



Anselm Kiefer, *Lot's Wife* (1989), *The Cleveland Museum of Art*

Shoah Literature

2nd Trimester
Senior Elective

Winter 2015-2016

Mr. Grunner



∞ COURSE DESCRIPTION

Out of the horrors of the Shoah grew an immense body of literature. Written first by survivors and later by the post-war generations, Shoah fiction confronts, grapples with, and tries to make sense of the experience of life before, during and after the deportation and extermination of the millions of victims of National Socialism. Our class will explore the central themes of Shoah literature through a close reading of several novels, short stories and poems, all which attempt to give voice to an almost unspeakable trauma. Through the trimester, our readings and discussions will be guided by several theoretical questions concerning the ethics of Shoah literature (is it permissible to write fiction about the Shoah?), the complicated relationship between Shoah literature and beauty (is it acceptable for works about the Shoah to be beautiful works of art?), and the possibility of representing, through artistic expression, experiences that some claim escape utterance. Readings will be drawn from the works of Aharon Appelfeld, Tadeusz Borowski, Paul Celan, Imre Kertész, Primo Levi, Cynthia Ozick and Miklos Radnoóti. Writing will total 12 pages.

∞ COURSE TEXTS

- Aharon Appelfeld, *For Every Sin* (978-0802134462)
- Primo Levi, *Survival In Auschwitz* (978-0684826806)
- Imre Kertész, *Fatelessness* (978-1400078639)
- Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way For The Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (978-0140186246)
- Cynthia Ozick, *The Shawl* (978-0679729266)

☞ METHODOLOGY

Class discussion; student presentations; the rare lecture; the occasional class visit.

☞ NUMBER OF CLASS SESSIONS

We will meet three times (3x) per cycle for forty-minute sessions

☞ EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Homework: Students are expected to come to each class session (1) having read every last word of an assigned text and (2) prepared to discuss the text with the class. The success of this endeavor rests upon your shoulders.

Writing: Through the course of the trimester, students will compose two intelligent and engaging response essays and a longer final essay. Prompts for all three essays will be distributed.

Tests and Quizzes: Simply put—don't make me. If I sense that you are taking a relaxed approach to completing the assigned readings, quizzes, the likes of which you have not seen in your time at Regis thus far, shall rain down upon your heads.

Other assessments: Class participation will count for 30% of your final grade and will be determined at the end of the trimester.

☞ GRADING POLICIES

Your trimester grade will be calculated using the following breakdown:

- Response Essay 1 (20%)
- Response Essay 2 (20%)
- Final Essay (30%)
- Participation (30%)

☞ MISCELLANEOUS

In my experience, laptop computers are more likely to tempt a student into distraction than to aid him in his learning and note-taking. Thus, use of a laptop computer will not be permitted during class discussion. After all, when coming together as a group to discuss a piece of writing we have all spent time reading and thinking about, there is absolutely no need to use a laptop. Furthermore, cell phones should remain on silent and should be left in your bag.

☞ READING SCHEDULE

12/2: Introduction

Ruth Franklin, *A Thousand Darknesses*, Introduction*

Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty*, Introduction*

12/4: Appelfeld, *Beyond Despair*, Lecture 1*

12/9: Appelfeld, *Beyond Despair*, Lecture 2*

12/10: Appelfeld, *Beyond Despair*, Lecture 3*†

12/14: Radnóti, selected poetry*

12/16: Radnóti, selected poetry*

12/17: Celan, selected poetry*

1/6: Appelfeld, *For Every Sin*

1/7: Appelfeld, *For Every Sin*

1/8: Appelfeld, *For Every Sin*

1/12: Borowski, *This Way For the Gas...*

1/14: Borowski, *This Way For the Gas...*

1/15: Borowski, *This Way For the Gas...*††

1/20: Borowski, *This Way For the Gas...*

1/22: Kertész, *Fatelessness*

1/25: Kertész, *Fatelessness*

1/27: Kertész, *Fatelessness*

1/29: Kertész, *Fatelessness*

2/1: Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

2/3: Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

2/5: Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

2/8: Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*

2/10: Ozick, *The Shawl*

2/12: Final Discussion, Student Presentations

* Available on Moodle

† Guest Lecture: Dr. Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei, Fordham University

†† Guest Lecture: Ruth Franklin, author of *A Thousand Darknesses*