

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
***Dept. of Germanic, Slavic and East Asian Studies***  
**Dr. F. Strzelczyk**  
German 357.04 – Fall 2012  
**THE HOLOCAUST ON FILM**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this class we will study representations of the Holocaust from 1940 to the present. Historical films have had a tremendous impact on public perceptions of the Holocaust worldwide. Comprehending how film as an art and media form represents the past is important for our understanding of both past and present. We will explore how different societies represent the Holocaust at different points in time, and what this tells us about how the Holocaust is remembered and understood in different societies.

What makes a good Holocaust movie varies depending on the perspective: What may be problematic to a film scholar may find enthusiastic reception among audiences and vice versa. What is the relationship between feature films and history? Is there a recognizable iconography to Holocaust films? How do feature films on the Holocaust shape and change how we remember and understand this event? How have many of these films influenced the way in which the public debates the Holocaust? Is it morally acceptable to make films about the Holocaust at all? Do such films insult real Holocaust victims by packaging this event for blockbuster consumption?

In these five, intense days we will study some of the historiography of the Holocaust, learn the basics of film analysis, engage with existing research on the chosen films, and apply these works to a number of movies. We will watch films that have been both praised and critiqued by scholars and also those that have had tremendous impact on the public. By the end of these work-intensive five days you will have a better understanding of Holocaust film as a medium and genre that has become a primary means to access, imagine, understand and debate the past.

We will benefit from the expertise of a number of guest speakers on the Holocaust history, film, and film history. Our guest speakers will present on very diverse topics (roots of anti-Semitism; the relation between history and film; the historiography of the Holocaust, Nazi sexploitation films, and the representation of children in Holocaust film).

**II. OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE**

This course will teach students to

- Recognize and describe facts about the Holocaust and elements of Holocaust historiography
- Explain and interpret the different ways in which film as a medium represents the Holocaust
- Comprehend the ways in which film and history relate to each other
- Apply film terminology and theory to a selected number of Holocaust films
- Debate, critique, and defend the ways in which Holocaust films choose to represent the past
- Evaluate the ways in which these representations change the way societies today understand the Holocaust
- Plan and produce descriptions, analyses, and interpretations, of Holocaust films integrating existing research and criticism of the film with your own reading of the film.

### III. TEXTBOOKS/READINGS

The readings will be available through the Blackboard site set up for this course. Please look under *Reading Assignments*. You will find theoretical readings for Day One of the course as well as one assigned reading for each film shown in class and the dates indicating when the films will be discussed. Under *Course Lectures* you will find the Power Point slides that accompany each lecture and guest presentation.

### IV. ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION, DUE DATES

Marking		Grading		
4 Quizzes (W, Th, Fr, Sat.)	20%	A+ (96-100)	B (77-80)	C- (59-61)
4 Blackboard discussions (T, W, Th, F)	20%	A (92-95)	B- (71-76)	D+ (55-58)
5 in class 1-minute papers	15%	A- (86-91)	C+ (65-70)	D (50-54)
3 Reflections	15%	B+ (81-85)	C (62-64)	F (0-49)
Take-home Exam	30%			

#### Due Dates:

4 Quizzes	8-8:20 a.m. on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday
4 Blackboard discussion	Midnight on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
5 in class 1-minute papers	due in class when announced
3 Reflections	8 a.m. on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday
Take Home Exam	Monday, October 1 <sup>st</sup> , 9 a.m

All written assignments except in-class work are to be submitted in printed form. Reflections are due at the beginning of class. Take-home exams are due at the department of Germanic, Slavic, and East Asian Studies. Assignments submitted after the deadline **will be** penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

#### Writing Skills Statement

All writing assignments will be marked according to content, form, analysis, and originality as well as clarity of writing including grammar, spelling, and organization. To improve your writing skills, contact the Effective Writing Centre (SS 301). If you are a student with a disability, who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to:

- register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237), and
- discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

### V. EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

*Quizzes:* Every morning (except on Tuesday, our first day) you will write a short, mostly multiple-choice quiz that assesses your understanding of major concepts and debates. On Blackboard, go to Course Information/ Quizzes to find more detailed instructions.

*One-Minute Papers:* The “one-minute paper” is a daily, very short, in-class writing activity (taking one minute or less to complete) in response to an instructor-posed question. It prompts you to reflect on the day’s lesson, argue one side of on an important debate, connect ideas from previous with present lectures, or report the result of a group discussion activity.

*Reflections:* Reflective writing (on Tuesday night for Wednesday morning; on Wednesday night for Thursday morning; on Thursday night for Friday morning) helps you to turn surface learning into deeper understanding by connecting what was said in class with the films you watched and the readings you studied. Reflections

should be 1 page (more is okay, but 3 pages is not!) and connect your thinking about the afternoon screening, the reading the same night and the lectures and discussions during the day. On Blackboard, go to Course Information/Reflections to see details. For the 3 different reflections we will post 3 different instructions at noon the day before they are due. **Please adhere to the following formatting requirements: Your reflections must be typed, have a title page containing your name, course, student number. One-inch margins all around, double-spaced. Hard copy to be handed in at 8am in ST135.**

*Discussion Board:* This is a lecture course. Participation will be facilitated through an on-line discussion forum accessible through Blackboard. Our teaching assistant, Isabell Woelfel, will post a question to the forum every day of this week, beginning on Monday. There will be no question on Saturday. Your task is 1) to respond to the daily question, and 2) to respond to at least one comment per day made by a fellow student. Your responses to 1) and 2) should each take the form of a solid paragraph. On Blackboard go to Course Information/ Discussion Board; you will find more detailed instructions on how to post to the discussion board and how your contributions will be assessed.

*Take-home Exam:* Your response to the Take-home exam will be around 2000-2500 words in total length. It will consist of a number of questions from which you can choose your preferences. These questions will focus on the last two films shown on Saturday afternoon, but they will also give you the opportunity to draw connections between different films we have discussed during those five days.

Think of each question as a mini-essay: try to pull together into a coherent whole film terminology you have learned, in-depth discussion of concrete film scenes that could help you make your point, theory and criticism discussed over the course of the class, and major debates that may have arisen around the film(s) you are writing on.

Please adhere to the following formatting requirements: Title page containing your name, course, student number. One-inch margins all around, double-spaced. You may want to cite from the readings to support your arguments. Please include a bibliography by choosing a bibliographical style that you follow consistently (such as APA, MLA, or Chicago). On Blackboard, go to Course Information/ Essays. You will find information on citation styles, how to structure your exam questions as well as the way in which your paper will be assessed and graded.

## **VI. ATTENDANCE AND IN-CLASS WORK**

You **must** attend all classes and all film screenings. We will take attendance every morning before the daily quiz. We will also randomly assign you to a different working group of ten students per group every day for group debates and discussions and to prepare one-minute papers explained above. We will also take attendance for the afternoon film screenings.

**VII. THE HOLOCAUST ON FILM - SYLLABUS**

Lectures, Discussions, Group Work will take place from 8-12. Film screenings will take place from 1-5.

	<b>Tuesday, Sept. 4</b>	<b>Wednesday, Sept. 5</b>	<b>Thursday, Sept. 6</b>	<b>Friday, Sept. 7</b>	<b>Saturday, Sept. 8</b>
<b>8-8.20</b>	Course Introduction	Quiz 1	Quiz 2	Quiz 3	Quiz 4
<b>8.20-9</b>	<b><i>Guest Lecture: The Historical Roots of Anti-Semitism. By Scott Murray, MRU, History</i></b>	Lecture & Discussion: How do films “tell their story” through images? (Part 1)	Lecture & Discussion: How do films “tell their story” through images? (Part 2)	Lecture & Discussion: How do films “tell their story” through images? (Part 3)	Lecture & Discussion: How do films “tell their story” through images? (Part 4)
<b>9-9.50</b>	Lecture & Discussion: The Holocaust: Policies, Development, Aftermath	<b><i>Guest lecture: History-Film- Historical Film By George Melnyk, UC, Communications/Film Studies</i></b>	Lecture & Discussion: Bare Bones Documentaries Shoah (1985) & Night & Fog	Lecture & Discussion: Schindler’s List: The Americanization of the Holocaust	<b><i>Guest Lecture: Children &amp; the Holocaust By Adrienne Kertzer, UC, English</i></b>
<b>10-10.30</b>	Lecture & Discussion: Film vs Reality vs. History		Lecture & Discussion: Jew Sues: Prelude to the Final Solution	<b><i>Guest Lecture: Nazism, Gender, Sexploitation By Annette Timm, UC, History</i></b>	
<b>10.30-11</b>	Can films tell the “truth” – how it really-really was?		The Great Dictator: Humor in the face of death.		Lecture & Discussion: Haunted by the Past: The Pawnbroker
<b>11-11.50</b>	<b><i>Guest Lecture: Debating the Holocaust By David Tal, UC, History</i></b>		Group Work and Discussion: Holocaust Documentary vs. Feature Film	Lecture & Discussion: Black Humour as Weapon: Train of Life	Lecture & Discussion: Nothing more than a sentimental fable? The Boy in the Striped Pajamas.
<b>12-1</b>	LUNCH				
<b>1-3 Film 1</b>	Jew Sues, Germany (1940)	Night & Fog, France (1955) & excerpts from Shoah, France (1985)	Schindler’s List, USA (1993)	Life is Beautiful, Italy (1997)	The Counterfeiters, Austria (2007)
<b>3-5 Film 2</b>	The Great Dictator, USA, (1940)	The Nasty Girl, Germany (1990)	Train of Life, France/ Belgium/Netherlands/ Israel (1998)	The Boy in he Striped Pajamas, UK/USA (2008)	The Pianist, France/ Germany/ UK/ Poland (2002)
<b>Prep.</b>	Readings, Reflections, Disc. Forum	Readings, Reflections, Disc. Forum	Readings, Reflections, Disc. Forum	Readings, Disc. Forum	Take Home Exam, due October 1, 9 a.m., GSEA main office