

# Theatre & the Holocaust

## THEA 4395.001 Fall 2023

Instructor: **Lisa Devine, MFA**

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Office Hours:

In-person: Tuesday/Thursday: 11:00a.m.-12:00 p.m. Friday: 12:00-1:00 p.m. Or by appointment.

Virtual: Monday/Wednesday: Appointments via Zoom.

Communication Preference: Message via Canvas, email, or Zoom session

Class Time: Fri. 9:00-11:50 a.m.

Office: RTFP 215

### ***Course Description***

This course involves the exploration and examination of performance and the arts as reflections of the experiences of people before, during, and after the Holocaust.

- Through readings, plays, films, videos, exhibitions, personal experiences, and family histories students will form and discuss personal points of view regarding the power of the arts as a way of honoring memory.
- Students will develop the ability to effectively engage in communication about the Holocaust and the individuals impacted by this atrocity in written, verbal, and performance forms.
- As active participants in this learning process, students will assume a responsibility for identifying and investigating opportunities to broad and deepen a personal understanding and commitment to issues related to the Holocaust and its continuing effect on contemporary thought.

### ***Required Course Textbooks***

#### **Books:**

Fuchs, Elinor (Editor). Plays of the Holocaust: An International Anthology. New York, NY. Theatre Communications Group, 1987.

Wiesel, Elie. Night. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2006.

Wiesenthal, Simon. The Sunflower. New York, NY.: Schocken Books, 1998.

#### **Plays:**

Goodrich, Frances and Hackett, Albert. The Diary of Anne Frank, adapted by Wendy Kesselman, New York, NY: Dramatists Play Service, Inc. 2001.

Samuels, Diane. Kindertransport. London, UK: Nick Hern Books, 1995 & 2006.

Sherman, Martin. Bent. New York, NY: Applause Books, 1979 & 1998.

#### **Additional Plays available on Canvas:**

Acito, Marc, Jay Kuo, and Lorenzo Thione. Allegiance. New York, NY. Perusal Copy, 2018.

Cristofer, Michael. Black Angel. New York, NY: Dramatists Play Service, Inc. 1984.

Lebow, Barbara. A Shayna Maidel. New York, NY: Dramatists Play Service, Inc. 1988.

Mann, Emily. Annulla: An Autobiography. New York, NY, TCG. 1988.

Nelson, Tim Blake. The Grey Zone. New York, NY: Dramatists Play Service, Inc. 1998.

Stein, Joseph, Jerry Brock and Sheldon Harnick. Fiddler on the Roof, New York, NY: Limelight Publishers, 2004.

Taylor, C.P. Good. Woodstock, IL: Dramatic Publishing Company. 1982.

#### **Subject Matter Disclaimer**

In studying the Holocaust through theatre, film, art, and literature as well as the moral, social, cultural, and political issues inherent in this area of study, it is possible to cover a wide spectrum of human behavior, practices, language, and subject matter that may be considered immoral, anti-social or obscene to some. Some performances, readings and discussions may contain adult themes, language or images which are not within your personal standards or value system.

The instructor nor the university plays the role of “censor.” Please consider this matter carefully. If you are easily offended or are not willing to experience standards and values different from your own, this may not be the class for you.

## Assignments and Grading

### Projects and Major Grades

Before the Holocaust Exam		A= excellent (100-90)
Surviving the Holocaust Exam		B= good (89-80)
After Liberation Exam		C=average (79-70)
The Sunflower Project	50%	D= (69-60)
		F= (59 or below)

### Assignments & Writings

Cast of Characters	
Analysis: “Fair Game”	
Reading Quizzes	
Considerations	
Assignments	30%

### Discussion & Citizenship

Attendance	
Class Participation	
Learning Activities	20%
	100%

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## Assignment Information

For every assignment you will be asked to complete, you will receive **an assignment sheet and a rubric** as to my expectations. I am always happy to answer questions about an assignment but if I am not available, please refer to these sheets. *Use these sheets when creating your final draft of an assignment to be sure that all expectations have been completed.* All assignment sheets and rubrics will be housed on Canvas. ***The most egregious mistake I see student’s make is not completing all portions of an assignment.***

## Quizzes and Exams – On Canvas only

A quiz will be given about once a week over the play reading and/or play background. All quizzes will be taken on Canvas. A quiz will be uploaded directly after Friday’s class (at 11:50 a.m.) and be open for students to take until Sunday at midnight (11:59p.m.). Once Canvas has closed the quiz, I will not re-open it. Plan your quiz taking schedule with this in mind.

Three exams will also be administered through Canvas. The date and hours of exam availability will be written on review sheets. The exams will be composed of limited choice questions, short essay, and essay. Exams must be taken during the scheduled opportunity. Once the date and time has passed, **no make-up exams will be given.**

## Considerations

Throughout the semester, questions about the play, its structure or subject matter will be posed to you to investigate and form an opinion. There are no “right” answers to these questions. They are designed like essay questions, in which there are a range of possible responses. Your grade does not rest on what your opinions are. You will be graded on the amount of effort and thought that you put into your consideration, as well as how you well you support your opinions given the limitation of two pages. All written assignments will be uploaded into Canvas for grading.

## Late Assignments

***No late assignments will be accepted.*** This is to guarantee equitable treatment of all students. Please acquaint yourself with the calendar attached. ***In theatre, the curtain rises on opening night regardless.*** Consider the “due date” the last moment I will take the assignment. Any written assignment may be turned in early. I will open the portal to turn in an assignment when I introduce it. This allows you to structure your study schedule to allow you time for other course assignments. *Time Management is a life skill. Recognize that if you are battling the clock on Canvas, you have procrastinated.* **Bottom line: Any assignment can be early. Nothing can be late. Show initiative.**

## UNT DTA Season Productions

You will receive vouchers for free tickets to the productions. The Fall 2023 season of plays includes:

**Elephant’s Graveyard** by George Brant  
Dates: September 20-22

**Peter & the Starcatcher** by Rick Elise & Wayne Barker  
Dates: October 5-8

## **Attendance**

**Active Participation is an extremely important part of maintaining a good grade in this class. You must attend all scheduled class sessions.** Each has been designed for the needs and goals of this group. If you are absent, you have missed experiences that cannot be made up or even explained. Information is imparted during lecture, discussion, activities, and exercises that discussing with me or other students will not fill the gap of your absence.

You should attend class on time, complete readings prior to class and participate in class activities. **Attendance will be taken every class meeting.** Although I am here to help you in any way and sympathize with problems you will encounter this semester, only documented illnesses, death in the family, and extreme circumstances are considered excused absences.

### **Acceptable Student Behavior**

- Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT.
- Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

### **Bottom Line:**

- Attendance is mandatory. You may receive two (2) excused absences for family emergencies, serious illness, or official UNT business. Students must show written proof. Doctors' appointments are not excused.
- The professor's roll book is the official record of absences and tardiness. This should be followed by students on Canvas. Leaving class early, sleeping, not joining an assigned breakout room and non-participation will all be counted as an absence.
- Suggested Dance and Theatre attendance policy expects the number of allowable absences should not exceed 10% of the total class meetings for the semester. For example, *if a class meets once a week for 15 weeks*, then the **number of allowable absences** before the students receives a failing grade (or is withdrawn) is **two (2)**.

## **Class Discussions**

You are required to read all the plays, come to class with the text, ready to participate in all class activities. Read the scripts not only as literature, but also from the perspective of directors, designers, actors, and teachers/students of literature. **Discussions of the assigned readings will constitute a major portion of the class.** It is imperative that students accept the responsibility for attending each class and assigned events as evidence of a commitment to the study of the Holocaust as well as to their peers and themselves. Please feel free to ask questions during lectures or discussions.

## **Class Participation**

The grade for class participation is evaluated in the following areas: *Attitude, Willingness to Learn, Citizenship, adding to the conversation, work ethic, improvement over the semester, acceptance of grades earned and how absences are handled.*

## **Grading**

There is a grading rubric that has been designed for each assignment. This tool is used to stay as objective and fair as possible when grading each student's work. **You are responsible for knowledge of your grade at all times.** Consult Canvas frequently (if not daily) to know where your grade is at throughout the semester. For large classes, I will grade the papers in the order they are received. This means those students who turn their assignments in at or close to 11:59 p.m. the day they are due will receive their graded work back last. If you have any questions about your grades, please contact me and I will be happy to help you. *Grades will not be discussed over the phone but rather in private Zoom sessions or in person during office hours.*

## **Incompletes**

Only under extraordinary circumstances will an Incomplete be given.

## **Withdrawal**

Should you choose to drop this course, you must initiate the drop and acquire all the proper signatures and paperwork. If that process is not completed, you will be subject to a WF or F at the close of the semester.

## **Cheating/Plagiarism**

The Student Code of Conduct prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty including the use of Artificial Intelligence or AI. This includes plagiarism, cheating on exams, using papers that have been written by someone other than yourself, or providing work to other students. *“Use of AI to produce or help content without proper attribution or authorization, when an assignment does not explicitly call or allow for it, is plagiarism.”*

To plagiarize means to take and submit as one's own ideas and/or the expression of ideas of another person. Plagiarism is using words or ideas which are not your own, but which you have culled from another source (including the internet) and have not given credit. Plagiarism is intellectual thievery and will not be tolerated.

If a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing the student will receive an F for that assignment. If the student is caught a second time, the student will receive an F for the course. With plagiarism, it will also be incumbent upon the student to demonstrate that the student has not plagiarized (rough drafts of papers, notes, outlines, annotated source materials, etc.) so please retain all evidence of your having done writing projects yourself.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act Notice**

*The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.*

## **Accommodation**

Please let me know if you need accommodation for religious holidays or other issues.

## **SPOT**

The Student Perception of Teaching Effectiveness (SPOT) is a requirement for all organized class at UNT. This short survey will be conducted in class on your laptop or cellphone at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in your feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider your “Personal Growth Assessment Assignment” and the SPOT to be an important part of your participation in this class.

**Last day to drop a course is November 10, 2023.**

*\*\*\*Because you (and only you) know what you'd like to gain from this class, I encourage you to set a few goals to accomplish over the course of the semester. Please let me know what I can do to assist you as you achieve these goals.*

***I am looking forward to getting to know each of you!***

**THEA 4395: Theatre and the Holocaust**  
**University of North Texas Fall 2023**  
Tentative Calendar

**Week 1: Before . . .**

August 25: *Welcome to the study of Theatre and the Holocaust.*  
***Receive Syllabus and Calendar.***  
Lecture: Brief History of Anti-Semitism  
Activity: Improvisation and discussion.

**Week 2**

September 1: *Where to begin?*  
Read Fiddler on the Roof by Joseph Stein, Jerry Brock, and Sheldon Harnick.  
Watch: "Fiddler: Miracle of Miracles". (2020-97 minutes)  
***Receive Cast of Characters Assignment.***

**Week 3**

September 8: *Have we learned?*  
Read Annulla: An Autobiography by Emily Mann. (.pdf on Canvas)  
***Cast of Characters Assignment Due.***

**Week 4:**

September 15: *Have we forgotten?*  
Read Cathedral of Ice by James Schevill. (Plays of the Holocaust Anthology)  
Activity & Discussion: Ally, Advocate, and Activist  
Lecture: The Rise of Hitler

**UNT Production: Elephant's Graveyard by George Brant**  
**Dates: September 20-22**

**Week 5:**

September 22: *How did this happen to good people?*  
Read Good by C. P. Taylor. (.pdf on Canvas)  
Discussion: Transformation of Halder  
Lecture: Children of War: Kindertransport and Hitler Youth

**Week 6:**

September 29: *Why didn't the Jews just leave?*  
Read Kindertransport by Diane Samuels. (Acting edition)  
Review for Exam I: Before the Holocaust

**Before the Holocaust Exam:**  
**Canvas portal will open at 11:59 a.m. Sunday, October 1.**  
**Canvas portal will close at 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, October 3.**

**Week 7: During . . .**

October 6: *What were the first signs the Jews were in trouble?*  
Read Ghetto by Joshua Sobol. (Plays of the Holocaust Anthology)  
Read Segment 1 of Night (pages 3-22).  
Lecture: Defining ghettos and forced relocation. Wilna Ghetto Theatre and Acts of Resistance;

**UNT Production: Peter & the Starcatcher**  
**Play by Rick Elise. Music by Wayne Barker.**  
**Dates: October 5-8**

**Week 8**

October 13: *What other groups were victims of Hitler's terror?*

Read Bent by Martin Sherman. (Acting edition)

Read Segment 2 of Night. (p.22-28)

Lecture: Life in the Concentration Camps; Other Victims of Hitler's Terror

**Week 9**

October 20: *Why is one young girl still affecting us?*

Read The Diary of Anne Frank by Goodrich & Hackett, adapted by Wendy Kesselman.

Read Segments 3-5 of Night. (pages 29-84)

Lecture: Comparing original source material to Broadway production of 1956 & 1997.

**Week 10**

October 27: *How many lives were lost in the Holocaust?*

Read The Grey Zone by Tim Blake Nelson (pdf on Canvas)

Read Segments 6-9 of Night. (pages 85-115)

Lecture: Who is Elie Wiesel? Auschwitz, Atrocities, and Nazi Desperation.

Review: Surviving the Holocaust Exam

**Surviving the Holocaust Exam:**  
**Canvas portal will open at 11:59 a.m. Sunday October 29.**  
**Canvas portal will close at 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, October 31.**

**Week 11: After. . .**

November 3: *What did the world know?*

Read Book 1 of The Sunflower by Simon Wiesenthal (pages 3-98)

Watch: "Life is Beautiful" (1997-117 minutes)

**UNT Productions:**

**Antigone by Sophocles; Translated by Nicholas Rudall**

**Dates: November 1-5**

**Eurydice by Sarah Ruhl**

**Dates: November 2-4**

**Week 12**

November 10: *How did the international organizations and German Allies treat the Jews?*

Read A Shayna Maidel by Barbara Lebow (pdf on Canvas)

Read 10 answers in The Sunflower.

Lecture: Allies, D-Day, and Liberation; How Families Reunited

***(Last day to drop a course is November 10.)***

**Week 13**

November 17: *Were the Nazi's brought to justice?*

Read Black Angel by Michael Cristofer (.pdf on Canvas)

Read 10 answers in The Sunflower.

Lecture: The Nuremberg Trials. Who is Simon Wisenthal?

### **Week 14**

November 24: Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

### **Week 15**

December 1: *What role did the United States play in World War II?*

Read Allegiance by Marc Acito, Jay Kuo, & Lorenzo Thione. (pdf on Canvas)

Read 10 answers in The Sunflower.

Lecture: Could it happen again? What do we do now?

Review for After Liberation Exam.

*Receive: The Sunflower Project*

### **Week 16**

December 8: Reading Day – No Class

**After Liberation Exam:**

**Canvas portal opens at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, December 4**

**Canvas portal closes at 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, December 7.**

### **Finals Week**

Wednesday December 13: Final Exam (8:00-10:00 a.m.) **The Sunflower Project Due.**