

THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA  
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Fall 2009

Prof. David G. Roskies

**LIT/MJS 5715y: The Making of Holocaust Literature, 1945-1960**

M 5:40 PM-7:30 pm; K 306

Unt. 506

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Office Hours: Monday 1:00-3:00

**Course Objectives:** This reading-intensive course will explore how Holocaust literature in its diversity of styles, genres, languages, national concerns and constituencies came into being during the immediate postwar years. Our goal is to recover pathbreaking works within their original literary-historical context. In each period, this course argues, the Holocaust was discovered anew, for different reasons, and by a different public. The years 1945-1960 were the most decisive.

**Readings:**

All titles marked by an asterisk are available for sale at the JTS Book Store.

Copies of the two course packets are for sale at Copyexperts, 3062 Broadway (121<sup>st</sup>). To reserve your copy, you may stop by the store, phone in your order at (212) 684-6501 or e-mail [copyexpertsnyc.com](http://copyexpertsnyc.com). Part I costs \$43.75 (bound); Part II: \$13.95 (bound). Cheaper if you order it unbound ("regular").

**Course Requirements:** Students are encouraged to keep a journal. Jot down your impressions as you do the assigned readings and refine your judgments as you go along. To track this process, you are asked to **submit one question each week** about the assigned readings. Please submit your question no later than **10:00 pm on the Sunday night** before class to [daroskies@jtsa.edu](mailto:daroskies@jtsa.edu). These questions will be collated and handed out in class the next day without your name.

**Grading:** There will be one midterm paper, 5-8 pages long, due on Friday March 13, worth 25% of your grade, and a final, take-home exam, worth 50%. The remaining 25% will be based on submitting intelligent questions and being alert and feisty in class.

- 26 Jan      **Liberation: I**
- Abraham Sutzkever – ווי אַזוי? / How? (1943), פֿאַרפֿרוירענע יידן / Frozen Jews (1944), לערינג אַ וועגן / Poem About a Herring (1946)
- Tadeusz Rózewicz – Ocalony / The Survivor (1947)
- 2 Feb      **Liberation: II**
- Y. D. Sheinson & Miklós Adler - Passover Service, American Zone, April 15-16, 1946. *A Survivor's Haggadah*, ed. Saul Touster. JPS, 2000. Course packet.
- 9 Feb      **Apocalypse**
- Curzio Malaparte – Kaputt, Part II: The Mice (1945)  
Translated from the Italian by Cesare Foligno. Course packet.
- 15 Feb      **Presidents' Day** [no classes]
- 23 Feb      **A Child of Our Time: I**
- \*Anne Frank - The Diary of a Young Girl, Definitive Edition (1942-44)  
ed. Otto H. Frank and Mirjam Pressler, trans. Susan Massotty (New York: 1995). 0-385-48033-4 Anchor Books \$12.95
- 2 Mar      **The concentrationary universe: I**
- \*Primo Levi – Se questo è un uomo / Survival in Auschwitz (1947)  
0-684-82680-1 Harper Torchbook \$14.00
- Robert S. C. Gordon, "Primo Levi's *If This Is a Man* and Responses to the Lager in Italy 1945-47, *Judaism* (Winter 1999): 49-57. Course packet.
- 9 Mar      **Ta'anit Esther: No class**

13 March **Midterm Writing Assignment - Moments of Truth: Anne Frank and Primo Levi**

Anne Frank's diary and Primo Levi's meditation-cum-memoir manage time in very different ways. Although Anne does, on occasion, update her diary and comment upon it, her story essentially unfolds in real time. Levi, by contrast, writes proleptically, as he radically telescopes the truth of Auschwitz. Choose one episode in each work that best illustrates this different management of time, of closing the gap between innocence and knowledge, survival and the certainty of death. How does time become the essential lens of the individual in extremis? How are we inducted differently into the grey zone between good and evil? How does this difference affect our experience as readers?

16 Mar. **The concentrationary universe: II**

\*Tadeusz Borowski – Kamienny Swiat / This Way to the Gas, Ladies & Gentlemen (1948). Translated Barbara Vedder. Penguin, 1967. 0-14-018624-7 \$14.00

23 Mar **The concentrationary universe: III**

Charlotte Delbo – Aucun de nous ne reviendra / None of Us Will Return. (1947/1965). Trans. John Githens. Beacon Press, 1968. Course packet.

30 Mar **The novel of atrocity**

Ka-Tzetnik - די ליאלקעס פון די דאָס הויז / House of Dolls (1955)  
Translated from the Hebrew by Moshe Kohn. Course packet.

6 Apr **God Wrestling: I**

Zvi Kolitz - יאָסל ראקאווער רעדט צו גאָט / Yosl Rakover's Appeal to God (1946). Translated Jeffrey V. Mallow and Frans Jozef van Beeck, *Cross Currents* (Fall, 1994). Course packet.

Chaim Grade – מיין קריג מיט הירש ראָסיינער / My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseynier (1952). Translated Milton Himmelfarb. Course packet.

20 Apr **God Wrestling: II**

\*Elie Wiesel - און די וועלט האָט געשוויגן / La Nuit / Night (1956/1958)  
A New Translation by Marion Wiesel; With a New Preface by the Author  
Hill and Wang ISBN: 978-0-374-50001-6 \$9.00

27 Apr

**A Child of Our Time: II**

Uri Orlev – חיילי עופרת / The Lead Soldiers (1956), trans. Hillel Halkin.  
New York: Taplinger, 1980. Course packet.

4 May

**A Child of Our Time: III**

\*André Schwarz-Bart – Le dernier des Justes / The Last of the Just  
(1959). Translated by Stephen Becker. New York: Atheneum, 1960.  
Penguin 978-158567016-1 \$15.95

**Reference Works**

Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*, trans. Rosette C. Lamont. Yale, 1995.  
D805.P7 D41613 1995. On reserve.

S. Lillian Kremer (ed.), *Holocaust Literature: An Encyclopedia of Writers and their Work*, 2 vols. (New York: 2003). Reference Oversize PN56 H55 H63 2003

Alan Mintz, "Two Models in the Study of Holocaust Representation," in *Popular culture and the shaping of Holocaust memory in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), Chap. 2. D804.45.U55 M55 2001. On reserve.