

German 260 H
The Holocaust in Film and Literature
Fall 2003

Dr. Thomas C. Fox
263 B.B. Comer
Tel.348-7652;
tfox@bama.ua.edu
Office Hours: M 10-12

August 25: Introduction. Issues of history and representation. A history of anti-Semitism.

September 8: Film: *Jew Süss*

September 15: Film: *The Eternal Jew*

September 22: Anne Frank: *The Diary of a Young Girl*; TEST

September 29: Film: *The Diary of Anne Frank* (excerpts)
Primo Levi: *Survival in Auschwitz*.

October 6: Eli Wiesel: *Night*. Film: *Au revoir, les enfants*

October 13: *Au revoir, les enfants*. Film: *Shoah* (excerpts)

October 20: *Shoah* (excerpts)

October 27: *Shoah* (excerpts); TEST

November 3: Peter Weiss: *The Investigation*; Film: *Night and Fog*

November 10: Holocaust Poetry; Art Spiegelman: *Maus*.

November 17: Film discussion: *Schindler's List*; Film: *Life is Beautiful*; TEST

November 24: Film: *Life is Beautiful*; Bernhard Schlink, *The Reader*

December 1: Schlink, *The Reader*. Conclusions

Prerequisites: None.

Course Description and Goals: As the Holocaust recedes in time, written and filmic documents (history, autobiography, art) increasingly shape our perception and understanding of the event. In this course we investigate important and exemplary literary and filmic renderings of the Holocaust. We will deal with questions of ethics, aesthetics (i.e., the meaning of art, or the limits of representation), and history. What are the aesthetic and ethical implications of creating art about the Holocaust? To what extent does that entail an aestheticization of horror? To what extent does that horror escape language? What are the implications of the commercialization of the Holocaust? What

are the differences between modernist and post-modernist renderings? What are the similarities, differences, and limits of documentary, autobiography, fiction, and history?

Students will hopefully 1) obtain a basic grasp of important historical events, including the history of anti-Semitism and exclusion of the Other; 2) learn how imagination and genre give form to memory; 3) be exposed to the ongoing debate regarding the historicization of the Holocaust. Students are encouraged to ponder to what extent the stereotypes and racism that occasioned the Holocaust can be located in other societies as well.

Grading: Students will write three examinations during the semester, plus a final examination. Each examination is worth 25%. Make-up examinations are only possible if the student makes prior arrangements with the teacher. Attendance is strongly encouraged, as material covered in class will be on examinations.

Required Works:

The syllabus may be changed depending on availability of films and texts.

Anne Frank, *Diary of a Young Girl*
Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah*
Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
Bernhard Schlink, *The Reader*
Art Spiegelman, *Maus*
Peter Weiss, *The Investigation*
Elie Wiesel, *Night*
Selected Poems (handouts)

Suggested Reading (on reserve):

Andre Colombard, *The Holocaust in French Cinema*
Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows. Film and the Holocaust*
Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*
James Young: *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*

All students are expected to adhere to the Code of Academic Conduct and to the Academic Honor Code as outlined in the *Undergraduate Catalog*.

Students needing special accommodations due to disabilities should first contact the Office of Disability Services and then contact me.