

Calendar of Learning & Teaching Activities

Hollywood and History: The Holocaust (History 270-05)

Spring 2024

Meeting Room: 018 AAB

Meeting Times: 3:00-4:15 M & W

(12025)

Syllabus updated 15 February 2024

[Hollywood & History Webpage](#)

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Student Drop-in Hours (251 AAB)

Mondays: 2:00-3:00 PM

Tuesdays: 3:30-5:00 PM

Wednesdays: 2:00-3:00 PM

Thursdays: 3:30 PM-5:00 PM

Happy to schedule appointments outside these times as well; just contact me.

Email Etiquette:

- Always include in which course you are enrolled
- Always include the topic of your email in the memo line
- Never assume that I read my email more than once a day, or that I will respond immediately when you send a message
- The lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part

According to the schedule below, you should have studied, not just read, by the date of the class meeting the assigned readings to be discussed. Please note when assignments are due. Any revisions that I make on the calendar will be made in the Content modules, placed in announcements, and sent to your school email. It is your responsibility to check these notifications. If in doubt, please do not hesitate to contact me.

All assignment guidelines are explained in the document entitled "Syllabus Details," and located in BRIGHTSPACE Content Modules. A brief overview of everything is explained in an infographic.

If we are forced online, our scheduled class meetings will be held via Zoom. If we were to watch a film or listen to a lecture, you will be asked to complete those before class, and we will discuss in class. If we were already planning to have a discussion, this can easily occur via Zoom.

Estimated Reading or Study Times (ERT or EST) are just that – an estimate. When we encounter people, places, and concepts that are unfamiliar to us, reading takes longer. What is more, the reading times do not account for short breaks or time taken to make notes.

"...knowing how to read something results almost automatically from knowing why we are reading, and without some purpose, reading is an aimless activity." ~ Katherine Gottschalk and Keith Hjortshoj¹

So, be sure to look ahead at assignments



This Syllabus is subject to Change


Class Meeting Dates

Schedule of Assignment Deadlines, Readings, Class Meetings

- Except for Szpilman's *The Pianist*, all readings are in the photocopy packet, purchased at the University Store

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skeletal Lecture Outlines are found in section 2 of the Photocopy Packet; the
Mon, 22 Jan	<p>Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What do you know about the History of the Holocaust? ▪ What are the course expectations? ▪ What are student motivations for taking the course? ▪ How might this course contribute to your education?
Between classes do the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review syllabus and bring questions to class. <input type="checkbox"/> Begin reading Robert Rosenstone, <i>Visions of the Past</i>, pp. 19-37, 45-61, 64-79 (ERT: 3 hours) <input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL 1 which requires that you watch a “family-friendly” movie related to the Holocaust
Wed, 24 Jan	<p>Lecture: Why this course & Working Assumptions about Hollywood and History PDF p. 1-14</p> <p>Discussion: Questions about syllabus? Assignments? Deadlines? Submission?</p>
Between classes do the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Be reading Robert Rosenstone, <i>Visions of the Past</i>, pp. 19-37, 45-61, 64-79 (ERT: 3 hours)
Mon, 29 Jan	<p>Lecture: Historians and Hollywood: The Clash of Professional Ethos? PDF p. 14-35</p>
Between classes do the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Finish reading Robert Rosenstone, <i>Visions of the Past</i>, pp. 19-37, 45-61, 64-79 (ERT: 3 hours) <input type="checkbox"/> Quiz 1 opens Monday, 29 January, 4:30 PM and closes on Monday, 5 February, 4:30 PM <input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL 1
Wed, 31 Jan	<p>Discussion: Consult Rosenstone and Lecture Notes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why might historians, especially “Draagnet historians,” dislike Hollywood’s versions of history? 2. According to Rosenstone, what should historians understand about how movies get made? What are specific techniques discussed by Rosenstone that filmmakers use to make movies out of history? 3. What is a historical film? 4. Can history be told through film? Can we learn history through film? 5. What are “true” and “false” inventions? Does evaluating films by how well they achieve authenticity provide sufficient criteria (see lecture notes)? 6. What does Rosenstone mean by “discourse of history”? 7. What is the “Hollywood tradition” and how does it affect filmmakers and their work?
Between classes do the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Begin Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Syd Field, “Screenplay” and “Adaptation”, pp. 7-16, 204-216 (ERT 60 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Quiz 1 closes on Monday, 5 February, 4:30 PM <input type="checkbox"/> Be working on WTL 1

Mon, 5 Feb	Lecture: Finish lecture content for Historians and Hollywood PDF p. 14-35
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Read and make notes: Syd Field, "Screenplay" and "Adaptation", pp. 7-16, 204-216 (ERT 60 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for online quiz <input type="checkbox"/> Quiz 2 opens Monday, 5 February, 4:30 PM and closes on Monday, 12 February, 4:30 PM <input type="checkbox"/> Be working on WTL 1
Wed, 7 Feb	Discussion: Drawing upon Syd Field and Lecture <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In learning about the structure of a screenplay, how do you imagine that this will shape the contents of a historical screenplay? 2. Given Field's advice on adapting novels, historical events, biographies etc., how will that impact accuracy and authenticity in historical films? 3. We have now studied filmmaking from two professional perspectives: professional historians and a screenwriter. What are the causes of the clash between their professional ethos? 4. What are your opinions about how well Hollywood might be able to do history given Syd Field's advice to screenwriters?
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit hard copy of WTL 1 in class Monday, 12 February, PLUS upload to BRIGHTSPACE by 3:00 PM <input type="checkbox"/> Quiz 2 closes on Monday, 12 February, 4:30 PM
Mon, 12 Feb	Lecture: Making Movies through the Eyes of Historians: The Screenwriters PDF p. 36-43
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin reading and making notes: Wladyslaw Szpilman, <i>The Pianist</i> , foreword and pp. 1-115 (Foreword and chapters 1-10) See also study guide in Photocopy Packet PDF p. 59-68
Wed, 14 Feb	Lectures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Movies through the Eyes of Historians: The Directors PDF p. 44-56 • Where do ghettos fit into Holocaust History? PDF p. 57-67
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Read and make notes: Wladyslaw Szpilman, <i>The Pianist</i> , foreword and pp. 1-115 (Foreword and chapters 1-10) See also study guide in Photocopy Packet (ERT: 3 hours)
Mon, 19 Feb	Discussion: How did Wladyslaw Szpilman translate his experiences? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does Szpilman portray his relationship with his parents and siblings? 2. Does Szpilman portray his survival as heroic or at least intentional? 3. Szpilman wrote that "from November 1940 to July 1942, a period of almost two years, merge into a single image as if they had lasted only a single day." (p. 61-chapters 6-10) If you were to adapt these chapters to a film, what would be most important to portray and why? Discuss at least two examples. 4. What should be the message of the movie?
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiz 3 Opens Monday, 19 February, 4:30 PM and closes on Monday, 26 February, 4:30 PM <input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL-The Pianist

Wed, 21 Feb	Begin Screening: <i>The Pianist</i>
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Read and Make Notes: Wladyslaw Szpilman, <i>The Pianist</i> , foreword and pp. 116-end of book (including extracts of Wilm Hosenfeld's diary and Epilogue) (ERT: 3 hours) <input type="checkbox"/> Quiz 3 Closes on Monday, 26 February, 4:30 PM
Mon, 26 Feb	Discussion: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the first hour of the film compare to the memoir? 2. Szpilman might not have survived if not for the help of non-Jewish Poles who took considerable risks. He discusses his escape (circa February 1943) and life in hiding until January 1945 (chapters 12-18). If you were to adapt these chapters to a film, what would be most important to portray and why? Discuss at least two examples. 3. Does Szpilman portray his survival as heroic or at least intentional?
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL-The Pianist
Wed, 28 Feb	Continue Screening: <i>The Pianist</i>
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring completed <i>The Pianist</i> Ticket Out to class <input type="checkbox"/> Be working on WTL-The Pianist
Mon, 4 Mar	Finish Screening: <i>The Pianist</i> Answer Questions about WTL-The Pianist
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit hard copy of WTL-The Pianist in class Wednesday, 6 March PLUS upload to BRIGHTSPACE by 3:00 PM
Wed, 6 Mar	Lecture: Heroes and Villains in Holocaust films PDF p. 68-78
11-15 Mar	Spring Break 
Mon, 18 Mar	Begin Screening: <i>Defiance</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the history of resistance and the Bielski otriad portrayed in the film? 2. How are the brothers portrayed in comparison to the Jews whom they rescue? 3. What is the filmmaker's translation of the past and the message/lesson being conveyed? 4. "Have the characters been <i>unnecessarily</i> simplified or modernized?"
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Sign up for one of two topics from <i>Defiance</i> by Nechama Tec <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> "Women in the Bielski Otriad," p. 218-238 <input type="checkbox"/> "Social Relations in the Bielski Otriad," p. 186-191, 193-202, 271-276 <input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL-Defiance
Wed, 20 Mar	Continue Screening: <i>Defiance</i>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the history of resistance and the Bielksi otriad portrayed in the film? 2. How are the brothers portrayed in comparison to the Jews whom they rescue? 3. What is the filmmaker's translation of the past and the message/lesson being conveyed? 4. "Have the characters been <i>unnecessarily</i> simplified or modernized?"
Between classes do the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Finish Screening <i>Defiance</i> on your own <input type="checkbox"/> Turn in Ticket Out during next class meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Read and Make Notes for discussion on 25 March: <i>Defiance: The Bielksi Otriad</i> by Nechama Tec (ERT: 90 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Introduction to <i>Defiance</i> <input type="checkbox"/> "The Big Hunt" in <i>Defiance</i> by Nechama Tec p. 149-152, 159-174 <input type="checkbox"/> "Last Night and Day" by Nechama Tec p. 280-287 <input type="checkbox"/> Sign up for one of two topics from <i>Defiance</i> by Nechama Tec <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> "Women in the Bielski Otriad," p. 218-238 (ERT: 45 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> "Social Relations in the Bielski Otriad," p. 186-191, 193-202, 271-276 (ERT 45 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL-<i>Defiance</i>
Mon, 25 Mar	<p>Discussion: How does the portrayal of the Bielksi brothers in the film <i>Defiance</i>, compare to their portrayal in Nechama Tec's study?</p> <p>This discussion will be based upon your study of the Historical Introduction and Nechama Tec's "The Big Hunt" and "Last Night and Day"</p>
Between classes do the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read and Make Notes: <i>Defiance</i> by Nechama Tec either <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> "Women in the Bielski Otriad" by Nechama Tec (ERT: 45 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> "Social Relations in the Bielski Otriad" by Nechama Tec (ERT 45 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Be writing WTL-<i>Defiance</i>
Wed, 27 Mar	<p>Discussion: How does the portrayal of the Bielksi brothers in the film <i>Defiance</i>, compare to their portrayal in Nechama Tec's study?</p> <p>Each group will first discuss their discoveries about the history as told by Nechama Tec, the two groups will exchange information, and then we will hold a full-class discussion of these two topics.</p>
Between classes do the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Submit hard copy of WTL-<i>Defiance</i> in class Wednesday, 10 April, PLUS upload to BRIGHTSPACE by 3:00 PM <input type="checkbox"/> Read and Make Notes: Wannsee Conference Sources
Mon, 1 Apr	<p>Begin Screening: <i>Conspiracy</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How well did the filmmakers do in their translating the meeting minutes on screen? 2. As part of the audience, what did you learn about the origins of the "final solution" from viewing the film?
Between classes do the following	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Begin reading: Gisella Perl, <i>I was a Doctor at Auschwitz</i>, pp. 11-20, 26-47, 56-65, 69-86, 116-123, 140-142, 165-175 (ERT: 3 hours)

Wed, 3 Apr	Finish Screening: <i>Conspiracy</i>
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin reading: Gisella Perl, <i>I was a Doctor at Auschwitz</i> , pp. 11-20, 26-47, 56-65, 69-86, 116-123, 140-142, 165-175 (ERT: 3 hours)
Mon, 8 Apr	Lecture: Ha! Is there room for humor about the Holocaust?
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL 2
Wed, 10 Apr	Lecture: Auschwitz in Historical Context PDF p. 79-91
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Read and make notes: Gisella Perl, <i>I was a Doctor at Auschwitz</i> (memoir excerpts) (ERT: 3 hours) <input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL 2
Mon, 15 Apr	Begin Screening: <i>Out of the Ashes</i> 1. What is the filmmaker's translation of the past and the message/lesson being conveyed? 2. "Have the characters been <i>unnecessarily</i> simplified or modernized?" 3. Has the compression of events or condensed timeline <i>significantly</i> altered the results of the events? Was it necessary? 4. Given that invention and alterations occur in every frame, "What alternatives might have been considered?"
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Submit hard copy of WTL 2 in class Wednesday, 17 April PLUS upload to BRIGHTSPACE Coursework by 3:00 PM <input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL 3
Wed, 17 Apr	Discussion: 1. How does Perl translate her imprisonment at Auschwitz for readers? 2. What experiences should be highlighted if you were the screenwriter or director?
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin reading and making notes: <input type="checkbox"/> Sonderkommando Revolt, Auschwitz, 1944 (2 pages, ERT: 5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Miklos Nyiszli, p. 152-162 (ERT: 30 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Shlomo Venezia, p. 63-73, 113-121 (ERT 30 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Preview WTL 3
Mon, 22 Apr	Finish screening: <i>Out of the Ashes</i>
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Read and Study: <input type="checkbox"/> Sonderkommando Revolt, Auschwitz, 1944 (2 pages, ERT: 5 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Miklos Nyiszli, p. 152-162 (ERT: 30 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Shlomo Venezia, p. 63-73, 113-121 (ERT: 30 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Submit hard copy of WTL 3 in class Wednesday, 24 April PLUS upload to BRIGHTSPACE by 3:00 PM

Wed, 24 Apr	<p>Discussion: Based upon the Sonderkommando Sources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What questions do you have about the memoir accounts and history told about the Sonderkommando Uprising/Revolt of October 1944? 2. What are the limits and possibilities of learning about the past through eyewitness accounts?
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Be preparing for final exam
Mon, 29 Apr	<p>Begin screening <i>The Grey Zone</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director and Producer Tim Blake Nelson never intended this film to be commercially successful. What were his intentions for creating it? 2. What is the "grey zone"? 3. Can the dehumanization, violence and death of the Holocaust ever be portrayed in an "artful, tasteful," meaningful way?
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Be preparing for the final exam <input type="checkbox"/> Bring questions about the final to class
Wed, 1 May	Finish Screening <i>The Grey Zone</i>
Between classes do the following	<input type="checkbox"/> Be studying for the final exam
6-9 May Finals Week	In class Monday, 6 May from 2:45-4:45 PM