

Studies in European Culture: Literature of the Holocaust LLit0220

This course provides students with a comprehensive approach and introduction to Holocaust Literature as well as the history of the Holocaust and its impact on human history. The course is designed to enable students to understand the Holocaust and other genocides and acts of injustice against humanity as well as feel empowered to stand up to all forms of prejudice and hate.

The Holocaust stories, short novels and poems that comprise the basic text material for the course introduce students to all the major Holocaust writers who lived through the events of the Holocaust including Elie Wiesel, Isaiah Spiegel, Ida Fink, Sara Nomberg-Pryztyk, Arnost Lustig, Tadeusz Borowski, Aharon Appelfeld, Chaim Grade, Avrohom Sutzkever, Dan Pagis, Nelly Sachs, Miklos Radnoti, Yankev Glatstein and Paul Celan. Excerpts from two Holocaust diaries written in the Warsaw Ghetto are also studied and analyzed. In addition, there is an exposure to some work written by writers such as Cynthia Ozick, who themselves did not live through the events of the Holocaust but were moved to write important literary works about it.

The literature in the course is framed within the context of 19th and 20th Century European Jewish history as well as other histories of human oppression that preceded the Holocaust (e.g. slavery and the struggle for Civil Rights in the United States) and atrocities that occurred after World War II such as the genocides in Kosovo, Cambodia and Rwanda.

All the works will be read in English even though most of them are translations from original works in Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Polish and Hungarian.

Students in this course will acquire new skills or deepen and enhance their current skills in analysis and interpretation of literary works. These skills will be directly applicable to everything that students are required to know in literature and history classes. Those who are already teaching or plan to go into the field of education will derive knowledge that is or will be directly applicable to their professional work.

The course is specially designed to facilitate critical thinking about combating all forms of prejudice and hate.