

Professor V. Aarons

Office Hours: MWF 10:00-11:00; 2:30-3:00, and by appointment
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Course Objectives - This course will be structured around three varying historical and generational perspectives of the Shoah, the biblical term for ruin, calamity, and desolation, reintroduced into modern Hebrew to suggest the cataclysmic destruction of European Jewry, generally referred to as the Holocaust, that period of time from 1933-1945, in which the Nazi genocide destroyed a third of the world's Jewish population. The three perspectival approaches that will direct our reading and discussion will consist of the following: those writers who themselves experienced the Holocaust, who lived through the immediacy of events and their aftermath and whose first-hand accounts shape their narratives; those "second generation" Holocaust writers, children of survivors and others whose own lives were shaped by the experiences of those who witnessed the Shoah; and, finally, those writers, loosely defined as North American, whose imaginations of events surrounding the Shoah frame and engender their narratives.

This course fulfills the **Global Awareness (GA)** Core Capacities Requirement.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to:

- Analyze the major historical event of the Holocaust, the character of Germany and related countries that gave rise to the event, and the effect on other countries throughout the world;
- Identify and articulate the variety of perspectives and values of diverse peoples, groups, institutions, and cultures of regions outside the United States;
- Gather and evaluate information from scholarly sources concerning the perspectives and values of peoples outside the United States.

Course requirements: Three analytical essays (7-10 pp.), using secondary sources where appropriate (MLA documentation). One of the papers must include outside research that responds to or directs your reading of the text(s). All readings and papers are due at the beginning of class on the assigned dates and must be completed in order to receive a grade in the course. **Please take note:** no late papers will be accepted. All work must be the writer's own invention; please read the section on plagiarism in the Student Handbook very carefully. Since the ideas for the papers will grow out of class discussion, attendance and active, intelligent class participation are mandatory and will be considered in the final course grade.

Texts:

Kosinski, *The Painted Bird*
Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces*
Orringer, *The Invisible Bridge*
Rosenbaum, *Elijah Visible*
Spiegelman, *MAUS*, vols. 1 & 2
Teichman and Leder, eds., *Truth and Lamentation*
Wallant, *The Pawnbroker*
Wiesel, *Night*

Syllabus:

W 8/26 Introduction to the course

F 8/28 The Shoah: an historical and literary overview

M 8/31 From *Truth and Lamentation*: Fink, “A Scrap of Time”

W 9/2 Film: *Triumph of the Will*

F 9/4 Fink, “The Key Game” (Handout)

M 9/7 Labor Day

W 9/9 Wiesel, *Night*

F 9/11 *Night*, continued
From *Truth and Lamentation*: (poem): Delbo, “Street for Arrivals, Street for Departures”

M 9/14 Rosh Hashanah; class cancelled

W 9/16 Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

F 9/18 *Survival in Auschwitz*, continued
From *Truth and Lamentation*: (poems) Levi, “Shema,” “For Adolf Eichmann”

M 9/21 From *Truth and Lamentation*: Borowski, “This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen”

W 9/23 Yom Kippur; class cancelled

F 9/25 Film: *Night and Fog*

M 9/28 From *Truth and Lamentation*: Spiegel, “A Ghetto Dog”
Discussion of paper

W 9/30 From *Truth and Lamentation*: Lustig, “The Lemon”; (poems) Jastrun, “Here Too as in Jerusalem”; Sutzkever, “1980,” “How?”

F 10/2 Class cancelled

M 10/5 **Paper due**
Film: *Wannsee Conference*

W 10/7 Film: *Wannsee Conference*

F 10/9 From *Truth and Lamentation*: Ozick, "The Shawl" (poems): Ficowski, "Lamentation," "Both Your Mothers," "5.8.1942"; Snodgrass, "Heinrich Himmler"

M 10/12 Kosinski, *The Painted Bird*

W 10/14 *The Painted Bird*, continued
From *Truth and Lamentation*: Slutsky, "Burnt"; Sachs, "Chorus of the Rescued"; Zychlinsky, "The Silent Partner"; Glatstein, "Nightsong"

F 10/16 Fall Break

M 10/19 Spiegelman, *MAUS*, vols. 1 & 2

W 10/21 *MAUS*, continued

F 10/23 From *Truth and Lamentation*: Wiesel, "An Old Acquaintance"; (poem): Klepfisz "Poland, 1944"

M 10/26 *The Pawnbroker*

W 10/28 *The Pawnbroker*, continued

F 10/30 From *Truth and Lamentation*: (poems) Pagis, "Instructions for Crossing the Border," "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway-Car"

M 11/2 **Paper due**
Film: *The Pawnbroker*

W 11/4 Film: *The Pawnbroker*, continued

F 11/6 From *Truth and Lamentation*: Megged, "The Name"; Nomberg-Przytyk, "Esther's First Born," "The Block of Death"

M 11/9 Michaels, *Fugitive Pieces*

W 11/11 *Fugitive Pieces*, continued
From *Truth and Lamentation*: (poems): Jarrell, "Protocols," "A Camp in the Prussian Forest"; Molodovsky, "God of Mercy"; Mezey, "Theresienstadt Poem"; Rich, "Yugoslavia, 1944"

F 11/13 From *Truth and Lamentation*: Grade, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseyner"; film

M 11/16 Class cancelled

W 11/18 Class cancelled

F 11/20 Rosenbaum, *Elijah Visible*

M 11/23 *Elijah Visible*, continued

W 11/25 Class cancelled

F 11/27 Class cancelled

M 11/30 Orringer, *The Invisible Bridge*

W 12/2 *The Invisible Bridge*, continued
From *Truth and Lamentation*: (poems) Piercy, “The Housing Project at Drancy,” Black Mountain”

F 12/4 Nathan Englander, “What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank” (T-Learn)

M 12/7 From *Truth and Lamentation*: Rosen, “The Cheek of the Trout”; (poems) Pillin, “A Poem for Anton Schmidt”; Kovner, “And There You Were”; Boimwall, “At Night”; Whitman, “Budapest: June 1944”; Tussman, “In Spite”

W 12/9 Reading Day

Th 12/17 **Final paper due** by noon, English Department Office