

Women and the Holocaust

Summer 2011

GRC S323E (85127) * JS S363 (85923) * WGS S340 (89472)

Time: MTWTHF 10:00-11:30

Classroom: GAR 1.126

Instructor: Pascale R. Bos

Phone: 232-6373

Office: 3.14 Burdine (BUR)

E-mail: pascale.r.bos@mail.utexas.edu

Office hours: M 11:30-12:30, TTH 9-10:00 or by appointment

Understanding Gender and Self-Representation under Nazi Reign

This course is meant to serve as an introduction to the *history* of both Jewish and of German women during WW II and the Holocaust and to women's *narratives* and *self-representations* of this period. *There are thus two foci:*

1. We will examine the *historical* role of non-Jewish German and of Jewish women during WW II and the Holocaust through autobiographical texts, film, and historical analyses. In doing so, we will simultaneously explore what doing feminist, or *gender* history may look like. How did fascism define the gender roles of non-Jewish women in Germany? How did the Nazis treat Jewish women and other female "enemies of the state"? Did the experience of persecuted (Jewish) women differ from that of (Jewish) men?

2. We will carefully examine autobiographical texts of women as self-representations that attempt to negotiate the different (and shifting) discourses on femininity and masculinity, and the role of women in the public and private sphere available during the war years. Although the texts (both autobiographical writing and interviews) sketch a picture of the experiences and gender constructions that we seek to examine, we will not just use these texts as "eyewitness" documents of women's experience. Instead, we critically investigate *how* to interpret these texts. How are these texts produced? When were they produced, how much time elapsed between the event and the writing about it? What is the role of the interviewer or editor, what is the role of time and aging? Are the texts *gendered*? Is memory gendered, or are narratives? How do the texts relate to "lived experience?"

Writing Flag

This is a class with a writing component course, and your writing assignments for this class in terms of both composition and content are as important as the primary class content. Throughout the course, you will receive writing hand-outs (information on certain skills) and writing prompts (descriptions of an assignment). Keep all of these hand-outs together in a folder or a binder as you are expected to refer back to this information while writing.

Course Requirements

Lectures

Depending on the content of the day's assignments and student presentations (see below) most classes will end or start with a short lecture and a brief in-class assignment which aids discussion.

Presentations

At the beginning of the course, you need to sign up for a presentation on one of the days' assigned readings. You will work on these presentations alone or in a pair. If you are working with a partner, divide up the reading, read the texts carefully, and provide a question or a topic for the rest of the class to respond to. Your presentation should be 10 minutes per person (20 total), and will be followed by questions from the class and a discussion. It may be useful to discuss the presentation beforehand with me (in office hours or by email). The presentation is graded. At the end of the semester, you will also give a 3-5 minute presentation on your final paper.

Writing Assignments

There are *three* different writing assignments: response papers, a brief film précis, and a final paper which is broken up into several components

Response Papers During the course of this class you will write three response papers. This response (which can be addressed to me, to the class as a whole, or to one student in particular) is based on the reading, the discussions in class, or anything else relevant to the content of the course. Specific instructions will be provided for each response. The letter needs to be between 300-500 words long (one to 1.5 pages typed 10 or 11 point font), no longer.

Film précis A brief (2-page) analysis of a film that we will view in class. The assignment is specific to the film,

and you will receive directions. Use this assignment to practice your summarizing and analytical skills for your final paper!

Final Paper A final research paper, discussing a choice of the readings and/or one or more of the issues raised during this course, ranging 8-10 pages, is due half a week after our last day of classes. You will also write a one-page proposal, a short bibliography, and a one-page outline with a working thesis and opening paragraph. We will have a thesis draft workshop in class. This final paper must be typed, double spaced, in letter quality 10 or 11 point type, with one inch margins and free of grammatical or typographical errors. One page equals *no less* than 250 words. Use page numbers. The paper should comply with MLA, APA, or Chicago style. You need NO title page. The paper needs to be sent to me electronically, saved in Word or as a PDF, title: "Final Paper Student Name."

Attendance

You are expected to attend all sessions, do the background reading, and participate in discussions, many of which will be based on the readings. Because we have so few sessions and much of the class consists of small group work, attendance is mandatory, reflected in your grade, and if you miss a class, I want to be notified (by email). Tardiness will be counted as a .5 absence. For *every 4 classes missed, your final grade will be lowered by one letter, no exceptions.*

Special note on summer session due dates

Because this is a summer session course, you will have to read and work through the same amount of material as in a long semester but now in only 1/3rd of the time. This means that it is essential that you keep up with the reading and the assignments and not fall behind, as there is simply not enough time to catch up. Spend enough time each day to read and do the assignments. Come to each class prepared (read the assigned texts, look over class questions,) and hand in each assignment on time.

Grading

Attendance/participation	15%	Response papers (3 x 5% each)	15%
Class presentation	10%	film précis	15%
Final research paper	45%	(prop 5%, biblio 5%, outline 5%, thesis 5%, opening ¶ 5%, paper 20%)	

I grade on an absolute scale, not a curve: 100-90 A, 89-80 B, 79-70 C, 69-60 D, < 59 F

Texts

A course packet will be available from Speedway Copies in the Dobie mall (478-3334) by Thursday.

Films

Ray Muller The Horrible, Wonderful Life of Leni Riefenstahl
Helke Sander BeFreiers, Befreite (not available from UT or video stores)

Disabilities

The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-6441 TTY.

Writing Center

The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Their services are not just for writing with "problems." Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. FAC 211, 471-6222. <http://uwc.fac.utexas.edu/>.

A note on scholastic dishonesty

While doing research on the internet, it is tempting to copy and paste.. However, this constitutes plagiarism, a form of scholastic dishonesty that UT takes very seriously. See:

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php Make sure you quote properly, or paraphrase (while disclosing your original source). Plagiarism tutorial:

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>

Calendar-Syllabus

Readings are listed on the day they will be discussed so read them before you come to class. They can be found in the reader. **Always bring the reader to class.**

Week 1	Class Introduction
T 11	Short History of WW II
2	Introduction to bio and survey
W 12	Short History of the Holocaust
3	<i>Bio due! Survey due!</i> Sign up for presentations History of WWII/Holocaust continued
Th 13	Interpretive Frameworks
4	History of WWII/Holocaust continued Discussion: WW II = “A war against the Jews”? and overarching framework: <i>Victims, Perpetrators, Bystanders</i>
F 14	What is Women's/Gender History? I
5	Joan Gadol <i>The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History</i> Presentation: Assignment: write <i>Response Paper #1</i>

Week 2	What is Women's/Gender History? II
M 18	<i>Response Paper #1 due!</i>
6	Kathleen Canning <i>Feminist History after the Linguistic Turn</i> (excerpt) Presentation: and

T 19	Germans: Victims or Willing Perpetrators?
7	Christopher Browning <i>Preface & Ordinary Men</i> Daniel Goldhagen <i>Introduction Hitler's Willing Executioners</i> Presentation:
W 20	Women in Germany: Victims, Bystanders, or Perpetrators?
8	Gisela Bock <i>Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany</i> Claudia Koonz <i>Consequences: Women, Nazis, and Moral Choice</i> Presentation:
Th 21	Leni Riefenstahl: victim or perpetrator? Watch documentary in class <i>The Horrible, Wonderful Life of Leni Riefenstahl</i> (Ray Muller, 1993) Bio Leni Riefenstahl in reader Assignment: write film précis

Week 3	Women in Germany: Victims, Bystanders, or Perpetrators? Final
M 25	<i>Film précis due!</i>
10	Alison Owings <i>Introduction to Frauen</i> , Frau Mathilde Mundt- The History Lesson, <i>Frau Anna Fest- A Job in Its Own Category</i> Presentation:
T 26	Allison Owings <i>Frau Haferkamp: Motherhood Times Ten</i>

- 11 Atina Grossmann *Feminist Debates about Women and National Socialism*
Presentation:

Assignment: write response #2 based on hand out
- W 27 *Response Paper #2 due!*
12 Stuart Liebman and Annette Michelson *After the Fall: Women in the House of...*
Presentation:
- Th 28 Watch *BeFreier, Befreite* (excerpt) in class, get hand-out on it for response #3
13
- F 29 **Personal Positionality: How to Interpret Testimony and Scholarship**
14 Penny Summerfield *Introduction to Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives*
Presentation:

Assignment: work on film hand-out for response #3 (work on questions)
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Week 4

- M 1 **Jewish Women during the Holocaust: History**
15 *Response Paper # 3 due!*
Sybil Milton (read all or only 227-end)
Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton *Surviving*
Sheryl Robbin *Life in the Camps: The Psychological Dimension*
Presentation:
- T 2 **Women's Narratives of the Holocaust**
16 Charlotte Delbo *Arrivals, Departures, Thirst, Whether you Return, Days and Memory*
Lawrence Langer *Deep Memory: The Buried Self*
Presentation:

Assignment: write a 1-page proposal for final paper
- W 3 **Women's Camp Experiences**
17 *1-page proposal for final paper due!*
Etty Hillesum *A Letter from Westerbork*
Gisella Perl *A Doctor in Auschwitz*
Presentation:
- Th 4 **Are Survivor Narratives Gendered?**
18 Marga Minco *Sabbath*
Sara Nomberg-Przytyk *The Camp Blanket*
Compare Primo Levi, Judith Magyar-Isaacson, Isabella Leitner (reader)
Presentation:

Assignment: create bibliography for final paper
- F 5 **Interpreting Holocaust Literature**
19 *Hand in brief bibliography for final paper!*
James Young *Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation*
James Young *On Rereading Holocaust Diaries and Memoirs*
Sara Horowitz *The Idea of Fiction*
Presentation:

Assignment: get hand-out of for response #4 and work on questions
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Week 5

M8
20

Interpreting Gender Difference I

Joan Ringelheim *Women and the Holocaust: A Reconsideration of Research*
Presentation:

T 9
21

Interpreting Gender Difference II

Pascale Bos *Women and the Holocaust: Analyzing Gender Difference*

Assignment: Create working thesis for final paper

W 10
22

In class peer review workshop on thesis

Assignment: create intro paragraph, thesis, outline for final paper.

Th 11
23

Intro paragraph, thesis, and outline for final paper due!

Andre Heller and Othmar Schmiderer [Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary](#)

F 12
24

Short final presentations by all students (3 minute discussion of your paper topic)

FINALS' WEEK: NO FINAL

Final papers are due Tuesday August 16th, by 12 PM, in electronic format. See syllabus and assignment prompt for more details