Representing the Holocaust in Words & Images
Summer 2016
(draft: may be changed before class begins)

Jewish Studies 261: Online
Dr. Rachel N. Baum
rbaum@uwm.edu

Course Online Access:
Desire to Learn at http://d2l.uwm.edu
Any problems with access, please contact help@uwm.edu or call (414)229-4040

Course Description: It is nearly impossible to comprehend the torture and murder of human beings on the massive scale of the Holocaust. Some people have said that those of us who were not there can never understand. Yet there are many books, films, photographs, poems, paintings, and other representations of the event. Can such words and images help us to confront the Holocaust? To understand it? To prevent other genocides? What are the ethical issues involved in trying to represent the murder of millions of human beings? This class provides a general background to the Holocaust, while also looking at the responsibility of representation, so important in our image-rich, social media connected age.

Required Reading:
Gerda Weissman Klein, All But My Life

Other reading will be transmitted through an online reading platform called Ginkgotree (which will be accessed via D2L). You will pay $10 for this reading. I have replaced several more expensive books with GT, so I hope you will join me in trying out this new method.
Optional: Art Spiegelman, *Maus I or II*. When we get to the section on *Maus*, you will be able to read one or both of the *Maus* books, or to read alternate *Maus* readings on Ginkgotree. You will get more out of the unit if you have *Maus*, but I’ll leave it up to you. Getting it from your local library is another good option.

**Summer Session:** Summer is a great time to take an extra class, but it is also a very intense schedule for learning. Condensing a 16-week semester into 4-weeks obviously requires making each week four times as intense. With a subject such as the Holocaust, a summer course can be particularly intense.

Month-long summer classes generally meet Mon – Thurs for three hours at a time. Then students are required to complete homework on top of that time commitment. Thus, students are spending between 20 – 30 hours a week on a single class during the summer.

Because this is an online class, our schedule can be more flexible, but I have based my schedule on the face-to-face schedule. In this way, I have given you intense Mon – Thurs schedules, and have left the long weekends for you to either relax or to catch up/work ahead. I think this schedule will work the best for you, because it offers you some flexibility depending on your other commitments and involvements.

I’ve planned the assignments in such a way that you can use your weekends well if you need to. Be sure to look ahead on the calendar. If you are a slow reader, for example, you will want to use your weekends to start readings. If your weekdays are free, but you work weekends, you will want to pack your weekdays with work so that you can take the weekends off.

**Checking D2L regularly:** Because this is an online class, you must make an effort to “come to class” regularly. Please check D2L every day for your work. During the regular semester, students can get away with checking every few days, but as this is a summer class, you will need to do work for this class every day, M – Th, to stay on track. I think I do a good job of laying out your work very clearly, but you need to stay on top of it.

Please be sure to read the “Announcements” section on the front page of our D2L course site. I will use this space for introductions to the units, things I want you to know, general announcements, etc.

**GRADING**

ASSIGNMENTS:

When an assignment has a due date, it means that the assignment must be completed by MIDNIGHT of that day. If a forum post is due on Sunday, therefore, it means that you have until midnight Sunday night.
Forum Postings: 240 points

Forums are the online version of in-class discussion. They are vital to our course, because they give you an opportunity to work through the issues of the course, and to engage in discussion about them with your classmates. They also offer me a chance to see your thinking about the issues and to raise some of the key concerns of the course. You must respond to the question I have asked, and your post must be 250 words. Be sure to use examples from the texts of the class, so that your response is detailed and specific.

Forum posts will be graded out of 40 points. Full assignment on D2L.

For the discussion forums, you will be in a group of 8 - 10 students. This will let you really participate in the forums without having a burdensome number of posts to read, and will let you get to know the students in your forum better.

Forum Responses: 150 points

These are brief (150 word) responses to the posts made by your classmates. Say something substantive about the original comment, rather than just finding 150 words to say, “Great job!” Use the space to ask a question, explain what you learned from the post, or describe where you agree or disagree with the original post.

Forum responses will be graded out of 30 points.

Quizzes: 400 points

There are four quizzes throughout the semester. These are graded immediately on D2L.

Reflections (210 points)

There will be two written reflections on your learning throughout the course. Full assignment on D2L.

Grading is based on a 1000 point system. Your final grades will be computed thusly:

950– 1000 points = A
900 - 949 points = A-
860 - 899 points = B+
821 - 859 points = B
800 – 820 points = B-
760 – 799 points = C+
721 – 759 points = C
700 – 720 points = C-
650 – 699 points = D+
600 – 649 points = D
Below 600 points = F

POLICIES:

Participation by Students with Disabilities:

If you need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible

Accommodation for Religious Observances:

Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements that are missed because of a religious observance.

Academic Misconduct

Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Claiming other people’s writing or ideas as your own is a serious offense. Be sure to credit your sources – including information you’ve gotten off of the Internet – in your work. If you are unsure how to do this, be sure to see me.

The University Policy about these issues and others (e.g., students called to active military duty, discriminatory conduct, incompletes, etc.) can be found at:

http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf
**Email Etiquette:** I check my email regularly and will usually respond to email within 24 hours. Please make the subject line something identifiable, such as Jewish Studies 261, so that I don’t accidentally delete your message. Should you not hear from me within a day, please resend it.

**Major/Minor in Jewish Studies**

This course fulfills a requirement for the Jewish Studies major and minor. The major offers two tracks: Hebrew Studies and Jewish Cultural Studies (which does not require Hebrew language). With its combination of core courses and electives, the Jewish Studies program allows students to create a course of study that can focus on religion, culture, Israel, Holocaust, media, or immigration. A dynamic and innovative major, Jewish Studies prepares students to work in our multicultural world.

For more information on the Jewish Studies major and minor, please contact me, as I am coordinator of the Jewish Studies program.
DAY ONE (May 31): CLASS ORIENTATION

Hello! Welcome to the class! I want you to jump right in and get familiar with the D2L site, so you can keep up with the work. This is going to be a great class and you will learn a lot – but only if you keep up! So here’s the plan for the first day:

**Read:** Syllabus, welcome letter. Familiarize yourself with D2L. Post any questions to the “Help!” forum– unless you don’t know how to do that, in which case, email me!

**Read/Watch:** Read “Week one lecture”.

**Write:** I am going to ask you to hit the ground running with two assignments for the first day.

1. **Introduction.** Before Tuesday at midnight, please go to the Discussions section of the site and post your introduction. Click on the blue link, “Introductions.” There you can read my introduction and post your own. Extra credit if you respond to another person’s post by Wednesday, midnight. We won’t have a lot to respond now, but I want you to get used to using D2L.

2. **“Dancing at Auschwitz.”** Watch the video “Dancing at Auschwitz” under Content, and write a discussion post on the following question:

   “Dancing at Auschwitz” evoked a controversy when it hit You Tube in the summer of 2010. The short film (in three parts; here is only Part One), by artist Jane Korman, features her father dancing with his grandchildren at various death camps.

   What do you think of the video? Do you find it controversial? Why or why not? What do you think the film does (or doesn’t do) for the viewer? Do you think it strengthens our culture’s memory of the Holocaust, or dilutes it?

   In general, your posts must be 250 words, but this first post has no word requirement. Give the question serious thought, though, and respond to the prompt.

   5 points extra credit if you respond to someone else’s post as well.
DAY TWO (June 1): WHAT WAS THE HOLOCAUST?

**Lecture:** Lecture on Holocaust (read first); Lecture on Death Camps (read second). In the lectures, be sure to click on any hot links that I’ve included in the Word document. (D2L doesn’t make this easy, but if you go to the lower right hand corner and hit “switch to text”, you’ll be able to copy & paste the links)

**Read:** Holocaust History I (On Ginkgotree; this is a series of articles)

**Assessment:** Quiz #1 on D2L, due May 31, before midnight (it would be great to get it done sooner, but I try to create as much flexibility as possible in the summer session, because it is such an intense month of learning.)

DAY THREE (June 3): WHAT WAS THE HOLOCAUST?

**Lecture:** Lecture on Death Camps.

**Read:** Holocaust History II (Ginkgotree)

**Assessment:** Quiz #2 on D2L, due May 31, before midnight

DAYS FOUR & FIVE (June 6 & 7):

TELLING THE STORY I: VICTIMS

**Read:** *All But My Life* by Gerda Weissman Klein

**Assessment:** Quiz on *All But My Life* due before June 2nd

**Watch:** *One Survivor Remembers* (on D2L)

**Respond:**

Write a forum post (250 words) in which you respond to the following questions. You do not need to address each question, but do address the issues as a whole: How does Gerda Weissman Klein connect with her audience? How does she build bridges between her
unique experience of the Holocaust and the reader, who has not experienced anything remotely similar? To what extent do you find her strategies effective? Are there any potential problems with such strategies? Are the connecting strategies different in the memoir than in the video?

Post (250 words) due by midnight, June 2\textsuperscript{nd}. Response (150 words) due by midnight, June 3rd.

**DAY SIX (June 8): THINKING ABOUT HOLOCAUST IMAGES**

**Lecture:** “Thinking about Images I” (read before you watch the film)

**Watch:** *Night and Fog* (on D2L be sure to read the lecture before viewing the film)

**DAY SEVEN (June 9) THINKING ABOUT HOLOCAUST IMAGES II**

**Lecture:** “Thinking about Images II”

**Write:** Reflection #1 (Assignment on D2L), due by midnight, June 7\textsuperscript{th}, in D2L dropbox

**DAYS EIGHT – NINE (June 13 & 14)**

**Lecture:** Lecture on *Shoah*

**Watch:** Clips of *Shoah*

**Respond:** Write a forum post (250 words) in which you respond to the following questions:

In *Shoah*, Claude Lanzmann makes the decision to place his film entirely in the present, without any use of archival images. This means that his film has none of the graphic images of emaciated skeletons that are seen in *Night & Fog* and in your Berenbaum book. Lanzmann also centers his films around interviews with people who were actually in the Holocaust -- as victims, perpetrators, or bystanders.
Write a response in which you consider the ethical dimensions of Shoah – that is to say, the moral issues raised by the film. In your response consider:

- Lanzmann’s treatment of the victims
- Lanzmann’s treatment of Franz Stangl, the perpetrator testimony you saw
- The position of the viewer (how does Shoah put the viewer in a different position than Night & Fog?)
- The position of the filmmaker (What do you think are Lanzmann’s goals for the film? What would he say about the ethics of the film?)

Post (250 words) due midnight, June 9. Response (150 words) due midnight, June 10th.

DAYS TEN, ELEVEN, TWELVE (June 15, 16, 20):

TELLING THE STORY II:
VICTIMS, PERPETRATORS, AND THE GRAY ZONE

Lecture: Lecture on Perpetrators. Lecture on Gray Zone.

Read: Excerpts from The Good Old Days: The Holocaust as Seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders, “This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen”, “Helmut Reiner,” “The Block of Death,” “Esther’s First Born.”

Assessment: Quiz due June 15th

Respond: Looking at the texts from this unit, write a forum post (250 words) that responds to the following questions:

- To what extent can the reader use his/her sense of morality to judge the behavior of the people in these stories?
- In what way did the setting & context of these stories shape the behavior of the people in the stories? Would they have made other choices if the situation were different? How does your answer to this question shape your opinion about their actions?
- Do you find Primo Levi’s concept of the “Gray Zone” helpful in thinking about the moral issues raised by these stories? What are the dangers of the concept?
DAYS THIRTEEN & FOURTEEN, (June 21 & 22):

**Lecture:** Lecture on *Maus*

**Read:** *Maus I or II*, or materials on Ginkgotree

**Assess:** Quiz due by June 18th

**Respond:** Forum post (250 words) in which you respond to the following question:

Giving specific examples, think about what the images do in *Maus*, contrasted with what the words do. To get your thoughts moving, consider:

- How would *Maus* be different without the images?
- What do you understand or know by looking at the images that you would not understand or know otherwise?
- Use specific examples to make your argument. Refer to page numbers so we can follow your thoughts.

Post (250 words) due June 18th. Response (150 words) due June 19th by midnight.

DAY FIFTEEN (June 23):

**Watch:** *Paper Clips*

**Read:** Lecture on *Paper Clips*

Post on *Paper Clips* is for EXTRA CREDIT!

DAY SIXTEEN (June 24):

**Reflection #2**

**Write:** REFLECTION #2 due by June 21st, midnight, in dropbox.