The Holocaust in Jewish Literature

This course offers a broad survey of selected literary responses to the Holocaust, written by victims, survivors, authors of the Yishuv, second generation survivors, and scholars, who ponder the dilemmas of the post-Holocaustian world. Thus, the course examines the wide-ranging body of literature by (mainly) Jewish writers produced in reaction to the Holocaust, and considers the psychological, social, moral and aesthetic challenges involved in representing and imagining such atrocity.

We will examine the ways in which writers of diverse backgrounds represent the Jewish experience of the Holocaust, and explore the major aesthetic and ethical dilemmas we confront when dealing with Holocaust literature. We will confront questions of memory, amnesia, victimhood, mourning, post-traumatic time, and guilt. Interdisciplinary in orientation—and working at the intersection of literature, politics, psychoanalysis, and the law—this course engages other disciplines such as art history, psychology, nationalism, and philosophy. In dialogue with key texts in trauma studies and memory studies, we will explore a number of central debates about Holocaust representation and memory. Additionally, we will discuss the relationship between literature and witnessing, and explore problems of bearing witness, and finding a sufficient language for unbearable events.

Course Requirements
Attendance and participation are particularly important and will count as part of the course grade. Students are expected to prepare for each class, participate in class discussion and hand in written assignments in a timely manner. The final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Attendance, participation, and oral presentation – 20%
- Midterm paper – 40%
- Final paper – 40%
* Monday, October 20, 2014: Midterm Paper due in class.
* Monday, December 8, 2014: Final Paper due in class.

* Each unit is approximately two weeks.
* The vast majority of readings may be found on LATTE.
* Books available in the Bookstore:
  David Grossman: See Under: Love
  Shoshana Felman: The Juridical Unconscious
  Joshua Sobol: Ghetto [Plays of the Holocaust]
  Ágota Kristóf: The Notebook
  Cynthia Ozick: “The Shawl”

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**Writing After Auschwitz: Introduction**

- “1889 (Braunau, Austria) – 1945 (Berlin, Germany),” Rosenfeld Gallery for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, October 2005.
  Maurice Blanchot: selection from The Writing of the Disaster (1995)

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**Unit 1 - “A Distinct Identity Split into Two:” From Delusion to Awareness**

  ➢ Additional reading for graduate students:

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**Unit 2 - Bearing Witness**

- Alfred Kantor (1924 - 2003)
- Sara Atzmon (1933 - )
  Yehiel Dinur’s testimony at the trial of Adolf Eichmann.
- Eyal Sivan (director): The Specialist (1999)
  Omer Bartov: “ Kitsch and Sadism in Ka-Tzetnik’s Other Planet: Israeli Youth Imagine the Holocaust,” Jewish Social Studies, 3.2 (1997) 42–76
  ➢ Additional reading for graduate students:

Or:

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**Unit 3 - “To Remember Forgetfully:” Memory, Mourning, and Time**

  - Additional reading for graduate students:
    - Cathy Caruth: selection from *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996)

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**Unit 4 - Others at Home: She’erit Hapletah (The Surviving Remnant) and the Yishuv**

- *The Matchmaker* (Paam Hayiti) (2010), directed by Avi Nesher

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**Unit 5 - “All These Words from ‘Over There:’” Second Generation Survivors**

- Orna Ben Dor (director): *Because of That War* (1988)
Additional reading for graduate students:

**Unit 6 - Contested Ethics: Heroism in the Ghetto**

- Pavel Pantel (1903-1944)
- Mickey au Camp de Gurs (1942)
Additional reading for graduate students:

**Unit 7 – “A Holocaust of Innocence:” Children of the Holocaust**

- “No Child’s Play” (online exhibition, Yad Vashem), Curator: Yehudit Inbar http://www1.yadvashem.org/exhibitions/nochildsplay/intro.asp
Additional reading for graduate students:
Or:

**Unit 8 - Ghetto Writing**

Abraham Sutzkever: selection from *Burnt Pearls - Ghetto Poems*
Isaiah Spiegel: selection from *Ghetto Kingdom: Tales of the Lodz Ghetto*
David Roskies: selection from *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (1984)