

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Dept. of Linguistics, Languages & Cultures
Dr. C. Dueck
German 357.04 – Fall 2014 (Sept. 2-6)
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, the instrumentalization of music in the Nazi period, 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
- Analyze a film sequence to understand how a film creates a representation of Holocaust stories
- 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 D2L site set up for this course. You will see them under content, organized by week. 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		
3 Quizzes (W, Th, Fr, Sat)	30%	A+ = 100–97%	A = 96–91%	A - = 90–86%
1 Film reflection paper	15%	B+ = 85–81%	B = 80–76%	B- = 75–71%
1 sequence analysis	15%	C+ = 70–67%	C = 66–62%	C- = 61–58%
8 film viewing questions (pass/fail)	10%	D+ = 57–54%	D = 53–50%	F = 49% and below
Take-home Exam	30%			

Due Dates:

3 Quizzes	8-8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday
Reflection	8 a.m. on Thursday
Take Home Exam	Wednesday, October 8 th , 9 a.m.

Written assignments (Reflection Paper and Sequence Analysis Report) are to be submitted in printed form. Reflections are due at the beginning of class. Sequence Analysis Reports are due on the day that your group presents. Take-home exams are to be submitted **in the D2L dropbox AND in hard copy** at the Department of Linguistics, Languages and Cultures (Craigie Hall C205). 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: On three mornings, 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 D2L, go to Quizzes to find more detailed instructions. **PLEASE BE ON TIME; QUIZZES BEGIN AT 8 SHARP.** Alternative arrangements are only available for those with documented emergencies or illness.

Viewing Questions: To aid and document attentive viewing of the films, you will receive one question per film at the time of the screening. You will answer the question by the end of the screening and submit to the teaching assistant on your way out. These are graded pass/fail.

Reflection: Reflective writing (on Wednesday night for Thursday 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 double spaced (~ 500 words; more is okay, but 3 pages is not! Maximum 650 words). Try to connect your thinking about the afternoon screening, the reading the same night and the lectures and discussions during the day. On D2L, go to **Course Information/Reflections** to see details. Instructions will be posted 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. Include a bibliography with at least three sources, in MLA Style. Hard copy to be handed in at 8am in MFH 160.** *Note that Group 3 and 4 may submit their reflection paper on Friday morning, to allow preparation of the sequence analysis.

Sequence Analysis: Narrative film has specific tools that are used to represent a story and leave the viewer with an impression of it. The sequence analysis is an opportunity to examine a short film sequence of approximately 3 minutes more closely to understand what is at work in the creation of this impression. This is a group project with three elements, all based on the techniques described in "Reading a Film Sequence" (see D2L). Your group will be assigned a film to work on, and you must decide as a group what sequence you wish to analyze.

- A. Your group will divide into four sub-groups (1 Narrative / 2 Staging / 3 Cinematography and Editing / 4 Sound). Each individual will contribute to a D2L discussion, commenting specifically on the sub-group category. You are encouraged to also meet in person to discuss, but your contributions must be recorded on D2L.
- B. The group will screen the short sequence and then present the sequence analysis to the class in 15 minutes. A spokesperson from each sub-group is recommended. Often, one component of the sequence analysis warrants more attention than the others, so the time need not be evenly divided. You may use PowerPoint to outline your points.
- C. You will **individually** submit a Sequence Analysis Report, in which you concentrate on the one of the formal elements of the sequence (narrative, staging, cinematography, editing or sound), and write up your findings in your own words.

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 are encouraged to cite from sources to support your arguments, and a bibliography in MLA Style is required. On D2L, 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. Attendance at the afternoon screenings will be documented by submission of the viewing questions.

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. 2	Wednesday, Sept. 3	Thursday, Sept. 4	Friday, Sept. 5	Saturday, Sept. 6
8-8.30	Course Introduction	Quiz 1	Reflection Paper due	Quiz 2	Quiz 3
8.30-12	<p>Guest Lecture: The Historical Roots of Anti-Semitism. By Scott Murray, MRU, History</p> <p>Lecture & Group Work & Discussion: The Holocaust on Film</p>	<p>Lecture & Sequence Analysis Group 1 <i>Jew Suess</i>: Prelude to the Final Solution</p> <p>Lecture & Sequence Analysis Group 2: <i>The Great Dictator</i>: Humor in the face of death.</p> <p>Guest lecture: Constructing Jewish Identity: The Nazi Regime and the Final Solution, Maureen Hiebert, Political Science (11 am)</p>	<p>Lecture & Sequence Analysis Group 3: Bare Bones Documentaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimonials & Ethics • Holocaust Documentary vs. Feature Film <p>Lecture & Sequence Analysis Group 4: Coming to terms with the Past: <i>The Nasty Girl</i>, 1990.</p> <p>Guest Lecture: Home Movies as a Challenge to Mainstream History? Charles Tepperman, Communications & Culture (11 am)</p>	<p>Lecture & Sequence Analysis Group 5: <i>Schindler's List</i>: The Americanization of the Holocaust</p> <p>Guest Lecture: Music and the Holocaust, Isabell Woelfel, UC, German (11 am)</p> <p>Lecture Truth and Lies & Sequence Analysis Group 6: Jacob the Liar</p>	<p>/Sequence Analysis Group 7: Life is Beautiful / Lecture: Humour and the Holocaust / Sequence Analysis Group 8: The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</p> <p>Guest Lecture: Children & the Holocaust By Adrienne Kertzer, UC, English (10am)</p> <p>Lecture & Group Work & Discussion: Nothing more than a sentimental fable? <i>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</i>.</p>
12-1	LUNCH				
1-3 Film 1	Jew Suess, Germany (1940)	Night & Fog, France (1955) excerpts from Shoah, France (1985); The Lady in Number 6, USA (2013)	Schindler's List, USA (1993)	Life is Beautiful, Italy (1997)	No film
3-5 Film 2	The Great Dictator, USA, (1940)	The Nasty Girl, West Germany (1990)	Jacob the Liar, East Germany (1974)	The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, UK/USA (2008)	No film
Prep.	Readings	Readings, Reflections due on Thursday morning.	Readings	Readings	Take Home Exam, due October 8, 9 a.m., LLC main office