

# LITERATURE OF THE HOLOCAUST – Course 05103

## Spring 2022

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**OFFICE HOURS:**       Tues:     10-1  
                              Thurs:    10-12

\*\*\*\* and by appointment\*\*\*\*

### TEXTS:

*The Oppermans*: Feuchtwanger, Lion  
*The Holocaust Chronicle*: Legacy Publishing  
*Survival in Auschwitz*: Primo Levi  
*Night*: Elie Weisel  
*Maus I* and *Maus II*: Art Spiegelman  
*Number the Stars*: Lois Lowry  
*A Different Story*: Emilie Roi  
*The Sunflower*: Simon Weisenthal  
*The Wretched of the Earth*: Franz Fanon  
*At the Mind's Limits*: Jean Amery  
\*Handouts, as necessary

### OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVE:

"Not the power to remember, but its very opposite, the power to forget, is a necessary condition for our existence" (Shalem Asch, *The Nazarene*, 1939).

This course offers students the opportunity to investigate a wide selection of Holocaust literature, including the genres of non-fiction, fiction, poetry, theory and philosophy, and film. Over the course of the semester, we will discuss the question of why the Holocaust should still have relevance to those growing up in the new Millennium, despite the fact that those who witnessed and experienced it have nearly all died. Through an investigation that begins with Hitler's rise to power, we will analyze the structures of power and subjugation that allowed over six million people to be murdered. We will discuss at length the questions of memory, forgetting, and forgiveness. We will seek to negotiate the very troubling issue of the appropriation of someone else's experience and motivations for doing so. Group viewings and discussions of films will generate further conversation and ideally lead us to a better understanding of the Holocaust and our individual responsibilities in remembering, forgetting, and passing on the stories of its victims.

The course is designed to (a) introduce you to or further your acquaintance with the works about the Holocaust (b) help you appreciate, analyze, interpret, and discuss literature, (c) provide opportunities to think about fundamental human questions, and (d) develop your ability to speak and write clearly and thoughtfully. I will emphasize reading attentively, discussing freely, thinking rigorously and creatively, supporting your assertions with textual and philosophical evidence, and writing with clarity, depth, and precision.

### WHAT I EXPECT OF YOU:

I expect you to

- **Be responsible.** Come prepared to *every* class. That means you've done the homework, you have all the required materials, and you're ready to focus on our work and participate.
- **Be accountable.** Complete all assignments, formal and informal, on time **and** ensure they are of the highest quality. If you have an occasional lapse in responsibility, take ownership for your error; don't try to make excuses or look for exemptions.
- **Be respectful.** This is a big one for me. You'll find that I'm pretty open-minded about most things, and that you can voice just about any opinion in my class, but it must be said respectfully, you must have a point, and you must support it.
- **Be honest.** Don't lie, cheat, or steal. You will disrupt and negatively affect the atmosphere of the whole class if you do. That impacts everyone.
- **Work hard.** Do your best, whether it's on an individual assignment or in a group project. Go out of your way to establish an impeccable and irreproachable work ethic.
- **Participate.** I plan to make this course largely discussion-based; therefore, you need to contribute and to listen. Too much of one or the other is equally detrimental to the class environment as a whole.
- **Be alert and flexible.** The syllabus will undoubtedly change throughout the course of the semester. Listen for changes and be consistent in noting them.

### ATTENDANCE and TARDY POLICIES:

Absences and tardies will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. You will be counted tardy if you arrive to class *at any time after* the class is scheduled to begin up to ten minutes past. You will be counted absent if you arrive to class more than *ten minutes after* the class is scheduled to begin.

It is **your** responsibility to find out about any work, assignments, announcements, syllabus changes, etc., that you miss due to absence or lateness. Get information and notes from a reliable classmate, pick up handouts from the folder on my office door, and contact me for any further information you need. Your absence on the day an assignment is given is not a legitimate excuse for a late or missing assignment. If your absence or tardiness is *unexcused*, you will not be allowed to make up missed work, and your grade(s), consequently, will be entered as a zero. Also, please note that sleeping in class will be counted as an unexcused absence; your head must remain up off the desk, and your eyes must remain open at all times. This will prevent most "interpretive" conflicts that might arise later on.

Be sure to get to me any assignment that is due on a day you must miss class, either through email, a classmate or by delivering it to the box on my office door. Assignments should be submitted *by the time class is scheduled to begin*.

Assignments missed for *multiple, consecutive* days of absence should be made up within the same number of classes missed. (I.e. If you miss Monday and Wednesday of one week, you have Friday and Monday to complete the work, which should be submitted by class time on Monday. It will, otherwise, be counted as late.)

### LATE WORK:

**All late work *must* be cleared with me prior to the due date without exception!** I will evaluate each request on a case by case basis, so be prepared to give compelling testimony in pleading your case. All late work, even if approved, will be subject to a late deduction, and the day the work is originally due counts as the first day. Once again, late work without prior approval will *not* be accepted.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

I take this issue very seriously. It is extremely important that you hand in your own work and give credit for any borrowed ideas, words, or information. If you need more detailed information on plagiarism, see me; otherwise, if you're in doubt, cite it. Consult me and/or *A Writer's Reference* for help with this. Conducting yourself honorably with regard to tests and other graded assignments/projects goes without saying. Avoid a situation where we have to address this embarrassing and injurious issue. Should an incident arise, I will deal with it according to the plan of action in the "Academic Honesty" section outlined in your *Student Handbook*. Consider your actions and their consequences carefully before you act. As an additional safeguard, I will randomly run your written work through a plagiarism detection software program, so please do be conscientious about citation.

**COMPUTER USE:**

Please do not have your computer out during class unless I specifically request that you do so. Whether or not you choose to bring it to class in your bag is your prerogative. When we do use computers in class, I will always give you prior notification. You must ensure they are in working order and ready for use at the beginning of class on specified days; you must employ them in academic pursuits only; you must have the sound turned off; and you must display the dock. Uses of your computer during class time – other than those assigned – will be counted as an unexcused absence, and additional consequences may ensue. Furthermore, do not utilize your camera or recording device without prior approval from me. Any deviation from these guidelines can result in my taking your computer and turning it in to Dr. Olufowote. You will then have to make an appointment with him (through his secretary) in order to retrieve it.

**CELL PHONES:**

Cell phones should be turned off before entering the classroom. The instructor reserves the right to confiscate any electronic device that is being utilized inappropriately during class time. The owner will then have to meet with the Director of Academic Affairs in order to reclaim this property.

**PAPERS:**

- Unless completed in class or otherwise stated, all assignments are to follow the following format:
- Typed in Times New Roman 12-point font
- Double spaced
- *Original* title
- Follow MLA style citing and referencing
- Printed in black ink
- Submitted at the beginning of class

You must submit a hard copy of your paper at the time it is due, unless otherwise instructed. Printer/computer/technology problems will evoke much sympathy from your instructor; however, your grade will still be processed according to the late work policy outlined above.

A note about your writing: Aside from in-class writing assignments, all written work should be thoroughly checked beforehand for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. As your instructor, I reserve the right to stop reading any paper if the mechanics are such that your ideas are inhibited, and I am having to mentally edit as I read for development of your thesis. In this case, I will "red line" the paper, hand it back to you, and you will have the option to make corrections and resubmit it within one class period's time. Late work penalties will apply.

**SCHEDULE OF DAILY READINGS / ASSIGNMENTS:**

Please have each assignment thoroughly read by the date above it. Changes I note in class take precedence over what is printed in the syllabus.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

There will be various long and short term projects and assignments, as well as other formal and informal assessments (like tests and quizzes) throughout the course of the semester. Some are listed in this syllabus; many are not. Be sure to listen in class in order to receive these assignments as they are given so you are not stuck trying to scurry at the last minute in order to complete them by the due date.

**PLEASE ALSO NOTE:**

Important Literature is often about the deepest and most difficult struggles of humans to live authentically in a complex world. Through the thoughts and experiences of literary characters, we readers can examine and evaluate our personal responses to life's mysteries, complexities, disappointments, and joys. In addition, we begin to understand how a writer, in their own struggle to express experience creatively, has responded to the social, political, and artistic environment of their times. The English Department at the Academy selects reading material that reflects these human struggles, has endured the test of time, and has earned a respected place in the universe of letters. In addition, the instructors include recently published poems, short stories, and articles that reflect the diversity of contemporary cultures and experiences. If, because of the powerful nature of the reading experience, you are unable to read and study a specific text with reasonable analytic objectivity, please confer with your instructor. Alternative texts (of comparable length and degree of difficulty) are available.

**GRADING:**

The grading scale I will employ in this class is as follows:

A	93-100	B+	87	C+	77	D*	69 and below
A-	90-92	B	83	C	73		
		B-	80	C-	70		

I grade on a point system, rather than the percentage breakdown you will encounter in many other classes. Larger and smaller assessments will be weighted appropriately. Class participation points will be added to your grade on most weeks (15 points possible on each week). You need to be aware of this large "assignment" that has a significant impact on your grade. Also, be aware that the "Class Participation" heading covers but is not necessarily limited to the following:

- Class discussion
  - Answering questions clearly and thoughtfully, evidencing your preparation for class
  - Generating your own ideas clearly and thoughtfully without monopolizing the discussion
  - Handling difference of opinion in a civil and mature manner (i.e. not personally attacking someone who disagrees with you)
  - Listening to others and responding to what they have said
  - Focusing on the question at hand
  - Citing textual evidence to support ideas put forth
- Attendance
- Attitude
  - Making positive contributions to the class atmosphere, rather than negative ones (through your actions and other nonverbal communications)
  - Contributing willingly, rather than complaining about it
  - Conducting yourself in a reasonable and considerate manner at all times
- Compliance with course requirements and policies outlined in this syllabus and through the instructor's communiqués.

**EVALUATION:**

In addition to weekly participation points,

- Each student will be required to submit a weekly journal that should reach a total length of approximately 40 pages by the end of the semester. Each journal entry is worth 10 points and will be evaluated upon its level of reflection and interaction with the assigned reading and the previous class period's discussion.
- Each student will be assigned two (2) formal presentations for the semester, one on a historical figure and one on a period or particular aspect of the War. Each presentation will be worth 50 points.
- Students will be required to attend group film viewings outside of class. A minimum of six are mandatory, though students will be offered approximately 12 from which to choose. These films will be offered for group screenings (usually after class); however, students are free to view them on their own time, if they have the access and availability.
- Finally, there will be both a midterm paper and a final project, the midterm equaling 100 points, and the final equaling 250. Topics TBA.
- Though there may be some smaller homework assignments that accompany readings, those listed above will comprise the majority of the points that will comprise the final grade for the course.

**HELP:**

Take advantage of my office hours. I'll be around a lot, especially during the daytime hours. I expect you to think and work independently to a large extent, but if you need help, take the initiative see me.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a **disability**, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office location and hours are listed on this document.

**PAPER HEADING FOR ASSIGNMENTS:**

First name    Last Name  
Due Date  
Title of assignment  
Nagelkirk – Holocaust Lit.

**FREEBIES:**

You are entitled to one "freebie" per semester in my class. A "freebie" is NOT a free pass to skip an assignment. Rather, it is a way to compensate for a moment of forgetfulness or a printer fiasco. Here are the stipulations:

- You must be able to prove that the work has been completed on time, so you can show it to me on your computer or you can utilize a tardy and run back to your room to retrieve it.
- You may email me the assignment. This should be done at the time the assignment is collected.
- Please inform me as soon as possible that you will be utilizing your "freebie."
- Once again, if you cannot show me the work was completed on time, the "freebie" status does not apply.
- If you have any questions or need clarification on what is acceptable, please ask.

**DIVERSITY:**

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter>.

**FORMAL ACADEMY STATEMENT ON UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:**

“It is the policy of the Indiana Academy that any absence from class is unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, and extenuating circumstances . When a student is absent from a class, the instructor reports the student absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The decision as to whether an absence is excused is not determined by the instructor.

\*You are expected to attend every class. You are allowed one unexcused absences without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will be penalized as follows: Unexcused absence (1) = 1-point subtraction from final grade. Unexcused absence (2) = 3-point subtraction from final grade. Unexcused absence (3) = 5-point subtraction from final grade. (For example, if you have an 89 final average with (3) unexcused absences your final grade will be 84). Four (4) or more unexcused absences will lead to academic and residential consequences beyond the scope of this class determined by the Office of Academic Affairs (i.e., residential groundings, parent/principal conference, and/or detention).

\*\*Any minor assignment/test/project/presentation missed due to an unexcused absence will be handled according to the late work policy of this class. You will be given an opportunity to retake any missed assignment/test/project/presentation worth more than 20% of the final grade but will be docked a full letter grade as a result.”