

San José State University
Department of English & Comparative Literature
ENGL, ForL, HUM, JwsS 126-01, Holocaust Literature, Fall 2020

Course and Contact Information

Instructor(s):	Dr. Linda Landau
Office Location:	FO 115 closed / See Zoom link on Canvas Homepage
Telephone:	N/A
Email:	linda.landau@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	T/TR 2:30-4:00 and by appointment on Zoom
Class Days/Time:	T/TR 12:00-1:15 pm
Classroom:	On Canvas and on Zoom
Prerequisites:	Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.
GE/SJSU Studies Category:	Satisfies GE Area V.

Course Description

This course is a survey of literature written by survivors or witnesses of the Holocaust, the destruction of European Jewry during World War II, focusing on diaries, memoirs, fiction, and occasionally poetry, drama, and film. Writers may include Anne Frank, Elie Wiesel, Primo Levi, Aharon Appelfeld, Roman Polanski, and Dara Horn. While a few works are written in English, the majority are translated into English from Yiddish, French, German, Polish, Dutch, Italian, and Hebrew. We will explore the historical, political, social, and religious contexts of these works from various perspectives while considering their ethical and literary implications for United States culture today.

Course Format

This is an online class, so you will need a computer. The course will be conducted asynchronously on the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) and synchronously on Zoom T/TR between 12:00 – 1:15 pm. Course materials such as the syllabus, announcements, lecture notes, reading assignments, writing assignment instructions, and Zoom link and schedule topics can be found on our Canvas page: [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. Writing assignments will be uploaded as documents, posted on group discussion boards, or written in a textbox as designated by the individual assignment requirements.

You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU](#) on [Spartan App Portal](#) to learn of any updates. General information about the LMS can be found at the eCampus website - <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec>. For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](#).

Course Goals

The goal of this course is to give students an appreciation for human expression in cultures outside the U.S. and an understanding of how that expression has developed over time. This course should also increase students' understanding of how traditions or cultures outside the U.S. have influenced American culture and society, as well as how cultures in general both develop distinctive features and interact with other cultures. Studying the literature of victims, survivors, and witnesses of the Holocaust, students will critically analyze the literature dealing with this and other instances of genocide in detail, in context, and in historical perspective.

GE Learning Outcomes for GELO Area V: Culture, Civilization, and Global Understanding

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

1. Compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, and/or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S.

This objective will be met by an in-depth study of memoirs translated from Yiddish, French, German, Italian, Polish, Russian, and Hebrew, and films, novels, poetry within their historical, social, political and religious contexts as students conduct library research beyond the lectures and other activities. Students will write short essays on the beliefs, ideas, values, and attitudes expressed in the diaries and memoirs of the Holocaust survivors. Students will define the Nazi ideology, values, attitudes, economic structures, and technological developments that contributed to the Holocaust.

2. Identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.

This objective will be met through online discussion and presentations that explore the European historical, ideological, and social contexts of Holocaust literature and its influence on American culture, in particular in its role in the origins of positive psychology and literary deconstruction. Students will write critical and creative responses to their readings about the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, racism, and reconciliation as they relate to modern American culture.

3. Explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures.

Students will explore the Jewish literary response to the Holocaust, beginning with early memoirs published in the late 40s and 50s through the literary, musical, and visual representations spanning seventy years. Student success in achieving this objective will be assessed by means of a scholarly literary analysis tracing the variations and changes in the Jewish narrative of physical, psychological, and moral survival.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) for Department of English & Comparative Literature

This course helps students develop and demonstrate BA Program Learning Outcomes set forth by the Department of English and Comparative Literature. Upon completion of this course students will be able to

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, and/or rhetoric. This course requires work in textual analysis, including study of the formal characteristics, the historical context, and the aesthetic and rhetorical presence of the text.

2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American and World Literature. This outcome will be achieved by students reading and analyzing literary texts translated from German, French, Italian, Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew written over the past 7 decades using various critical approaches.

3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject. Students will achieve this objective by writing effectively in an academic style and context about the literary texts under study.

4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively. Students will achieve this outcome by writing a scholarly paper requiring research and the ability to integrate this research with their own ideas, including inciting sources in-text and in a Works Cited.

5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts. Students will satisfy this objective by writing an essay that places Holocaust literature in its historical, social, and literary contexts.

Required Texts/Readings and Films (in the order they will be studied)

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Translated from Dutch by Mooyaart-Doubleday, Bantam-Random House, 1952. ISBN: 978-0-553-29698-3

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. Translated from French by Marion Wiesel, Hill & Wang-Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006 (1958, 1969). ISBN: 978-0-374-50001-6

Levi, Primo. *Surviving Auschwitz*. Translated from Italian by Stuart Woolf, Touchstone-Simon & Schuster, 1996 (1958). ISBN: 978-0-684-82680-6

GI Jews: Jewish Americans in World War II. PBS, 2018. (PBS Passport or Amazon Prime).

Appelfeld, Aharon. *The Story of a Life*. Translated from Hebrew by Aloma Halter, Schocken-Random House, 2006 (1999). ISBN: 978-0-8052-1126-9

The Pianist. Directed by Roman Polanski. Based on *The Pianist* (1946), a Holocaust memoir by Polish-Jewish pianist and composer Władysław Szpilman. Focus Features Studio Canal, 2002. (Netflix, Amazon Prime).

Horn, Dara. *Eternal Life: A Novel*. W.W. Norton & Co., 2018. ISBN: 978-0-393-35656-4

Additional works posted in your Canvas modules as pdf files or links:

The poem, "Babi Yar," Songs by Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, links to Holocaust museum and websites, and short articles. Tales in Yaffa Eliach, *The Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*. Vintage, 1982

Recommended films: *Schindler's List*, *Look Who's Back* (Netflix), and *Viral: Four Mutations of Antisemitism*

Library Liaison

Peggy Cabrera. English & World Languages: peggy.cabrera@sjsu.edu / 408-808-2034.

Course Requirements and Assignments

University Credit Hours Requirement: As per [University Policy S12-3](#), "Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. This means spending **9 hours** per week preparing for class, participating in Zoom sessions and course activities, and completing assignments."

Preparation and Participation: Students should come to class having read the day's assignments and prepared to discuss them. On Canvas Modules, the Zoom Schedule presents topics and study guide questions for the day's session. Students are encouraged to bring questions about the weekly readings and may be called upon to answer a question, interpret a passage, or express an opinion.

Active Participation: In order to ensure that you get credit for the considerable work you do in reading and reflecting on the works assigned for this course, you will be asked to lead discussions or give presentations answering questions or defining key terms. There may also be quizzes or responses on our discussion board that will cover significant information from that day's reading assignment, information that may not be the sort readily accessible to you in plot summaries, outlines, or synopses, but only through personally experiencing the text for yourself. A pattern of poor results on this writing and speaking should indicate to you that you are not doing the reading, or not reading attentively enough, or not reading with the care and analysis necessary to understand and appreciate the texts.

Assignments & Grades: You will meet the objectives of this course by writing two major essays, both approximately 1,500 words (including prewrites and editing) and counting 25% of the final mark each, and a final examination also worth 25% of the final mark. Active participation on zoom discussions – asking questions and engaging in discussion with group mates, as well as quizzes, discussion board posts, and presentations (leading a discussion) – will help determine the remaining 25%.

Major Assignments	Words	% of Grade	Pts	CLO	GELO
Essay 1 uses close reading of literary texts and research to define key terms, provide context and background, and question cultural assumptions about the Holocaust.	750-1,000	25%	25	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 2
Essay 2 is a literary analysis tracing the Jewish literary response to the Holocaust spanning 3 continents and 70 years. Module 2 Essay includes close reading and analysis of literary texts using a variety of approaches, to explore a particular cultural narrative, how/if it varies, changes and/or remains stable over time.	1,500 total including prewrites and edited revisions	25%	25	1-5	1,2,3
Final includes short essay responses to the readings throughout the semester.	1000 total	25%	25	1,2, 3,5	1,2,3
Participation: short writings, discussion board posts, team or individual presentations answering questions or defining a key term.	1,000	25%	25	1,2, 4,5	1,2
TOTAL	4,000	100%	100		

Bolded numbers: CLO or GELO assessed

Essay Submission Policy

- **Submit** your final version essay on Canvas, where it will be graded with comments.
- **Format** your papers double spaced in **MLA** style, no cover page, but with Works Cited at end of essay.
 - Your name, class - section number, my name, and date are printed in the **top left corner of the first page**.
 - All subsequent pages show **your last name and page number in top right corner**.
- **Late Papers** are accepted **within three days of the deadline**, but **drop a grade unless you have a valid excuse** (documented illness, religious holiday) and notify me *before* or *on* the missed date.
- **Extra credit** in this class consists of **additional research for assigned essays** that improves critical thinking and writing skills. There is no extra credit for writing additional essays or other extra work.

Final Examination

There will be a final examination and meeting on Zoom Tuesday, Dec. 10 from 9:45 to noon.

Determination of Grades

Criteria for Grading Essays

In English Department courses, instructors comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

- An “A” essay (**100-90**) is **complete** inasmuch as it fulfills *all* prompt and assignment requirements *and* offers new insights on the topic; **coherent/cohesive** in that it is organized and well-developed, **convincing** in that it provides compelling evidence to prove its point and detailed examples to explain them in a voice that is clearly the student writer’s; **concise** using grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics that enable readers to easily follow the argument, and **with plenty of critical thinking** – is a *researched, fact-based, in-depth* exploration of the topic that explains connections and the bigger picture while framing the argument in language that strengthens the *writer-audience ethos*. The essay is submitted on time, formatted according to requirements, and uses language effectively – strategic word choice, grammar, and punctuation.

- A “B” essay (89-80) demonstrates competence in the same categories as the “A” essay. The chief difference is that the “B” essay will show some describable slight weaknesses in one of these categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, generally research and context, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.
- A “C” essay (79-70) will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations; or it may rely on too few relevant sources to support a convincing analysis or argument, or may cite relevant sources but in a way that is difficult for the reader to find; or may develop the essay with so many fused sentences, missing/extra verbs, or wordiness and repetition that the reader cannot easily follow the argument.
- A “D” essay (69-60) will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate or support generalizations, or it may fail to stay on topic. It may contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that interfere with reader comprehension. There is no match between in-text citations and the entry on the Works Cited list.
- An “F” essay (59-0) does not fulfill the assignment. It demonstrates a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

Grading: A-F. This course must be passed with a C or better as a CSU graduation requirement.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined by the SJSU Catalog (Grades-Letter Grading). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A+/A/A- = excellent; B+/B/B- = above average; C+/C/C- = average; D+/D/D- = below average; F = failure.

A (100-90) = Exceptional communication and critical thinking skills as demonstrated on all major assignments; intellectual curiosity and exemplary mastery of course readings and concepts as shown by excellent preparation for in-class writing and quizzes, class discussion, and team work; initiative during group activities with insightful contributions to class and team discussions.

B (89-80) = Good communication and critical thinking skills as demonstrated by responding to all points on the prompt of all major assignments; interest and engagement in course readings and concepts, and solid preparation for in-class writing and quizzes, class discussion; consistently meaningful and voluntary contributions to group and class activities.

C (79-70) = Satisfactory communication and critical thinking skills; competence in course readings and concepts as shown in fair but inconsistent preparation for class discussion; positive, but noncommittal attitude towards class; sporadic contributions to class and team activities.

D (69-60) = Limited communication and critical thinking skills; uneven preparation for class; demonstrated indifference to class activities and course readings as shown in rare contributions to class and group activities, inattentiveness during class discussions, and other factors such as consistent tardiness, leaving class early, texting, and other disruptive behaviors; failure to submit essays and homework on time, or at all.

F (59-0) = Weak communication and critical thinking skills; little to no preparation for class; no contributions to class and team discussions; no commitment to class concepts and goals; failure to submit essays and homework.

There is no extra credit for writing additional essays or completing extra work. Instead, **extra credit** in this class consists of **additional research for assigned essays** that improves critical thinking and writing skills and additional contributions to Zoom discussions.

Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.

Grade Distribution

Grade	% Points	Evaluation
A plus	100-97	Outstanding
A	96-93	Excellent
A minus	92-90	Very good
B plus	89-87	Above average
B	86-83	Above average
B minus	82-80	Competent
C plus	79-77	Average
C	76-72	Average
C minus	71-70	Not passing
D plus	69-67	Not passing
D	66-63	Not passing
D minus	62-60	Not passing
F	59-0	Fail

If you are experiencing difficulty in meeting course requirements, please see me to discuss strategies for success.

Classroom Protocol

This course welcomes diversity of opinion. The students in this class have arrived from different backgrounds and different disciplines across campus. We are respectful of opposing viewpoints.

This course encourages collaboration. Sharing ideas, asking questions, and providing valuable feedback to your group are the basic contributors to a successful learning environment. Think of yourself and your classmates as your most valuable resources. If you cannot attend a team meeting or peer review session, notify your team and make arrangements to exchange papers, notes, or essays with a team member.

We practice empathy at all times. Online learning is a new experience for all of us, myself included. If Zoom discussions or Canvas modules or assignments aren't working for you or could be improved, if you have tech issues or time issues, contact me immediately with questions and comments at my email on Canvas or at linda.landau@sjsu.edu.

Zoom Discussion Etiquette:

- **We actively participate on Zoom, by**
 - **contributing to the discussion,**
 - **closing our microphones only** when there is interference from background noise,
 - **showing our faces at all time,** and
 - **focusing our attention** on the discussion (not on other activities, such as texting, etc).
- If any part of this discussion rule is difficult for you, please let me know right away.

- **We encourage perspectives different from our own**, but we don't necessarily have to agree with an opposing view. We aim to reach common ground.
- **We listen without judgment**, and we refrain from evaluating each other's ideas.
- **We ask scholarly questions** about a statement before disagreeing with it.
- **We provide evidence** to support our opinions.
- **We refrain from evaluating the works** we encounter. Instead we examine them from a semiotic and rhetorical perspective – they are signs of a particular culture at a particular time in a particular place. We explore the messages they communicate and their purpose in creating this particular message in this particular way at this particular time.
- **We may use analogy** to *interpret* unfamiliar or unimaginable experiences. When inventing analogies between a Holocaust event and a current situation, be prepared to 1) provide evidence *confirming the similarity*, and 2) *discuss the dissimilarities* between the two.
- **We arrive on time**. Arriving late and taking breaks disturbs the session and results in your missing important discussion and activities. These disruptions will lose you points. Same with texting.
- **We check our Canvas schedule and announcements for discussion questions** regularly, and communicate with teammates, especially if we miss a Zoom session.
- **We do not record Zoom sessions**. Since our zoom sessions are participation-based, *written permission* to record the session is required from *all* class members as per [University Policy S12-7](#).

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](#), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Helpful Resources

- **SJSU Health Center:** For appointments, call (408) 924-6122, or <http://www.sjsu.edu/studenthealth>. For after-hours **Advice Nurse Line**, call (866) 935-6347.
- **SJSU Counseling Services**, <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling> located in the Student Wellness Center, 3rd floor, 300B, offers a variety of workshops, support groups, and professional help.
- **Accessible Education Center** <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/services-at-a-glance/academic-accommodation/>.
- **Writing Center.** To make an appointment, visit **Writing Center website**: <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.
- **Peer Connections.** Visit [Peer Connections website](https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/appointments/appointment/index.html) at <https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/appointments/appointment/index.html>.
- **Computer labs** are available in the Academic Success Center, Clark Hall 1st floor and 2nd floors; Student Union, 2nd floor.
- Our campus has developed the **Spartan Support Network** to bring students together with specific campus resources promoting academic success. I have agreed to participate in this program and may refer you to it if I believe you need the services provided by Spartan Support Network to succeed in this course.

English 126 / Holocaust Literature / Fall 2020

Course Schedule

This schedule will most likely change in order to meet class needs. You will be notified on Canvas.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines See our Canvas Schedule for links to websites, videos, articles		
1	TH 8/20	INTRODUCTIONS: syllabus, Canvas, groups	Question due on Canvas before 8/19	
2	T 8/25	Perspective & Context: World War II & Dutch Diaries, Holocaust Museums (links on Canvas)		
2	TH 8/27	Anne Frank, <i>Diary of a Young Girl</i> , pp. 1-57, 90, 111-7, 128, 146, 175, 187-197, 207-8*, 223*, 233-9, 256-268; Anne Frank Museum (links on Canvas)	8/31 last day to drop	
3	T 9/1	<i>Diary of a Young Girl</i> – Perspective, Audience, Context, Analogies then and now		
3	TH 9/3	Elie Wiesel, <i>Night</i> , Lecture Notes 1: Ethical & Literary Questions		
4	T 9/8	<i>Night, Violins of Hope</i> (links on Canvas) Lecture Notes 2 on Violins of Hope	Last day to add	
4	TH 9/10	<i>Night</i> – Narrative Structure, Allies		
5	T 9/15	Defining Antisemitism: Cuddy, Glick, Eligon articles, Lecture Notes 3		
5	TH 9/17	Defining Antisemitism: Cuddy, Glick, Eligon articles, Lecture Notes 4		
6	T 9/22	Review Peer Review asynchronous	Essay 1 due W 9/23 6:00 pm	
6	TH 9/24	Shostak podcast– 3 Kinds of Narrative, “Dona” (links on Canvas)		
7	T 9/29	Viktor Frankl’s <i>Man’s Search for Meaning</i> and Elie Wiesel’s <i>Night</i>		
7	TH 10/1	<i>Surviving Auschwitz</i> , Primo Levi		
8	T 10/6	<i>Surviving Auschwitz</i>		
8	TH 10/8	<i>Surviving Auschwitz</i>		
9	T 10/13	<i>GI Jews</i> & Interview with director		
9	TH 10/15	Hasidic Tales		
10	T 10/20	Hasidic Tales		
10	TH 10/22	<i>The Pianist</i>		
11	T 10/27	Aharon Apelfeld, <i>Story of a Life</i> : imagination and memory		
11	TH 10/29	<i>Story of a Life</i> , Bob Dylan, “Hard Rain”		
12	T 11/3	<i>Story of a Life</i>		
12	TH 11/5	“Babi Yar,” Germany Today – <i>Look Who’s Back</i> (optional), “With God on Our Side,” Bob Dylan		
13	T 11/10	Review & Peer Review asynchronous	Essay 2 due W 11/11 6:00 pm	
13	TH 11/12	Dara Horn, “Introduction” to <i>The Pawnbroker</i>		

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		See our Canvas Schedule for links to websites, videos, articles
14	T 11/17	Amit – Remembrance Day videos, Survivors visit Auschwitz (links on Canvas)
14	TH 11/19	Dara Horn, <i>Eternal Life</i>
15	T 11/24	<i>Eternal Life</i>
15	TH 12/26	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASSES
16	T 12/1	<i>Eternal Life</i>
16	TH 12/3	Review
Final Exam	T 12/10	Zoom 9:45-12:00