

English 271 (DL, WI)
“Film and Literature of the Holocaust”
Three Credits
Prerequisite: First-Year Writing or the Equivalent
In Seville
Spring 2024
And by appointment
Dr. Daphne Desser
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Course Description

How should the Holocaust be remembered? As the generation of survivors continues to age, we will soon face an era in which no living witnesses of the Shoah are left among us. What is the responsibility of second and third generations to this history? What can popular genres, such as film and novels, contribute to this conversation? In this course, students will address these questions at large and also through the particular lens of Spanish history. Coursework will involve analyzing well-known films and memoirs on the Holocaust. We will also read and view lesser-known work by Spanish novelists and filmmakers attempting to contend with the history of the Shoah and its aftermath. With the history of World War II in Spain and contemporary Spain’s grappling with this history as its focal point, this course will raise questions about film, fiction, and (inherited) trauma; the politics of memory; and the problematics associated with re-discovering and representing human suffering and acts of evil. Writing assignments will not only cover this material but also make use of students’ growing awareness of Spanish culture and history

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will strengthen the skills of literary, rhetorical and or cultural analysis they acquired in their first-year English course by continuing to analyze the significance of cultural, biographical, historical, and/or philosophical contexts on creative works, with a particular focus on Spanish culture and history. This will help students to demonstrate, in their own writing and via class discussions, a growing awareness of their own cultural values and biases as well as how to more effectively reflect on how their biases impact their ability to work with others.
- Students will learn more about the complexity of differentiating between fact and fiction and of determining reliability in self-disclosure and self-censorship, with creative work on the Shoah as particular site for analysis and a particular eye toward Spain’s role and involvement. This will help students to develop an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.
- Students will deepen their understanding of the role memory and language play in the construction of cultural meanings and identities, with Spanish culture and history as a

particular focus. This will help students to demonstrate, in writing and via class discussions, an increased capacity to analyze issues with appreciation for disparate viewpoints.

Required Texts

Primary texts:

Memoir: *Night* by Elie Wiesel

Novel: *The Imposter* by Javier Cercas

Films: *The Pianist*; *El Verdugo*

Secondary Texts:

Marta Simó, “Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust in Spain.”

And selections from:

Aharony, Michal, and Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, eds. Special Issue: Holocaust Commemoration: New Trends in Museums and Memorials. *Dapim: The Journal of Holocaust Research* 30.3 (2016).

Brenneis, Sarah. Ed. *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust: History and Representation*.

----- . *Spaniards in Mauthausen: Representations of a Nazi Concentration Camp: 1940-2015*.

Hellig, Jocelyn. *The Holocaust and Antisemitism: A Short History*.

Lewy, Guenter. *Perpetrators: The World of the Holocaust Killers*.

Preston, Paul. *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain*.

Course Policies

Attendance

I take roll each day at the beginning of class; if you are not present when roll is called, you will be considered absent. More than **five** absences will result in a grade penalty. If you miss more than five classes, your final grade for the course will be reduced by 5 points per class session over the five that you miss. For example, if you miss eight class sessions this semester, and your final grade was 82/100, it will be bumped down to 67/100. (That’s 15 points—3 penalized absences at 5 points each.) It would mean going from a B- to a D+! Importantly, there is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences—they are all absences, and they all count the same way. In the event that you do miss a class, you are responsible for making up any

in-class work. You are also responsible for finding out about any homework assignments and completing them on time. Do **not** expect to be able to hand in something late or not do an assignment simply because you were absent on the day it was assigned or due; it still needs to be submitted on time. Since everything you submit will ultimately come with a date/time stamp, it will be very clear as to when you are “present” in your engagements with the course online. Any produced work will need to be submitted on time; if it is not, penalties will occur, and your grade will be reduced. This is in conjunction with the attendance policy: a lack of regular, consistent engagement with the class will result in a reduced grade.

Assignments

- You may not turn in work that was or will be required by another course.
- To complete this course with a grade of **D** or higher, you must complete all major written assignments. Failure to complete one or more major assignment(s) will result in an automatic failure for the course.
- All written assignments prepared outside of class should be professional in appearance, style, and tone: i.e. typed, free of grammatical error, and appropriate in form and content for the particular context.
- Make **two copies** of each assignment--one to turn in for evaluation and one to keep for your files to insure credit for all work.
- To receive full credit, all written assignments must be submitted on time, in proper format, and with the required supporting materials.

Class Business

All class business (i.e. questions about grades or policies, suggestions, etc.) should be documented in writing as memoranda, preferably by e-mail.

Grading

To complete this course successfully you must complete all writing assignments on time, prepare for class, and participate in class activities and discussions online. You cannot receive a passing grade unless you have submitted all major assignments. “Major assignments” refers to the following:

- **at least seven** of the Writing Assignments. (This means you can miss a few and receive a reduced grade, but you cannot skip them altogether, as that will be missing, collectively speaking, a major assignment.)
- the Take-Home Final Exam

To receive full credit, all assignments must be submitted on time in the proper format. Late work will receive a grade reduction of 10% per class day that they it is late. For all assignments, students will be given an opportunity to plan and discuss their strategies for responding to the prompt. In addition, the first writing assignment will be graded more leniently than the subsequent ones as it represents the first graded work in our course.

Your work will be posted in a discussion forum on Laulima or via its dropbox. However, if, for some reason, you email me any kind of written material as a submission of work for a grade, an email that fails to reach me or has a “missing” or “non-functioning” attachment will not be excused. This means that you need to ‘cc yourself whatever you email me and test the attachment to ensure successful delivery. It also means that you have to maintain a “sent-mail” folder with all work sent to me via email; if ever I don’t receive an email from you, one that you claim to have sent to me on time, I will ask that you do the following: 1) open the original from your sent-mail folder; 2) either take a screenshot or create a pdf of that original e-mail in its original e-mail format, not a Word document; 3) e-mail me the pdf or the screenshot as an attachment. This process will ensure that you receive credit for it having been sent on time. If you do not have such a copy to attach, I simply will have no choice but to penalize your assignment according to the date that I actually receive it. This is a non-negotiable policy; your UH email accounts have nearly infinite amounts of storage space, so there is basically no reason whatsoever to not keep a sent-mail copy of all emails and all attachments for the duration of the semester. It’s simply your responsibility. Relatedly, in addition to keeping copies of all sent emails and attachments, you must also maintain copies of all your projects. If you do not keep a copy and your project gets lost or misplaced (or a server hosting the work you produced crashes), you will have to rewrite it, and if you cannot provide rock solid evidence of it having been produced and submitted on time, you will have to take the requisite penalties.

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F 0-59
A 93-96	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Assignment

Point Value

Writing Assignments (11 at 8 points each)	88
Take-home Final Exam	12
Total	100

Grades are posted to our Laulima class site.

Incompletes will be considered only in case of documented emergency and when the majority of course work has been completed successfully.

Plagiarism

You are expected to maintain professional standards by giving credit where it is due, acknowledging the inclusion of outside sources in your own writing, whether by paraphrase or direct quote. Do not hand in someone else's work as your own. Document all borrowed information according to the format required by your field's conventions. You may not employ a ghostwriter or make use of AI to draft or write your work. An indisputable case of plagiarism will result in an automatic failure for the course and may result in further University sanctions, such as suspension or expulsion.

Code of Conduct

You are expected to behave in a courteous, polite, and professional manner; failure to do so may result in removal from the course and an official record of misconduct on your permanent file. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code here:

http://studentaffairs.oa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code.

KOKUA

If you have or think that you may have a disability and therefore need some support, you are encouraged to contact the KOKUA Program for students with all disabilities including learning, mental health, and physical disabilities. Contact KOKUA at 808-956-7511 (V/T), email KOKUA at kokua@hawaii.edu, visit KOKUA in Room 013 Queen Lili'oukalani Center for Student Services, or visit the KOKUA web site at <http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/> for further information. KOKUA services are confidential and there is no charge to students.

Gender Equity

Sexual harassment is one type of sex discrimination under Title IX, United States Education Amendments of 1972. The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) states that sexual harassment is *any* unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual Violence is a severe

form of sexual harassment. Some examples of sexual violence include threatening someone into unwanted sexual activity; sexual contact with someone who is drunk, drugged, unconscious, or otherwise unable to give a clear, informed “yes” or “no”; and rape or attempted rape. For more examples, visit the Office of Gender Equity website. Under Title IX, responsible employees cannot ensure confidentiality. Responsible employees must report any instance or disclosure of alleged sexual harassment. If you would like to speak to someone *confidentially* about your options regarding something you have experienced or witnessed, please contact: the UH Office of Gender Equity, a confidential resource that provides information about options regarding University policies and procedures to potential complainants of gender-based discrimination, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, or intimate partner violence. You can contact this office at 808-956-7077 (voice or text) and email at eeo@hawaii.edu.

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Schedule

(Subject to revision as necessary)

In addition to our assigned texts, I may distribute articles or assign on-line work on topics that arise as part of our class conversations.

Week 1: Introduction to the Holocaust and its historical context

- Reading Assignment: selection from *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust: History and Representation* edited by Sarah Brenneis
- Writing Assignment 1: Analyze and discuss one argument made by the text regarding the historical context of Spain and its relationship to the Shoah

Week 2: Literature of the Holocaust

- Reading Assignment: *Night* by Elie Wiesel
- Writing Assignment 2: Analyze how the politics of publication to a largely Christian audience shaped the version of Wiesel's work that was made available just after the war.

Week 3: Spanish Literature and the Holocaust

- Reading Assignment: *The Imposter* by Javier Cercas
- Writing Assignment 3: Analyze a passage from the text that you argue exemplifies the author's style and illustrates the themes of war, fascism and human suffering in the text.

Week 4: The Holocaust in Film

- Viewing Assignment: *The Pianist* by Władysław Szpilman
- Writing Assignment 4: Analyze the use of one cinematic technique employed in *The Pianist* to convey the horrors of the Holocaust

Week 5: Spanish Film and the Holocaust

- Viewing Assignment: *El Verdugo* by Michael Verhoeven
- Writing Assignment 5: Analyze the visual representation of fascism in Spain, focusing on the use of visual metaphor in *El Verdugo*.

Week 6: Holocaust Memorials and Museums

- Reading Assignment: selection from Aharony, Michal, and Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, eds. Special Issue: Holocaust Commemoration: New Trends in Museums and Memorials. *Dapim: The Journal of Holocaust Research* 30.3 (2016).
- Writing Assignment 6: Write a reflective essay on the role of Holocaust memorials and museums in preserving the memory of the Holocaust

Week 7: Spanish Holocaust Memorials and Museums

- Reading Assignment: selection from *Spaniards in Mauthausen: Representations of a Nazi Concentration Camp: 1940-2015* by Sarah Brenneis.
- Writing Assignment 7: Write a short research paper on one Holocaust memorial or museum in Spain, focusing on its role in representing the Shoah.

Week 8: The Holocaust and Human Rights

- Reading Assignment: selection from *Perpetrators: The World of the Holocaust Killers* by Guenter Lewy
- Writing Assignment 8: Write an analytical essay on the relationship between the Holocaust studies and human rights scholarship

Week 9: The Holocaust and the Spanish Civil War

- Reading Assignment: selection from *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* by Paul Preston
- Writing Assignment 9: Research one aspect of historical context of the Holocaust and Spanish Civil War that you did not know before, focusing on the role of the Franco regime.

Week 10: The Holocaust and Contemporary Issues

- Reading Assignment: *The Holocaust and Antisemitism: A Short History* by Jocelyn Hellig
- Writing Assignment 10: Write a reflective essay on the relevance of the Holocaust to contemporary expressions of antisemitism.

Week 11: The Holocaust and Spain Today

- Reading Assignment: “Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust in Spain Author” by Marta Simó.
- Writing Assignment 11: Research a short paper on the current state of Holocaust education and awareness in Spain

Week 12: Conclusion and Reflection

- Take-Home Final Exam: Write a final reflective essay on the course and its impact on your understanding of the Holocaust and its relationship to Spain.