

IDS 2935: Post-Holocaust American Jews

Quest 1: The Examined Life

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- MW 8 <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/97430491183>
- Online

Tutorial Section Meetings (please go to the one in which you are enrolled)

- F6
- F7
- F8

Instructor

- Yaniv Feller
- Anderson Hall, #122 (meetings will take place online)
- Office Hours: M 11:00-12:00 (in-person) and by appointment over Zoom or in-person using the following link: <https://calendly.com/yfeller-1/30min>
- Email: yfeller@ufl.edu

Teaching Assistant

- Carol Rodriguez
- Email: rodriguez.ca@ufl.edu
- Office hours after tutorials or on Zoom by appointment

Course Description

Although we are accustomed the thinking about the importance of the Holocaust, itself, as a specific event in time, the Holocaust was also a historical event that had enduring consequences for American culture and society. In this class, we'll look at some of the aspects of culture that the Holocaust affected, such as attitudes toward antisemitism; the Cold War; the Civil Rights Movement; philosophical views of the Holocaust; and how it is remembered in films, comics, and museums (H). Among the skills acquired in the process are close reading, critical thinking, and effective communication of ideas (H). These will be developed through class discussions, in-class exercises, personal reflection pieces, artistic projects, as well as a final analytical paper (WR).

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

This course accomplishes the Quest and General Education objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Course Objectives

- Understand some of the specific effects of the Holocaust on American culture.
- Understand how American understandings of Jews and other minorities changed over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century.
- Understand the changing relationship between Jews and the majority culture in 20th century America.
- Write about how American culture has changed over time.
- Use literary and popular culture sources to make a historical argument.
- Think about Jews in relation to broader trends in American history and culture.
- Think about how historical events influence subsequent eras.

Required Readings and Works

- Art Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus* (or both I and II separately).
- All other readings and works are available in Canvas.

Recommended Writing Resource: Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style* (4th edition), ISBN: 979-8-848-36592-4.

Course Policies

Zoom Etiquette: Class and tutorials will take place over Zoom. The behavior expected from you is just like a regular class. You need to have your **camera on**, **microphone off** unless you want to speak, be in a **quiet place** with **stable internet connection**, and be **fully engaged**, not doing anything else. Failure to comply will reduce in penalties to the attendance category.

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): (a) quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution, and (b) submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing UF's standard online evaluations (summary results will be available to students here) as well as a course-specific evaluation that focuses on course content and the experience of the Quest curriculum. Class time will be allocated for the completion of both evaluations.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx> , 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Writing Studio: The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online

at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

***This syllabus is subject to change, and the professor will alert students to changes.*

II. Graded Work

Attendance Policy: Attendance is a prerequisite to succeed in this class. Attendance will be taken at every class meeting. Students will be allowed one unexcused absence. Each unexcused absence after that will incur a 25-point (out of 1,000) deduction from the final grade in the class. Students must have an excused absence to make up for in-class examinations.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Participation (10%): Further information is provided in the participation rubric below.

Unit Reflection Paper (5x3=15%): You are required to submit **five** reflection papers, but **no more than one per unit**. Units are marked in Roman numerals (I, V etc.). Deadline is BEFORE class that day at 9am. For example: for August 28 you will submit on Nietzsche. This would allow me to read it before and prepare the class based on your interests and what you got from the text. These very short papers are a chance for you to reflect on the readings and how they engage your own life experience. Each reflection paper should have the following components:

1. A one sentence **quote** from the reading(s). Be sure to provide the page number, not based on the pdf but on the actual pages of the book/article where available.

2. A 3-5 lines **explanation** on why you chose this quote. They can be analytical (this is the main argument, it reminds you another reading etc.) or personal (this quote relates to me because...).

3. One analytical question about the content or argument of the text.

As there is a lot of flexibility, anything submitted after 9am will not count, and no excuses for late submission would be granted.

Two Short papers (35%): 900-1200 you will be provided with prompts for two short papers, during the semester. Details will appear on Canvas and discussed in class.

Deadline First Short Paper: October 9 before class (17%)

Deadline Second Short Paper: October 30 before class. (18%)

Outline for a Museum (7%): In this short assignment, you will draft a proposal for your American Post-Holocaust Museum. It will include a short abstract of your concept, and an outline of how you plan to write your final paper. Details will appear on Canvas and discussed in class. Deadline: Nov. 13, 23:55

Class Presentation (8%): In this 5–7-minute presentation, you would present your concept to the class. The presentation must include images, your main argument, and a bibliography. Deadline: Last two weeks of classes and tutorials; a list will be given in advance. Details will appear on Canvas and discussed in class.

Final Paper (25%): The final paper will detail your concept for the museum, the decisions you made, and how they are grounded in American-Jewish history (including but not limited to the materials in class). Deadline: Friday, December 13, 14:30. Failure to submit by this time might result not only in penalty but also in an INCOMPLETE grade.

Feedback would be available upon demand within a week from the deadline.

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

Grading Rubric(s)

Writing Assessment Rubric and Statements

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.

ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback before the end of the course on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- WR course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Participation Rubric¹

	Excellent 9-10	Good 8	Average 7	Insufficient 6	Unsatisfactory 0-5
Knowledgeable: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.	Consistently makes excellent contributions to the overwhelming majority of class discussions in a way that shows excellent preparation of the relevant class materials.	Contributes to most class discussions in a way that shows good preparation of the relevant class materials.	Regularly contributes to class discussions and is able to explain their position based on the reading.	Sometimes contributes to the discussion in ways that do not necessarily show good preparation of class materials.	Never or rarely contributes to class discussions, and the contribution do not prove evidence of reading.
Thoughtful: Evaluates carefully issues raised in assigned work.	Consistently makes excellent contributions to the overwhelming majority of class discussions by raising important questions, relating to other comments, or making connections across readings.	Contributes to most class discussions by raising important questions, relating to other comments, or making connections across readings	Regularly contributes to most class discussions by raising important questions, relating to other comments, or making connections across readings.	Sometimes contributes to the discussion in ways that show the ability to carefully evaluate issues raised.	Never or rarely contributes to class discussions, and the contributions do not amount to careful evaluation of the material.
Considerate: Takes the perspective of others into account and listens attentively. ²	Always respectful to others, and takes their comments seriously.	Respectful to others and attempts to engage their comments.	Respectful, and sometimes relates to others' comments	Rarely takes into account how others might perceive one's comments.	Does not take into account other people's feelings and perspectives.

¹ Coming to class, having done the readings and ready to discuss them, is essential for your success in this course, and for the enjoyment of all of us. If you cannot make it to class because of a valid reason (religious observance, illness etc.) please let me know as soon as possible. Other than that, see the "attendance policy" above.

² Religion is a sensitive topic for many people. You may come from a faith tradition, or you may not. We are here together to learn more, so any question that comes from an honest desire to learn is a good question. Our goal is to explore and learn, but not to judge either each other's traditions, or ignorance about them. You do not ever need to volunteer anything about your own beliefs, traditions, practices or opinions (or lack thereof) but if you do, make sure that you speak in the first person, thereby making clear that you are representing yourself and not an entire tradition in the discussion.

III. Annotated Schedule

Prelude

Mon., Aug. 26: Syllabus and background: What Are American Jews?

Wed., Aug. 28: Nathan Englander, “What We Talk about When We Talk about Anne Frank?”

Mon., Sep. 2 LABOR DAY NO CLASS

I. The 1940s: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Anti-Semitism

Wed., Sep. 4: Watch Ken Burns, *The U.S. and the Holocaust*, episode 1: “[The Golden Doors](#)” and episode 2: “[Yearning to Breath Free](#)”

Mon., Sep. 9: Dara Horn, “Legends of Dead Jews,” 89-103

Wed., Sep. 11: Leo Baeck, “Why Jews in the World?” (1947)

Mon., Sep. 16: **Guest Lecture:** Professor Rachel Gordan. Read: Laura Z. Hobson, *Gentlemen’s Agreement*, chapter 1-2

II. The 1950s: Zionism and Anne Frank

Wed., Sep. 18: Watch *Exodus*

Mon., Sep. 23: Derek Penslar, *Zionism: An Emotional State*, 145-166

Wed., Sep. 25: Cynthia Ozick, “Who Owns Anne Frank?”

III. The 1960s: Civil Rights and Black Power

Mon., Sep. 30: Susannah Heschel, introduction to *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*,

Wed., Oct. 2 JEWISH NEW YEAR – NO CLASS

Mon., Oct. 7: Avinoam Patt and Liat Steir-Levy on Oct. 7 and Holocaust comparisons, [The Conversation](#), Dec. 3, 2023.

Wed., Oct. 9: Marc Dollinger, “American Jews and the Rise of Black Power,” 80-103.

Deadline First short assignment

IV. 1960s-1970s: The Rise of Post-Holocaust Philosophy

Mon., Oct. 14: Emil Fackenheim, *Wrestling with God*, 419-439 (stop at “Israel and Diaspora”)

Wed., Oct. 16: David Hartman, “[Auschwitz or Sinai](#)”

Mon., Oct. 21 Plan to attend Dara Horn’s lecture online (details will be provided)

V. 1990s: The Year of the Holocaust and The New Era of Memory

Wed., Oct. 23: Yaniv Feller, “What Is a (Jewish) Museum?: A Brief History”

Mon., Oct. 28: Rachel Gross, “Ghosts in the Gallery”

Wed., Oct. 30: Oren Baruch Stier, “Torah and Taboo,” 505-536 Deadline Second Short Assignment

Mon., Nov. 4: Laura Levitt, “Looking Behind a Long Shadow”

Wed., Nov. 6: *Maus*, Part I

Mon., Nov. 11: *Maus*, Part II

Wed., Nov. 13: Steven Spielberg, [*Schindler's List*](#)

Deadline: Outline for a Museum

Class Presentations (list will be provided)

Mon., Nov. 18:

Wed., Nov. 20:

Mon., Nov. 25 NO CLASS

Wed., Nov. 27 THANKSGIVING

Mon., Dec. 2:

Wed., Dec. 4:

Final Assignment Deadline: Friday, December 13, 14:30