific event in 20th 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)

This particular course emphasizes literary art (fiction, memoir, poetry) created by the victims of the Holocaust—written primarily by Jews, but by others as well. Nazi ideology, World War II, Hitler, The Nazi Party, the history of antisemitism, German and European history, and other topics will be discussed primarily as a means to provide a context for what has been termed the “**the literature of witness.**” However, History and Literature share several major concerns—with, for example, issues surrounding representation, authority, memory, testimony, language, and the limits of all of these.

*“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 course assumes no prior knowledge of Jewish history, Judaism, the history of anti-Semitism, or the Holocaust.

A paragraph especially for those taking this course for credit in History and International Studies: be not afraid. You do not have to be an English major to

understand and do well in this course; you only have to know how to read. There are no mysterious and esoteric "hidden meanings" that you aren't trained to find. We will be studying the work of historians, and professors of history will visit the class. The first half of the course will rely heavily on assignments in history. Many of our texts are considered as both history and literature. You will learn for yourselves the similarities and differences between the study of Literature and the study of History.

"As an author, I'm grateful for having undergone Auschwitz, because as a writer, I saw the real face of the century." --Imre Kertesz {Nobel Prize in Literature, 2002}

Our 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. Holocaust Studies 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. The events we will read about **did** happen to real, breathing human beings, not two-dimensional caricatures of heroes and saints, monsters and demons. Some of the murdered were good, some were criminal, some were heroic but all were victims. We must 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.

When you study the Holocaust, you are studying the highest level of organized hate in the history of humankind: although Jews were the primary victims, millions of others labeled "undesirable," "enemies of the state," or "subhuman" were also murdered. Some groups were targeted because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the physically and mentally challenged, Africans, African-Germans, Jewish American soldiers, Russian POWs, and some of the Slavic people (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted and murdered on political and behavioral grounds, among them persons with physical or mental disabilities; political dissidents (Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists), religious dissidents (such as Jehovah's Witnesses and dissenting clergy), and what were at the time considered "antisocials" and "deviants," such as Homosexuals, the "work shy," and prostitutes. The Nazis victimized some people for what they did, some for what they refused to do, some for what they were, and some for the fact that they were. **Not all of the victims were Jews; but all Jews were the victims.**

The Holocaust was unprecedented, but now the precedent is here. One of the horrible lessons of the Holocaust is that it can and does happen again; it happened to a certain extent in Rwanda, East Timor, Cambodia, the Sudan, and in Kosovo.

One way for us to relay the horrors of what happened, its significance and to keep this from happening again is through honest and universal education, such as this course. At the same time, understand that medical doctors were among the chief murderers in Nazi Germany. The Holocaust calls into question all of our belief systems; indeed, it questions our belief in Western Civilization itself.

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. Yet, by reading these texts and completing this course, we might feel as if we are making a moral statement: We will never forget; we will never stand by; 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.

Holocaust Remembrance Day: April 28, 2014

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 such 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.

(Go to page 10: course details)

On orders from my department, I too drove a gas-van from Berlin to Minsk. These vans had been constructed with a lockable cargo compartment, like a moving van....I was detailed with the gas-van to about twelve conveyors of arriving Jews. It was in 1942. There were about a thousand Jews in each conveyer. With each arrival I made five or six trips with my van. Some of the Jews were shot. I myself never shot a single Jew; I only gassed them.--Comments by Walter Stier, former head of the Reich Railway Department 33. When asked if he knew that Treblinka meant extermination, he responded: "Of course not...How could we know? I never went to Treblinka. I stayed in Krakow, in Warsaw, glued to my desk...I was strictly a bureaucrat.



Sauer gas vans: early attempts to devise an efficient, cost effective genocide.

An example of what we will be reading: *"One of the Germans, a man named Sepp, was a vile and savage beast, who took special delight in torturing children. When he pushed women around and they begged him to stop because they had children with them, he would frequently snatch a child from the woman's arms and either tear the child in half or grab it by the legs, smash its head against a wall and throw the body away. Such scenes were by no means isolated. Jankiel Wiernik, "One Year in Treblinka"*

*Although I am aware that it is the duty of the police to protect the innocent I was however at that time convinced that the Jewish people were not innocent but guilty. I believed in the propaganda that Jews were criminals and subhuman and that they were the cause of Germany's decline after the First World War. **The thought that one should oppose or evade the order to take part in the extermination of the Jews never entered my head either. I followed these orders because they came from the highest leaders of the state and not because I was in any way afraid.***

Kurt Moebius, Nazi at Chelmno extermination camp, "The Good Old Days"

In 1933 Martin Niemoller, a leader of the Confessing Church, voted for the Nazi Party. By 1938, he was in a concentration camp. After the war, he is believed to have said:

*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

"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

The road to Auschwitz was built by hate but paved by indifference. --Ian Kershaw

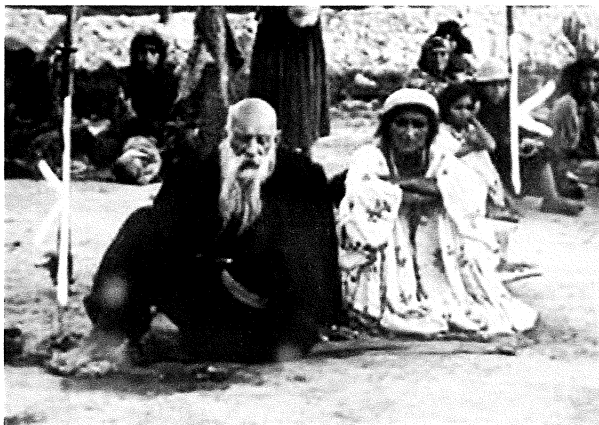
"At the risk of offending, it must be emphasized that the victims suffered more, and more profoundly, from the indifference of the onlookers than from the brutality of the executioner. The cruelty of the enemy would have been incapable of breaking the prisoner; it was the silence of those he believed to be his friends---cruelty more cowardly, more subtle---which broke his heart. ...At Auschwitz, not only man died, but also the idea of man. It was its own heart the world incinerated at Auschwitz."

--Elie Wiesel



Elie Wiesel in Buchenwald concentration camp

The picture was taken on April 16, 1945, five days after the liberation of the camp.



5,

Roma and Sinti Families in Auschwitz

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

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

COURSE PACKET (buy from professor)

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

Terence Des Pres, *The Survivor*, Oxford

Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, vols. I and II

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*, 10th 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*, Vols. I and II

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*, 2nd 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>

Sites with many links to other sites: www.jr.co.il/hotsites/j_holoc.htm

www.holocaust-history.org

www.historyplace.com

www.shoahproject.org

www.us-israel.org/jsource/holo.html

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- to become familiar with the main events and personages of the Holocaust;
- to understand the controversies surrounding the representation of the Holocaust in literature and in history; including issues of authenticity, appropriateness, testimony, the problems and limits of language, the effect of trauma upon memory, "post-memory";

- to recognize the roles played by perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, victims, resisters, rescuers, and witnesses;
- to comprehend how gender affected experiences during the Holocaust;
- to practice the close reading of literary texts;
- to become familiar with the history of antisemitism, its myths, and causes;
- to understand the process of "othering," its consequences, and its prevention;
- to understand the impact of the event upon the children of the survivors and upon later generations, and its continuing impact in the 21st century;
- to understand what is meant by genocide.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS COURSE:

1. Attendance and promptness. I expect that you will attend all classes. If you are absent, get in touch with someone else in class (*not your professor who has over a hundred students to think about*) to find out what you have missed, and to be sure that you are fully prepared for the next class. Three note-takers will receive extra credit and my gratitude for sharing their notes with absentees:

Kenosha:

Racine:

On duty:

*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. This course also requires mental attendance. **Disappearance after the break will count as an absence.** More than one absence will affect your grade. Students who have missed more than three weeks of class, for whatever reason, will fail the course. There are no excused absences, except with a doctor's note or a notice from the Dean of Students.*

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

Do not plan vacations or make appointments that conflict with class time; if you have an unavoidable work conflict, discuss it with me beforehand.

I understand and respect that many of you have work and family commitments that might interfere with your education. You are welcome to discuss these with me.

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 to be discussed. 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. Your professor welcomes your contributions, and respects curious, thoughtful, and bold learners. Do not be afraid to speak up: we are all students here, and students may ask anything inside a college classroom, without fear of humiliation, for it goes without saying that no college student is stupid, nor is any student taking a holocaust course antisemitic. I promise you that I will never knowingly humiliate a student, nor will I permit other members of the class to do so. The college classroom is one of the few places in our society where discussion and debate may freely take place in a sophisticated and informed way; where in the spirit of inquiry, anything may be said. Always remember: I like you, and I respect you for taking on this course.

Eager talkers will be handsomely rewarded! Those who speak during class, please give me your names at the end of class. Steady contributions to discussions and questions will make your grade skyrocket!

4. Basic classroom manners.

- Turn off cell phones.
- Do not conduct private conversations or pack up books and papers while the professor or other students are speaking.
- Attendance will also be taken after the break.
- Once class has begun, remain alert and focused; do not doze or do homework
- Falling asleep, yawning loudly, or taking a mental vacation during class time unnerves the professor and may affect her self esteem.
- Do not arrive late or leave early, or ask for permission to do so.
- Take care of your needs before class so that you will not have to leave the classroom
- 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.

5. Late Work will be graded down one grade for each day it is late. The sequences of grades goes, for example, B+, B, B-. Doctors' written excuses, as well as very imaginative and creative lies may be taken into account.

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. Don't be a jerk!

Plagiarism is intellectual theft, and it includes: using the actual words of another person without citing them; paraphrasing those words without citing them (putting them into your own words); or using another person's ideas without citing them; in other words, lying, cheating, and stealing. It is of course permissible to make sparing use of another's words or ideas as long as you give them credit, both within the body of your paper and at the end in a Works Cited page. However, it is your own ideas and insights in which I am most interested.

8. 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 carry a grudge, 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

7. 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.*** Realize that very shortly there will be no one left alive who has undergone the Holocaust; it is up to you to witness and remember their stories, and tell them to the next generation.

Remember to be kind to each other and to the Professor.
Forgive her the many mistakes she knows she will make.

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 **major** terms, events, 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.

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 choice: if you are unprepared for the quiz, you can take it anyway and hope to fool me, or you can be honest. Your professor respects honesty. If you haven't completed the reading, say so on your quiz paper. You will still fail the quiz but you will be a mensch.

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.

If you have faithfully completed the reading yet blank on one of my questions, write something else, very detailed and specific, that shows you have done your work.

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.

EXAMS

There will be a midterm exam for all students (date etc. to be announced; you will get a study sheet).
There will be a take-home final for 200-level students.

WRITTEN WORK FOR 400 LEVEL STUDENTS

1. ***Narrative paper: Parts A and B, your main essays for the course:***

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 very closely like your own self 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. Do not try to cover the entire Holocaust; focus on a single aspect, and go into depth and detail.

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. Historians and English majors should do well here.

You may feel that imagining yourself as a victim of the Holocaust is disrespectful to those who actually went through the experience. I find it the opposite: humbling, even reverential, attempting to empathize as closely as it is possible with the suffering of those who perished in the Holocaust; the nearest we can come to imagining the unimaginable, and struggling with the same issues of language and representation that we have been studying.

Section A: Historical analysis: report of the immediate historical context within which your narrative takes place: researched and documented. List of works to be consulted will be handed in earlier.

Section B: a story, your narrative

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, 0). Papers must be typed and double spaced. More directions to follow.

3. Reflection/Analysis paper: short essays from time to time

- *There will be an opportunity in April to accompany Prof. Vopat to a Friday night service at the Kenosha synagogue; afterwards, Rabbi Dena Feinberg will address our group. An **oneg Shabbat** (refreshments) will follow. The service itself takes about 45 minutes; the shul is handicapped accessible. Everyone is welcome.*

GRADING OF WRITTEN WORK:

- Papers will be graded using the following four criteria: *originality, argument, evidence, and style*. *Originality* means that the ideas are your own. That doesn't mean no one else in the world has to have thought of them. It only means that in the context of the class, you have come up with these ideas by yourself, and that they are not recycled from the class or the professor's lectures.
- *The argument* is both the thesis of your paper and how it is presented structurally. Is the paper logical? Does one idea lead to the next? Are there contradictions? Do you account for possible objections? Is your thesis significant and do you prove its significance? Have you scrupulously avoided repeating yourself? Have you avoided broad generalizations, or empty, shallow work?
- *The evidence* is the quality and quantity of support you pull together to support your argument, and comes from both the text in question and, possibly, the context (for example, historical evidence).
- *Style* is hard to define but easy to recognize. It includes your grasp of the basic mechanics of grammar and syntax, but also your ability to write well-constructed, clear, fluid sentences.
- *Presentation:* never hand in a paper to any professor which has not been carefully proofread, and checked for grammar, punctuation and spelling. This professor asks that you not use folders or fancy covers; just turn in the paper itself.

Notice: Any information on this syllabus may be superseded by verbal announcements in class. Please be here every time; make sure you know what's going on. I am less interested in pushing through the syllabus, than I am committed to giving you the best education I can devise, taking into account the pace and interests of your particular class. Please understand that I cannot concoct a one semester course on the Holocaust that will satisfy each and every student. Know that I take this class very seriously and work for it as hard as I can.

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*
- *handed in all the coursework*
- *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.