

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
**Dept. of Linguistics, Languages & Cultures**  
**Dr. F. Strzelczyk**  
German 357.04 – Fall 2013 (Sept. 3-7)  
**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.)	40%	A+ = 100–97%	A = 96–91%	A - = 90–86%
2 Reflections	30%	B+ = 85–81%	B = 80–76%	B- = 75–71%
Take-home Exam	30%	C+ = 70–67%	C = 66–62%	C- = 61–58%
		D+ = 57–54%	D = 53–50%	F = 49% and below

**Due Dates:**

4 Quizzes

8-8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday

2 Reflections

8 a.m. on Thursday, and Saturday

Take Home Exam

Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</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 multiple-choice quiz that assesses your understanding of the reading you have completed the night as well as the films discussed in class that day. On Blackboard, go to Course Information/ Quizzes to find more detailed instructions. **PLEASE BE ON TIME; QUIZZES BEGIN AT 8 SHARP.**

*Reflections:* Reflective writing (on Wednesday night for Thursday morning; on Friday night for Saturday morning) helps you to turn surface learning into deeper understanding by connecting what was discussed in class with the films you watched and the readings you studied. Reflections should be 2 pages (~ 500 words; more is okay, but 3 pages is not!). Try to 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 2 different reflections we will post 2 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 MFH 160.**

*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 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.

	Tuesday, Sept. 3	Wednesday, Sept. 4	Thursday, Sept. 5	Friday, Sept. 6	Saturday, Sept. 7
8-8.30	Course Introduction	Quiz 1	Quiz 2	Quiz 3	Quiz 4
8.30-12	<p><b>Guest Lecture: The Historical Roots of Anti-Semitism. By Scott Murray, MRU, History</b></p> <p>Lecture &amp; Group Work &amp; Discussion: The Holocaust on Film</p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Group Work &amp; Discussion: <i>Jew Süss</i>: Prelude to the Final Solution</p> <p>Lecture &amp; Group Work &amp; Discussion: <i>The Great Dictator</i>: Humor in the face of death.</p> <p><b>Guest lecture: Constructing Jewish Identity: The Nazi Regime and the Final Solution, Maureen Hiebert, Political Science (11 am)</b></p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Group Work &amp; Discussion: Bare Bones Documentaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testimonials &amp; Ethics</li> <li>• Holocaust Documentary vs. Feature Film</li> </ul> <p>Lecture &amp; Group Work &amp; Discussion: Coming to terms with the Past: <i>The Nasty Girl</i>, 1990.</p> <p><b>Guest Lecture: Home Movies as a Challenge to Mainstream History? Charles Tepperman, Communications &amp; Culture (11 am)</b></p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Group Work &amp; Discussion: <i>Schindler's List</i>: The Americanization of the Holocaust</p> <p><b>Guest Lecture: An Introduction to Music in Visual Narrative (aka Film Music), Michelle Bozynski, UofT (11 am)</b></p> <p>Lecture &amp; Group Work &amp; Discussion: Holocaust Comedies</p>	<p>Lecture &amp; Group Work &amp; Discussion: <i>Life is Beautiful</i>: Humour and the Holocaust</p> <p><b>Guest Lecture: Children &amp; the Holocaust By Adrienne Kertzer, UC, English (10am)</b></p> <p>Lecture &amp; Group Work &amp; Discussion: Nothing more than a sentimental fable? <i>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</i>.</p>
12-1	<b>LUNCH</b>				
1-3 Film 1	Jew Süss, Germany (1940)	Night & Fog, France (1955) excerpts from Shoah, France (1985)	Schindler's List, USA (1993)	Life is Beautiful, Italy (1997)	No film
3-5 Film 2	The Great Dictator, USA, (1940)	The Nasty Girl, Germany, 1990	Train de Vie, Romania, France, Israel, Belgium, Netherlands (1998)	The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, UK/USA (2008)	No film
Prep.	Readings	Readings, Reflections due on Thursday morning.	Readings	Readings, Reflections due on Saturday morning	Take Home Exam, due October 8, 9 a.m., LLC main office