

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
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EDUC 253X
HISTORY 237B

**Teaching the Unteachable:
Teaching & Representing the Holocaust**

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Overview:

Theodore Adorno asked if it was possible to write poetry after Auschwitz. Whatever the answer, it is clear that each year witnesses exponential growth in attempts to teach the Holocaust the world over. Included in this growth are formal mandates to teach the Holocaust in curricula across the United States (by last count, 26 states had passed bills to mandate it).

In this seminar, we will consider how we teach something often considered unteachable.

How does catastrophe become curriculum . . . and for what purpose? What forms of representation — *mémoire*, testimony, oral history, literature, film, and even simulation — are used in classrooms and what do students learn from such encounters? By asking these questions, we will touch on issues of how history is represented in a variety of media, and how the past comes to inform our present.

Two of the most widely adopted books in the US curriculum are Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* and Elie Wiesel's *Night*. In fact, if you graduated from an American school, odds are you've encountered both. What you probably haven't done is consider how these texts fit into a global movement that has turned the Holocaust into curriculum for schools, museums, adult education, and — chilling as it may seem — Edutainment.

Focus

In this seminar we will look critically at Holocaust “curriculum materials.” But our scope goes beyond this. If curriculum is a “course to be run,” a systematic attempt to sequence learning activities, we will ask questions about where to begin. Every narrative, every curriculum, has to begin *somewhere* – where *should* we start the story of the attempt to rid the earth of the Jews? Swirling around us will be a set of core questions: Does the Holocaust have “lessons”? If yes, what are they? Can, and should, this topic be taught? If the answer is yes, to whom, and at what age? What does it mean to represent the experience of catastrophe, and by what means can we evaluate the merits of such representations? What metric should we use to gauge the “success” of teaching the Holocaust? All of these questions come into play the moment we turn a historical event of this magnitude into

curriculum, textbooks, and school assignments. In this sense, the teaching of the Holocaust becomes a case study for how we think of teaching history, *writ large*.

Education is also about the cultivation of attitudes. Like the cultivation of other human capacities, hate, too, must be taught. As a modern educational bureaucracy, the Third Reich named Ministers of Education, commissioned textbooks, approved the writing of curriculum, and made educational films. We will study how hate was transacted as an educational aim, and how the instruments of modern bureaucratized education – children’s books, board games, textbooks, “manipulatives,” film – were marshaled to this end.

Finally, if education is about understanding people different from ourselves (“educate” in the Latin means to “go out” – that is, to go beyond our narrowness), we will try to understand – and remember, understanding is not the same as excusing -- those who perpetrated these crimes. We will grapple not only with the limits of representation, but with the limits of what is -- and isn’t -- “teachable.”

Class Format

This class will be conducted as a seminar, requiring thoughtful preparation before class and active participation during it. While it is impossible to engineer a successful seminar, it is possible to take steps toward making our discussions fruitful. First, to get our heads aimed in the same direction, you will come to class with one page of comments responding to “Thought Questions” I assign the previous week. At the beginning of each class, I will sketch out a brief agenda for our time together. This agenda will provide an initial point of departure that we can alter depending on the flow of our discussion.

Rights and Responsibilities. A seminar is a collective enterprise that demands a skillful balance of rights and responsibilities. You have the right to be heard and taken seriously. You have the right to listen carefully and formulate your thoughts before speaking. But you also have the *responsibility* to participate. In the democratic transaction of a seminar, it is not permissible to remain silent for an entire session. To encourage each of us to fulfill our responsibility, you are required to must make at least one (ideally more) unsolicited comment per week.

Assignments

Preparation. It is crucial to do the reading *before* class. Nothing is drearier than a seminar of silence. On the weeks when we have a full-length movie screening (e.g., *Schindler’s List*), you can choose to watch it at the assigned time or view it on reserve in Green.

Thought Questions (TQs). Each week I will assign one or two “thought questions” for you to answer as you do the week’s reading. Your response should be typed (single-spaced, with adequate margins for my comments) and should not exceed one page. The format of your response can be informal, personal, questioning, or analytic depending on the question asked and your reaction to it. The goals of the TQs are two-fold (a) to have you come to class having thought about the issues we will discuss, and (b) to keep *you and me* honest by providing a

weekly format to exchange views. TQs are graded on a pass/non-pass basis; they are due in class unless you've received prior approval otherwise. Nine TQs are required to receive credit.

I take your TQs seriously. I read them over twice, and try to share my own puzzlements with you in the margins. Sometimes I am puzzled about the material we've read; sometimes about your (or my!) interpretations of this material. When I jot a question in the margins, it is always an invitation to continue the dialogue, in person or by email. Don't feel under any obligation, however, to accept the invitation. It is there if you choose.

TQ for Next Week: Clendinnen refers to the "Gorgon effect" as something that thwarts our understanding of the Holocaust. What exactly does she mean by this term? What is the relation between the Gorgon effect and Wineburg's claim that historical thinking is "unnatural"? Are these positions complimentary or in conflict? Explain.

Reaction Papers. Two short, analytic papers that respond to key issues in the course and ask that you take a position and support it. These are "restricted papers" because they are restricted to the works we have read (or films we have seen) in class; no outside reading is necessary. (You can do outside reading but it is not required nor expected.) Essays should be no longer than three to four pages in length (no exceptions), double-spaced with normal margins, and printed in a normal type font (e.g., Times-Roman, Courier, Trebuchet). Writing a short essay is often more difficult than writing a longer one; you have to get to your point quickly, develop it with adequate textual evidence, consider alternative views, and pull everything together -- all in a couple of pages. Planning is critical. The first reaction paper is due, in class, on Feb. 6 (week 5); the second reaction paper is due on our penultimate class session, March 5.

Emphasis on Writing. If you would like to get your reaction papers back, you will have to schedule a 15-minute writing conference with me, during which we will go over your written work in a face-to-face setting.

Final Paper. For your final paper, you have two options: (a) to follow up in a more extended format any of the themes we've discussed; or (b) to evaluate a piece of curriculum in light of the ideas of this course. Option B is opportunity for you to meld theory and practice. I will place a selection of curriculum materials on reserve in Meyer Library by week six or seven of the course. You should choose one of these to review. Your paper should have three parts: first, in your introduction, you should provide an overview of the curriculum, briefly describing for whom it is intended, its stated duration, and its goals; second, in your analysis, you should provide a critical analysis of its assumptions (often unstated) and place them in the larger frameworks we've developed during the course; third, in the final section of the paper, you should provide an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses as an educational tool. Papers should not exceed ten pages, double-spaced. In terms of a rough space allocation, part one should be about 2 pages; part 2 about 5-6 pages; and part three about 2 pages.

Papers are due on **March 19, by 3 p.m.**, in a MS Word or PDF file, to wineburg@stanford.edu.

In terms of determining your grade, the assignments will be weighted according to this scheme: TQs = 10%, Reaction Papers = 40%, Final Paper = 40%, Class Participation = 10%.

Required Texts

- (1) Wiesel, Elie. (1982). *Night*. New York: Bantam Books. **Important:** use the **older translation of *Night***, not the newest old featured on Oprah's *Book club of the Air*. You want to look for the cheap paperback of *Night*, translated from the French by **Stella Rodway**.
- (2) Clendinnen, Inga. (2002). *Reading the Holocaust*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- (3) Schweber, Simone (2004). *Making sense of the Holocaust: Lessons from classroom practice*. New York: Teachers College Press. ‘
- (4) Spiegelman, Art (1993). *Maus I & II: A survivor's tale and Here my troubles began*. New York: Pantheon. (make sure you have both I and II). (also listed as the *Complete Maus*.)
- (5) Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City*
- (6) Gregor, Neil, *How to Read Hitler*.
- (7) *Course Reader*, available at Copy Source, California Avenue, Palo Alto

Important Note: I am presuming some basic knowledge of the Holocaust. If you need to brush up, a short (if somewhat dry) introduction is Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (1987). NY: Penguin.

Class #1, Jan. 9 **Introduction: Background & Purposes**

Class #2, Jan. 16 **Setting the Stage**

Clendinnen, Inga. (2002). *Reading the Holocaust*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. [intro to pg 78]

Wineburg, S. (2001). *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. available @ <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kwin9903.htm>

Class #3, Jan. 22 **Beginning the Narrative**

*Ruether, Rosemary (1974). *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*. New York: Seabury Press, Chapter 4¹

*Carroll, James (2001). *Constantine's Sword*. New York: Mariner Books. Chapter 5, "Passion Play."

Luther, Martin (1543). *The Jews and their lies*. Available at the Internet Medieval Source Book <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/luther-jews.html>

¹ The asterisk indicates that this selection is in your Course Reader.

Class #4, Jan. 30

Survivor as Curriculum

Spiegelman, Art (1993). *Maus I & II: A survivor's tale and Here my troubles began*. New York: Pantheon. (make sure you have both I and II)

*Gopnik, Adam. (1987). Maus: A Survivor's Tale. *New Republic*, 196, 29-36.

*Young, James (1998). The Holocaust as Vicarious Past: Art Spiegelman's Maus and the Afterimages of history. *Critical Inquiry*, 24, 666-699.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0093-1896%28199821%2924%3A3%3C666%3ATHAVPA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R>

Baudrillard, Jean (1988). Simulacra and simulations. In *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings*. Mark Poster (Ed.) (pp. 164-184). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Baudrillard/Baudrillard_Simulacra.html

Class #5, Feb. 6

Victim as Curriculum

Wiesel, Elie. (1982). *Night*. New York: Bantam Books.

*Seidman, Naomi (1996). Elie Wiesel and the scandal of Jewish rage. *Jewish Social Studies*, 3(1), 1-19.

<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=105&sid=281fdcc5-59ed-4a4c-ace3-122bb8f636f4%40sessionmgr106>

*Frank, Anne. (1993). *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*. New York: Bantam. [with an introduction by Eleanor Roosevelt, translated from the Dutch by B. M. Mooyaat].
excerpt

*Ozick, Cynthia. (2000). Who owns Anne Frank. In *Quarrel and quandary* (pp. 74-102). New York: Knopf. [Originally published in the October 6, *New Yorker*, 1997, pp. 76-87]

*Schweber, S. (in press). "What happened to their pets?" Third graders encounter the Holocaust. *Teachers College Record*.

Class #6, Feb. 13

Education for Hate

*Confino, Alon (2005). Fantasies about the Jews. *History and Memory*, v. 17, 296-322.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=18085658&site=ehost-live>

*translation of two children's stories from *The Poisonous Mushroom*, in Randall L. Bytwerk, *Julius Streicher: Nazi Editor of the Notorious Anti-Semitic Newspaper Der Stürmer*.

Gregor, Neil (2005). *How to Read Hitler*. New York: Norton.

Screening *Dear Ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew)*. Germany, 1938, and *Jud Süß 1940*

Class #7 Feb. 20

The Holocaust Goes to School

Schweber, Simone (2004). *Making sense of the Holocaust: Lessons from classroom practice*. New York: Teachers College Press. p. 1-101.

Totten, Samuel. (2000). Diminishing the complexity of the Holocaust via simulation. *Social Education*, 165-171. Available at <http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~holoweb/papers/simholo.html>

*Dawidowicz, Lucy S. (1990, Dec.). How they teach the Holocaust. *Commentary*, 25-32.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9101213296&site=ehost-live>

Lipstadt, Deborah (1995, March 6). Not facing history. *New Republic*, pp. 26-28. Available at <http://www.learntoquestion.com/resources/database/archives/000717.html>

Guest Speaker: representative from West Coast office of *Facing History and Ourselves*

Class #8, Feb. 27

“Education for the Masses”

*Spielberg, Steven (1995). My primary purpose in making “Schindler’s List” was for education. *Social Education*, 59(6), 365-366.

*Gourevitch, Philip (1994, February). A dissent on “Schindler’s List. *Commentary*. 49-52.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9403173821&site=ehost-live>

*Gellately, Robert (1993). Between exploitation, rescue, and annihilation: Reviewing *Schindler’s List*. *Central European History*, 475-489.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=5690973&site=ehost-live>

Screening (excerpts) *Schindler’s List (Spielberg)* [I will arrange a special screening of *Schindler’s List* for the class; and you will also be able to see it, on reserve, at Green’s Media Library

Class #9, March 5

Are there “Lessons” of the Holocaust?

Langer, Lawrence (1998). *Preempting the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press (pp. 1-22).

Novick, Peter (1999) *The Holocaust in American Life*. New York: Houghton Mifflin. Chapter 11 “Never Again the Slaughter of the Albigensians.” 239-266

Judt, Tony (1999). The morbid truth. Review of Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*. *New Republic*, July 19, p 36-40.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=1997241&site=ehost-live>

Screening (excerpts): movies *Paper Clips*, *Not in Our Town*

Class #10, March 12

“Education as Understanding”: Perpetrators & Bystanders

Clendinnen, *Reading the Holocaust*, pp. 79-155

Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City*

Selected Curriculum/Teaching Approaches for Evaluation

Using Authentic Nazi Propaganda in Teaching the Holocaust: Problems, possibilities, dangers and experiences;

<http://www.holocaust-history.org/der-ewige-jude/tampa-19970302.shtml>

Der Giftpilz (The Toadstool) (often translated into English as *The Poisonous Mushroom*)
Echoes and Reflections: A multimedia curriculum on the Holocaust. ADL Anti-Defamation League (2005).

Facing History and Ourselves Resource Book.

Goldstein, Phyllis (1995). Teaching “Schindler’s List. *Social Education*, 59(6), 362-364.

<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/thumb.htm>

Mager, Susan (1998). *Teaching the diary of Anne Frank: An in-depth resource for learning about the Holocaust through the writings of Anne Frank* (Grades 5 and up). New York: Scholastic.

Matas, Carol (1993). *Daniel’s story*. New York: Scholastic Paperbacks. (VHS tape as well)
Maus I and Maus II, from *Holocaust Literature: Study Guides to Twelve Stories of Courage*. J Weston Walch Publisher.

Model Curriculum for Human Rights and Genocide. California State Board of Education
www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/model-curriculum-hr.pdf

Steven Spielberg and Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation *Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust*. Hosted by Leonardo DiCaprio and Winona Rider.

Visual History Foundation (2003). *One Human Spirit*. (grades 9-12)

Zwerin, Raymond, Marcus, Audrey Friedman, & Kramish, Leonard (1976). *Gestapo: A learning experience about the Holocaust*. Denver, CO: Alternatives in Religious Education.

Additional Readings

- Blackburn, Gilmer W. (1985). *Education in the Third Reich: A study of race and history in Nazi Textbooks*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. [Chapters 1 &7]
- Browning, Christopher (1993) *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Harper. (selection)
- Cohen, Jeremy (1999). *Living letters of the law: Ideas of Jew in Medieval Christianity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Chapter 1-3]
- Cole, Tim (1999). *Selling the Holocaust: How History is bought, packaged, and sold*. New York
- Danks, Carol (May-June 1996). Using the literature of Elie Wiesel and selected poetry to teach the Holocaust in the Secondary history classroom. *Social Studies*, 87(3), 101-105.]: Routledge. [chapter 2, Eichmann]
- Des Pres, Terrence (1976). *The survivor: The anatomy of life in the death camps*. New York: Kangaroo. [chapter 3, "Excremental Assault"]
- Eaglestone, Robert (2001). *Postmodernism and Holocaust denial*. Cambridge, England: Icon Books.
- Feldman, Jackie (2002). Marking the boundaries of the enclave: Defining the Israeli collective through the Poland experience. *Israel Studies*, 7(2), 84-114.
- Felman, Shoshana (1991). Education and crisis, or the vicissitudes of teaching. *American Imago*, 48 (1).
- Hazan, Haim (2001). The Holocaust as simulation – Israel school delegations in Poland. In Haim Hazan, *Simulated dreams: Israeli youth and virtual Zionism* (pp. 35-55). New York: Berghahn Books.
- Judt, Tony (1999). The morbid truth. Review of Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*. *New Republic*, July 19, p 36-40.
- Lang, Berel (1992). The representation of limits. In Saul Friedlander (Ed.), *Probing the limits of representation*. (pp. 300-317). Cambridge, MA: Harvard.
- Lifton, Robert J. (2000). *The Nazi Doctors: Medical killing and the psychology of genocide*. New York: Basic Books. (selection)
- Linenthal, Edward T. (1995). *Preserving memory: The struggle to create America's Holocaust Museum*. New York: Penguin. [selection "Mobilizing Holocaust Memory, pp 260-272.]
- Mosse, George (1961). *The Crisis of German ideology*.
- Novick, Peter (1999) *The Holocaust in American Life*. New York: Houghton Mifflin. Chapter 11 "Never Again the Slaughter of the Albigensians." 239-266
- Shandler, Jeffrey (1999). *While America watches: Televising the Holocaust*. New York: Oxford.
- Shapira, Anita. (1998). The Holocaust: Private memories, public memory. *Jewish Social Studies*, 4(2), 40-58.
- Totten, Samuel, & Feinberg, Stephen. (2001). *Teaching and studying the Holocaust*.

Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Welker, Robert P. (1996). Searching for the educational imperative in Holocaust curriculum (pp. 99-121). In Rochelle L. Millen (Ed.), *New perspectives on the Holocaust*. New York: NYU Press.

Wiesel, Elie (1989, June 11). Art and the Holocaust: Trivializing Memory. *New York Times*.

Websites [a few selected]

<http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/Holocaust/holhome.html>

An unbelievable resource maintained by Professor Al Filreis at Penn.

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/holocaust/timeline.html>

A quick and easy timeline of the Holocaust to orient yourself.

<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/faculty/streich3.htm>

<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturmer.htm>

An excellent resource maintained by Professor Randall Bytwerk, called the “German Propaganda Archive, and focusing on Julius Streicher’s *Der Strumer* newspaper.

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~felluga/holocaust/holocaust.html>**An unusually well done on-line course syllabus with excellent links to many up-to-date sources.**