

**UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
***School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures***  
**Dr. C. Dueck**  
German 357.04 – Fall 2017 (Sept. 5-9)  
**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 music. Our guest speakers will present on very diverse topics (roots of anti-Semitism; the relation between history and film; empathy responses to Holocaust films; Arendt's concept of "banality of evil"; the representation of Jewish and Roma music; and the 'metacinema' of Tarantino.

**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, Sat (6x3)             | 18% | A+ = 100–97% | A = 96–91% | A - = 90–86%      |
| 1 Film reflection paper                 | 20% | B+ = 85–81%  | B = 80–76% | B- = 75–71%       |
| 1 sequence analysis                     | 15% | C+ = 70–67%  | C = 66–62% | C- = 61–58%       |
| Viewing/listening questions (pass/fail) | 12% | D+ = 57–54%  | D = 53–50% | F = 49% and below |
| Take-home Exam                          | 35% |              |            |                   |

#### Due Dates:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 3 Quizzes      | evenings Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday   |
| Reflection     | 8 a.m. on Saturday                       |
| Take Home Exam | Friday, October 6 <sup>th</sup> , 9 a.m. |

Written assignments are all to be submitted in the **D2L Dropbox**. Reflections are due at the beginning of class (8 a.m.). Sequence Analysis Reports are due on the day that your group presents. Take-home exams are to be submitted **in the D2L dropbox** also. 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 Student Accessibility Services (220-8237), and
- discuss your needs with your instructor at the start of this course.

#### V. EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

**Quizzes:** On three evenings, you will complete a multiple-choice quiz that assesses your understanding of the reading you have completed, as well as the films discussed in class that day. On D2L, go to Quizzes to complete the quiz on the evenings as assigned. The quizzes have a restricted time for completion of 45 minutes, with an estimated completion time of approximately 30 minutes. This means that you will need to complete the readings and prepare BEFORE beginning the quiz.

**Viewing Questions and Lecture Questions:** To aid and document attentive viewing of the films, and listening during the lectures, you will receive quick-response questions via TopHat over the course of the time in class. These are graded pass/fail (an effort to respond is a pass).

**Reflection:** Reflective writing (assigned Monday night for Saturday submission) 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. **Please adhere to the following formatting requirements: Your reflections must be in WORD, have a title section at the top of the page containing your name, course, student number.** Document name: **LastName.StudentNumber.GERM357**. One-inch margins all around, **double-spaced. Include a bibliography in MLA or APA Style**, using at minimum the readings provided for the course on your topic. Good use of another *scholarly* source will often add to the quality of the paper. The reflection papers will be returned to you within 10 days after the class ends, to allow students to take feedback into account before submitting the take-home final.

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 3-5 minutes more closely to understand what is at work in the creation of this impression. This is a group project based on the techniques described in "Reading a Film Sequence" (see D2L). Your group will be assigned a film and a sequence to work on. These are available for you as clips in D2L: click on "Communications" >> "Discussions". There are also questions there to get you started.

- A. **Important Note on participation:** In order for you to receive the group grade on the project, you must show evidence of your contribution. An hour can be booked for your group to work together on the evening after your group's film has been screened (Day 1 students have time booked in workrooms at the library, and the Day 2-5 groups will need to book a room themselves or decide on an available space on campus). You can document your presence there with a group photo (with a list of names present) posted to the D2L Dropbox at the beginning and end of the hour. **OR:** you can contribute substantially to the D2L discussion of the clip before 8 p.m. after the film has been screened.
- B. The group will present the sequence analysis to the class in 10 minutes (=maximum time allotted; a timer will beep), with a focus on one of the elements in the sequence that merits a closer look. Indicate how the sequence contributes to, or is characteristic of, the film as a whole. Use PowerPoint to outline your analysis, and submit the slides to D2L Dropbox. Recommended: two presenters from the group.

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 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: Document name: **LastName.StudentNumber.GERM357**. Top of first page must include 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. Please submit in Microsoft Word or Pages.

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

You **must** attend all classes and all film screenings. Attendance and engagement will be documented by TopHat. Please bring a fully-charged smartphone / tablet / laptop with you each day.

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

**Lectures, Discussions, Group Work, Screenings. Course Schedule: Holocaust on Film 2017**

|                   | <b>Tuesday, Sept. 5</b>  | <b>Wednesday, Sept. 6</b>  | <b>Thursday, Sept. 7</b>  | <b>Friday, Sept. 8</b>  | <b>Saturday, Sept. 9</b>   |
|-------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| <b>8:00-12:00</b> | Course Introduction  | Sequence Analysis<br>Group 1 +2 present  | Group 3+4 present   | Group 5+6 present<br>Group 7+8 present  | INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS (2009)<br>153 mins                          |
|                   | <b>Guest: Scott Murray, MRU, History, The Historical Roots of Anti-Semitism</b>                        | Excerpts from <i>SHOAH</i> , France (1985)<br>68 mins  | Excerpts from <i>SON OF SAUL</i> , with <b>discussion with Dr. Jan Süselbeck, SLLLC</b> | Lectures:<br>-Humour and the Holocaust<br>-Roma Holocaust History   |  |
|                   | Lecture, The Holocaust on Film   |  | Lecture, <i>Schindler's List</i> : The Americanization of the Holocaust                 |   |  |
|                   | Sequence Analysis practice and Discussion: with clip from Leni Riefenstahl, <i>Triumph of the Will</i> | Bare Bones Documentaries:<br>• Testimonials & Ethics<br>• Holocaust Documentary vs. Feature Film | <b>Guest Dr. Jennie Han: Hannah Arendt's <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i>, (10:30 a.m.)</b> | <b>Guest: Edmond Agopian, School of Creative and Performing Arts, Jewish and Roma music in Romania; Music featured in <i>Train of Life</i> (11:15 am)</b> |  |
| <b>12-1</b>       | <b>LUNCH</b>   |  |   |   |  |
|                   | THE GREAT DICTATOR, USA, (1940)<br>125 mins  | SCHINDLER'S LIST, USA (1993)<br>195 mins   | HANNAH ARENDT (2012)<br>104 mins  | Life is Beautiful, Italy (1997)<br>116 mins   | Group 11 + 12 present  |
|                   | Lecture, <i>The Great Dictator</i> : Comedy in the face of war   |  | TRAIN OF LIFE (1998)<br>103 mins  |   | Group 9+10 present   |
|                   | NIGHT & FOG, France (1955)<br>32 mins; Shoah (1985)<br>Excerpts, 20mins                                | Film discussion: Schindler   |   | Reflection paper writing: peer review of introduction   | Conclusions and Discussion                                       |
| <b>5 p.m.</b>     | Homework: Group pres 1+2<br>Readings   | Homework: Group pres 3+4<br>Readings<br><b>Quiz 1</b>  | Homework:<br>Group pres 5,6,7,8,9,10<br>Readings<br><b>Quiz 2</b>                       | Homework: Group pres 11,12<br>Readings  | <b>Quiz 3</b><br><br>Take Home Exam, due October 6, 9 a.m on D2L |

