

Office Hours: Fridays, 16:30-17:30, Room 327

☎ Office: 838 54 240 · Home: 863 99 459

✉ sbrandt@zedat.fu-berlin.de



The Holocaust in American Art, II

Fr 14.00-16.00

R 319

Extra-screenings: Fr 16.00-18.00, R 319

The course will investigate the changing ways in which the Holocaust has been represented through various discourses in American culture, from cinema and television to memoirs, novels, essays and the fine arts. We will examine both the political and ideological aspects of the Holocaust in American art as a historical event, a subjective or collective experience, a source for artistic making, and a pedagogical and spiritual exercise.

What ethical problems are linked to the negotiation of a catastrophe of such scope that some have considered it to be, by definition, «unrepresentable»? How do Holocaust texts address such questions as the limitations of language, the nature of memory, and constructions of authenticity and the «truth of experience»? Are there limits to how the Holocaust should be represented and by whom? What distinctive claims, needs, and agendas can be found in different generations' approaches to the Holocaust?

A major focus will be on representations of the Holocaust in Hollywood cinema, which has produced several important films about the destruction of European Jewry, examples being George Stevens's *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959), Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* (1972) and Fred Zinnemann's *Julia* (1977). Although our emphasis will be on artifacts of American culture, we will also examine for purposes of contrast foreign films such as *Life is Beautiful* (1998) and *The Pianist* (2002). The seminar is a follow-up to a seminar taught in the winter term by Susanne Rohr from the department of literature.

Credit requirements: Regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class (25%), an oral presentation as part of an expert group (20%), and a final paper (40%). There will also be a few quizzes meant as an encouragement to keep track with the assigned reading (15%).

Required work: You are expected to watch all (!) of the movies we discuss in class, either in the extra screenings, in the video room in the library or at home. DVDs and videos can be checked out over the weekend from 4:30 pm Fridays to 11 am on Mondays. There is also a course reader with required texts available in the copy-shop at Königin-Luise-Str.

Seminar papers: The seminar paper will be 17 to 20 pages long. It will make an original argument about one or more of the texts we've been reading, present this argument coherently and logically, and use both close readings of the text(s) and secondary sources to support it. Every paper should include a «works cited» list of at least six secondary sources and make an effort to consult mostly material published after 1980.

- The paper is due September 30, 2005 -

- Note: There is no extension of this deadline. Late essays will not be accepted!!! -

Syllabus:

15. April 2004:

Introduction: The Holocaust in American Film

Introductory texts: Hilene Flanzbaum, «The Americanization of the Holocaust.» In: *The Americanization of the Holocaust* (1999), 1-17.
Ilan Avisar, «Introduction», from: *Screening the Holocaust* (1988), vii-xi.

22. April 2004:

Hollywood and the Holocaust

Screening & discussion IMAGINARY WITNESS (2004) (65 min.)

Read and prepare: Hilene Flanzbaum, «The Americanization of the Holocaust.» In: *The Americanization of the Holocaust* (1999), 1-17.
Ilan Avisar, «The Hollywood Film and the Presentation of the Jewish Catastrophe», from *Screening the Holocaust* (1988), 90-133.

16-18:
Extra screening THE GREAT DICTATOR (Charlie Chaplin, 1940) (128 min.)

29. April 2004:

The Third Reich as Satire

Watch and prepare: THE GREAT DICTATOR (Charlie Chaplin, 1940)

Extra text: Ilan Avisar, «Chaplin's THE GREAT DICTATOR», from: *Screening the Holocaust* (1988), 134-148.

6. May 2004:

Remembering to Forget: The Holocaust and Photography

Read and prepare: Barbie Zelizer, «Remembering to Remember», from: *Remembering to Forget* (1998).

Extra text: Ilan Avisar, «The Photographic Image and Cinematic Documentation», from *Screening the Holocaust* (1988), 1-32.

16-19:
Extra screening THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (George Stevens, 1959) (156 min.)

13. May 2004:

The End of Innocence: Hollywood's Romance of the Holocaust

Watch and prepare: THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (George Stevens, 1959)

Extra text: Judith E. Doneson, «*The Diary of Anne Frank* in Post-War America.» In: *The Holocaust in American Film* (1987), 59-83.

20. May 2004:

The Judgment of Nuremberg

14-17

Screening:

THE JUDGMENT OF NUREMBERG (Stanley Kramer 1961) (178 min)

27. May 2004:

Nazis on Trial: Narratives of Persecution in the American 1960s

Watch and prepare:

THE JUDGMENT OF NUREMBERG (Stanley Kramer, 1961)

Extra text:

Judith E. Doneson, «Eichmann and *Nuremberg*: Nazis on Trial in the 1960s.» In: *The Holocaust in American Film* (1987), 87-107.

16-18:

Extra screening

CABARET (Bob Fosse, 1972) (128 min.)

03. June 2004:

Cabaret's Kit-Kat Club as a Microcosm of Pre-Nazi Germany

Watch and prepare:

CABARET (Bob Fosse, 1972)

Extra text:

Annette Insdorf, from *Indelible Shadows* (1983), 42-44

Judith E. Doneson, from *The Holocaust in American Film* (1987), 121-127.

16-18

Extra screening:

4th episode from the television series *Holocaust* (1977)

10. June 2004:

The Holocaust and American Television

Watch and prepare:

Final episode from the TV-series *Holocaust* (1977)

Extra text:

Judith E. Doneson, «Television and the Effects of the Holocaust.» In: *The Holocaust in American Film* (1987), 143-196.

17. June 2004:

THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL

Screening

THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1978) (123 min.)

24. June 2004:

Cloning Hitler: Hollywood's Bizarre Vision of the Third Reich

Watch and prepare:

THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1978)

Extra text:

Annette Insdorf, from *Indelible Shadows* (1983), 10-12.

16-18

Extra screening:

SCHINDLER'S LIST (Steven Spielberg, 1993) (195 min.)

01. July 2004: **Traumatic Economies: Is There a «Holocaust Industry»?**

Watch and prepare: SCHINDLER'S LIST (Steven Spielberg, 1993)

Extra text: Kirby Farrell, «Traumatic Economies in *Schindler's List*.» In:
Posttraumatic Culture (1998), 236-257.

08. July 2004: **«Selling the Holocaust»: The US Holocaust Memorial Museum**

Read and prepare: Edward T. Linenthal, «The Site of Holocaust Memory.» In:
Preserving Memory (1995), 57-107.

Tim Cole, «The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.» In:
Selling the Holocaust (1999), 146-171.

16-18:30

Extra screening: THE PIANIST (Roman Polanski, 2002) (143 min.)

15. July 2004: **Final discussion: The Holocaust as Thriller**

Watch and prepare: THE PIANIST (Roman Polanski, 2002)

— ***Final Paper due September 30, 2005*** —

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