Course description

“After the Holocaust” is a huge and open-ended topic that easily encompasses a multitude of study areas from history to international law, political science to literary studies. This course will introduce a few important over-arching texts while at the same time serving as a writers’ workshop that focuses on rhetoric, narrative, audience, and differing genres of writing. We will discuss ethical, political and psychological issues raised by the state-sponsored persecution and attempted extermination of the Jews during the Nazi era in Germany and explore the impact of the Holocaust on contemporary Judaism as well as on the discourse and culture of the United States in general over the last almost seven decades. Students will analyze assigned texts according to specific criteria and themselves produce various forms of writing, including a film or book review, a personal essay, an editorial argument and an extended research project and paper to express their ideas and conclusions.

WRTG 3020 is designed to meet the criteria of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education for an advanced writing course:

CCHE Criteria

**Rhetorical knowledge:** We will emphasize critical reading, undertaking a close analysis of assigned texts, and considering in each case the writer’s purpose, persuasive tactics, and intended audience, as well as the overall context in which he or she is writing.

**Writing process:** Writing is a continually recursive process. Often we discover what we think about a particular issue or topic only through the process of putting our thoughts on paper. As the ideas become clearer and more focused, it becomes necessary to re-work what has already been written.

This class follows a workshop format, and you will be expected to re-write every paper assigned at least once, and in some cases several times. Your writing will be critiqued and discussed by your fellow students as well as by me; you will give a presentation on your research project to help you shape your material and devise the best and most persuasive way of organizing and communicating your ideas. Through this presentation you will also be able to analyze the differences between written and oral communication in terms of both content and audience, and the varying strengths, weaknesses and uses of both modes.
You will be encouraged to analyze your own arguments and those in the written materials assigned for logic, coherence and persuasiveness. You will brush up on your research techniques, and will evaluate in depth the validity and relevance of your sources.

**Writing conventions:** You will learn to devise effective communication strategies for differing audiences, including readers of newspapers, scholars in the specific discipline toward which you direct your in-depth research project (economics, anthropology, etc.), civic leaders, and the general public.

We will examine the conventions and vocabulary of each genre, at all times bearing in mind the needs and expectations of your specific audience.

**Texts:**

*Survival in Auschwitz* by Primo Levi

*The Holocaust in American Life* by Peter Novick

*(Depending on time: The Nazi Doctors* by Robert Jay Lifton)

**Student papers:** Papers will be workshopped online and in class; you will need to make hard copies of your papers for distribution to your fellow students.

Various essays and papers sent electronically or posted on D2L.

I will post book titles and articles that relate to the topics we’re discussing or to your specific research projects on D2L. There is more worthwhile and illuminating literature on the Holocaust than we can possibly read together, but I hope our discussion will spark your curiosity and you’ll want to explore further than the confines of this classroom.

**Films:** *The Last Days*, dir. James Moll

*Fighter*, dir. Amir Bar-Lev

**Recommended supplemental texts:**

- The Elements of Style, Strunk and White
- On Writing Well, William Zinsser

  A first-rate dictionary and a college handbook, such as The Everyday Writer, Andrea A. Lunsford

**Assignments**

**Writing Exercises:** You will be working on exercises to increase the ease, fluidity and expressiveness of your writing throughout the semester. Some of these will be brought shared in-class or online.

**Film or book review:** 3 to 4 pages (20 percent)

**An editorial:** 2-3 pages (20 percent)

**Four or five 200-400-word posts** on D2L in response to readings (20 percent)
**Persuasive research paper**, 8-10 pages (25 percent; grade encompasses both paper and presentation), subdivided as follows:

1. Class presentation, 15-20 minutes. You will determine the primary claim you intend to make in your research paper, and present it to the class with supporting evidence. This should enable you to sharpen your focus, think ahead of time about the most persuasive way in which to present your data on paper, figure out, with the help of your classmates’ questions and overall response, your areas of strength and those where more thought and research are needed.

2. Research paper. You will determine which works best for your topic: the first person or a more formal academic style. The goal is to arrive at a complex and sustainable thesis and to convince your reader of its validity. Like everything you write for this class, the research paper will be critiqued both by the instructor and your peers, and re-written at least once.

**Class participation, including in-class exercises and your presentation on Primo Levi** counts for the final 15% of your grade

**Methods of delivery and evaluation**

Class time will be taken up with lectures, discussion, analysis of reading material, in-class writing, both full-class and small-group workshops, and an occasional speaker. We will utilize e-mail, CU-Learn, library databases and various websites. You will be encouraged to use all relevant technological processes for your research and your presentation and to aid communication both inside and outside the classroom.

You will be graded on your comprehension of course subject matter, the intelligence and expressiveness of your writing, your ability to conduct serious, in-depth research, the skill with which you use the information you’ve acquired in argument and to persuade, your ability to speak—both verbally and in writing—in different genres and to differing audiences.

**Schedule of readings, assignments, exercises**

**Week One (Aug. 26 and 28):** Intro. to class. In class writing, share and discuss

*Read: Survival in Auschwitz by Sept. 9*

**Week Two (Sept. 2 and 4):** Watch *The Last Days*. Take notes. Discuss. Analysis of rhetorical effectiveness of film versus the written word.

*Finish reading Survival in Auschwitz (Sept. 9)*

*Read reviews posted in D2L*

**Week Three (Sept. 9 and 11):** Close analysis of first chapter of Survival in Auschwitz. Break into small groups to discuss Primo Levi presentations. How to write a review revisited.

*Prepare presentations on Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz. Prepare and bring in supporting handout (one page, hard copy) to share with the class.*

**Week Four (Sept. 16 and 18):** Student presentations on Primo Levi
Read The Holocaust in American Life, part one. Post ideas about possible research topics suggested by these chapters on D2L by Sept. 23

Write a review of either Survival in Auschwitz or The Last Days, three pages, hard copies due Sept. 23

Read handouts (possible: Lifton, Sereny, Arendt, Levi)

Read The Holocaust in American Life, part two. Post response and ideas

**Week Five (Sept. 23 and 25):** In-class critique of reviews. Conferences. Class discussion of readings: How does the Holocaust help shape our ideas about good and evil?

Post on how we should think about/define evil OR whether Nazi criminals ever can or should be forgiven, 200-400 words.

Read The Holocaust in American Life, part three. Post response

**Week Six (Sept. 30 and Oct. 2):** How to think about/write a research paper; brainstorm topics.

Read The Holocaust in American Life, parts four and five. Post response

**Week Seven (Oct. 7 and 9):** Discuss The Holocaust in American Life.

Post thesis statements

**Week Eight (Oct. 14 and 26):** Debate. Analyze thesis statements

**Week Nine (Oct. 21 and 23):** Presentations on research

**Week Ten (Oct. 28 and 30):** Presentations

**Week Eleven (Nov. 4 and 6):** Presentations

Research papers due Nov. 4, eight to ten pages

**Week Twelve (Nov. 11 and 13):** In-class critique. Conferences

Final version research paper due in Nov. 18

**Week Thirteen (Nov. 18 and 20):** How to write an editorial; analyze editorial samples

**Week Fourteen (Nov. 25 and 27):** Fall break and Thanksgiving

Editorial: What should we learn from the Holocaust? 3 pages, due Dec. 2

**Week Fifteen (Dec. 2 and 4):** In-class critique. Conferences

Editorial rewrite due Dec. 11

**Week Sixteen (Dec. 9 and 11):** Watch and discuss Fighter. Wrap-up

Class Policies
**Grades:** Your work will be held to high standards, according to the following criteria:

**A:** Excellent in content, form, and style—original, substantive, insightful, persuasive, clear, and free from mechanical errors.

**B:** Good, with no major flaws—interesting, with above-average thought and expression.

**C:** Adequate or reasonably competent. May have a mixture of strengths and weaknesses.

**D:** Poor in content, form, or style—disorganized, illogical, confusing, unfocused, or containing pervasive errors that impair readability.

**F:** Incoherent or disastrously flawed, never handed in, plagiarized.

**Attendance and participation:** Since this is a workshop class, participation counts for 15 percent of your final grade. More than two unexcused absences can result in your final grade falling by one fraction of a letter (from A to A-, etc.); four absences may earn you an F. Failure to attend an individual conference counts as an absence.

Participation involves more than your physical presence. It encompasses your coming to class prepared, participating fully in discussions, and the generosity and intelligence you show in critiquing the work of others.

If your class time is spent texting or focusing on your portable devices and ignoring class discussion, I will count that as an absence. You will also accrue absences if you make a habit of walking in and out of the classroom while class is in session.

**Late papers** will not be accepted unless you have consulted with me and secured my agreement beforehand.

**Writing Center:** Individual tutoring is available for students at every writing level. You can make an appointment at [http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html](http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html)

**Plagiarism** is presenting the work or ideas of someone else as your own. It includes failing to use quotation marks for directly quoted work, failing to document paraphrased ideas, and false documentation. It is also plagiarism to submit someone else’s work as your own. An assignment containing plagiarized material will receive an automatic “F” and will be reported to the Dean. (See “Honor Code” in “University Policies” below.)

**University Policies:**

**Students with disabilities:**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

**Religious holidays:**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. See full details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html)
**Classroom behavior:**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I can make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at: http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

**Honor Code:**

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at: http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at: http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

**Sexual harassment:**

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment (http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html), the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh