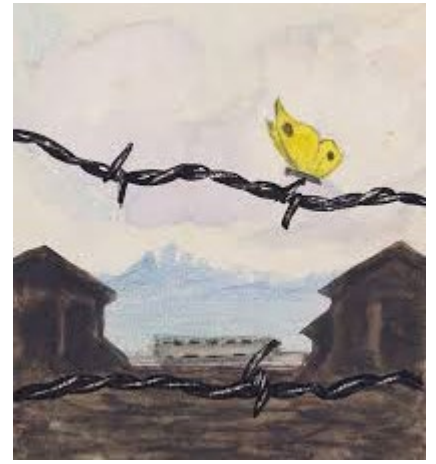


# **BEYOND WORDS**

## **UNVEILING TRAUMA IN NORTH AMERICAN HOLOCAUST NARRATIVES**



**Course number:** ENP.01028UB  
**Room:** Seminar Room 34.D2  
(Attemsgasse 25, Top Floor)  
**Time:** Friday, 4:00-5:30 p.m.  
**UniMeet link:** <https://unimeet.uni-graz.at/b/bra-ptf-2h5-rww> (in case we need to go online)  
**Lecturer:** Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stefan L. Brandt · **Email:** [stefan.brandt@uni-graz.at](mailto:stefan.brandt@uni-graz.at)  
**Office Hours:** Thu, 4:00-6:00 p.m. (<https://moodle.uni-graz.at/course/view.php?id=24980>)  
**Course tutor:** Charlie Taylor ([charlie.taylor@uni-graz.at](mailto:charlie.taylor@uni-graz.at))

**Description:** The seminar examines trauma in North American Holocaust narratives, prompting students to critically analyze poignant literary works that delve into the complexities of the Shoah. Through an interdisciplinary approach, participants will dissect texts spanning various genres and mediums, including literature, graphic novels, and film. Notable figures such as Art Spiegelman, author of the groundbreaking *Maus* (1986), will be studied alongside other influential voices in Holocaust literature. Additional works to be explored include Elie Wiesel's *Night* (1956), Anne Frank's *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1947), and Cynthia Ozick's "The Shawl" (1989). Moreover, the seminar will broaden its scope to encompass a diverse array of North American Holocaust narratives beyond the initial selections. Students will encounter a multitude of literary voices offering unique perspectives on the Holocaust experience, including texts like Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic* (1988), Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), and Miriam Katin's *Letting It Go* (2013).

### **Assessment:**

- A.) Regular attendance** (no more than 2 absences!), **active participation**, and at least **six (!) substantiated entries** in the **Moodle discussion forum (1/3)** (not including your own session);
- B.) Expert Session, Handout, and Revised Presentation** (to be held in class and then uploaded onto the Moodle course site in a *revised, adapted, and extended form*) **(1/3)**;
- C.) 2-page research proposal** plus **12-15-page final paper** (around 5,000 words all in all, including bibliography, but excluding title page, table of contents). Please use templates on Moodle! **(1/3)**.

### **A.) REGULAR ATTENDANCE, CLASS, PARTICIPATION, AND MOODLE DISCUSSION FORUM**

**Regular attendance** and **active participation** are crucial for success in this course. You're allowed a **maximum of two absences**, so notify us in advance if you'll be absent. Merely reading assigned material isn't enough; come ready to engage fully by asking questions, providing interpretations, and presenting your viewpoints. **Pop quizzes** may be given to assess your familiarity with the materials.

In the Moodle discussion forum, make at least **six substantial entries**. Anything less will lead to a 'Fail' in the class. Before addressing the three discussion questions, ensure you're **well-informed** by reading the required text and conducting **online research**. Reference any helpful materials found online, like video clips or articles, and, ideally, respond to your peers' entries.



### **B.) EXPERT SESSION, REVISED PRESENTATION, AND HANDOUT**

As an expert, prepare **three discussion questions** (focus on composition, background, and text impact) for the forum, to be uploaded six days prior to your session. **Share questions with the instructor a week before the session or via email.**



In the classroom, start with essential information using the **keywords**. Pose questions for lively discussion, incorporating relevant examples. Encourage **interactivity** with images, clips, games, or thought-provoking questions. Be flexible with the schedule to adapt to class dynamics.

After the session, **revise** and **expand** your presentation, addressing raised questions. Upload the revised presentation and a **3-page handout** on Moodle within one week.

### **C.) RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND FINAL PAPER**

Submit your **2-page research proposal** outline by **June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025**, using the form on Moodle. **Refer to secondary texts provided on the course website.**

The **final paper**, limited to **15 pages** (including bibliography), with a word count of 4,500 to 5,500, is due on **July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025**. Upload it to the designated Moodle forum, including an **editable Google Docs or OneDrive version**. Insert the Google Docs link in the forum's **comment section**, **not (!)** within the document. Include your name, email, course title, instructor, submission date, and word count in the final paper. Please ensure that sources are cited following either MLA 9 citation style or the University of Graz stylesheet.



**Important note: No extensions will be granted.**

**Important: Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, are allowed for the following activities:**

- Exploring and modifying ideas, perfecting research inquiries.
- Acquiring general information on the subject (ensure thorough verification of all sources and information).
- Creating an outline to structure thoughts.
- Reviewing grammar and style.

**The use of generative AI tools is strictly prohibited for the following:**

- Composing an entire draft of a writing assignment.
- Generating complete sentences, paragraphs, or papers to fulfill class assignments.
- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, like composing discussion forum entries or chat content.

*Note: Failure to comply with these regulations will result in disqualification from the class.* For more details, see <https://lehren-und-lernen-mit-ki.uni-graz.at/en/for-students/>

**Important: Thoroughly researching, reading, reviewing, and processing scholarly sources—specifically academic articles and books—is essential for any academic work and cannot be replaced by AI!**

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**Week 1 (March 14): Introduction: Defining Holocaust Narratives in North American Literature**

**Recommended reading:** Jules Chametzky, “General Introduction” to Jewish American Literature (2001) and Hilene Flanzbaum, “From Holocaust Studies to Trauma Studies and Back Again” (2020)

**Session Tasks:** Introduce course objectives and structure; discuss the significance of Holocaust narratives in North American literature; explore the role of memory and trauma in literary representations.

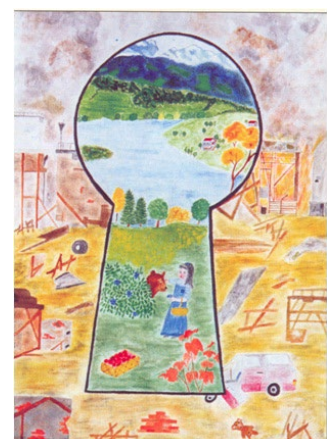
**Keywords:** Holocaust Narratives; Memory; Literature and History; Representation; Testimony; Trauma.

**Week 2 (March 21): Poetry, Elegy, and the Limits of Representation – Anthony Hecht, “The Book of Yolek” (1982/1990)**

**Required reading:** Anthony Hecht, “The Book of Yolek”

**Session Tasks:** Analyze Hecht’s poetic engagement with Holocaust memory; explore themes of loss, survival, and historical responsibility in Holocaust poetry.

**Keywords:** Anthony Hecht; Elegy; Holocaust Poetry; Intertextuality; Memory; Witnessing.





### Week 3 (March 28): **Postmemory, Trauma Transmission, and Collective Remembrance**

**Required reading:** Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory* (2012); Michael Rothberg, *Theorizing Multidirectional Memory* (2009)

**Session Tasks:** Examine the concept of postmemory and its impact on Holocaust studies; explore how trauma is transmitted across generations; discuss the role of multidirectional memory in shaping collective remembrance.

**Keywords:** Cultural Memory; Generational Trauma; Holocaust Studies; Marianne Hirsch; Michael Rothberg; Multidirectional Memory; Postmemory.



### Week 4 (April 4): **The Diary as Holocaust Testimony and Cultural Memory – Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl***

**Required reading:** Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1942-44, 1952)

**Session Tasks:** Discuss Anne Frank's diary as a primary document of the Holocaust; examine themes of hope, identity, and resilience; analyze its cultural and historical impact.

**Keywords:** Anne Frank; Diary as Literature; Holocaust Testimony; Identity; Personal Voice Youth Perspective; Resilience.

### Week 5 (April 11): **Survival, Faith, and Ethical Witnessing – Elie Wiesel, *Night* and Nobel Prize Speech**

**Required reading:** Elie Wiesel, *Night* (1956); Wiesel's *Nobel Prize Speech* (1986)

**Session Tasks:** Explore Wiesel's autobiographical narrative as a testimony of survival; discuss themes of faith, loss, and ethical responsibility; analyze Wiesel's advocacy for remembrance and human rights.

**Keywords:** Elie Wiesel; Ethical Responsibility; Faith and Doubt; Holocaust Memoir; Moral Witnessing; Survival Narrative.



### Week 6 (May 2): **Trauma, Memory, and Visual Narrative – Art Spiegelman, *Maus***

**Required reading:** Art Spiegelman, *Maus* (1986)

**Session Tasks:** Examine *Maus* as a graphic novel representation of Holocaust trauma; analyze the interplay of visual and textual storytelling; discuss the challenges of representing the Holocaust in comic form.

**Keywords:** Art Spiegelman; Graphic Novel; Memory and Testimony; Second-Generation Narrative; Trauma Representation; Visual Narrative.

### Week 7 (May 9): **Symbolism, Trauma, and Narrative Compression – Cynthia Ozick, "The Shawl" (1989)**

**Required reading:** Cynthia Ozick, "The Shawl"

**Session Tasks:** Analyze Ozick's depiction of trauma, survival, and loss; explore the novella's lyrical language and symbolic imagery; discuss its role in the canon of Holocaust literature.

**Keywords:** Cynthia Ozick; Holocaust Trauma; Motherhood and Loss; Narrative Compression; Psychological Realism; Symbolism.

### Week 8 (May 16): **Research Methods and Academic Writing in Holocaust Studies – Online Materials**

**Required reading:** PowerPoint presentation on academic writing

**Session Tasks:** Read through the online materials on academic writing; begin preparing research proposals based on the provided guidelines.



**Keywords:** Academic Writing; Argumentation; Citation; Critical Thinking; Research Proposal; Research Questions; Essay Structure; Thesis.

**Week 9 (May 23): Holocaust Fiction and the Historical Imagination – Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic***

**Required reading:** Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic* (1988)

**Session Tasks:** Discuss the role of historical fiction in Holocaust education; examine the use of time-travel as a narrative device; analyze the impact of Yolen's novel on young adult audiences.

**Keywords:** Historical Imagination; Holocaust Fiction; Jane Yolen; Memory Transmission; Time-Travel Narrative; Young Adult Literature.

**Week 10 (June 6): Postmodernism, Family Histories, and Holocaust Memory – Jonathan Safran Foer, *Everything Is Illuminated* (2002)**

**Required reading:** Jonathan Safran Foer, *Everything Is Illuminated* (2002)

**Session Tasks:** Explore the intersection of personal and historical memory in Foer's novel; discuss postmodern approaches to Holocaust narratives; analyze the interplay of humor and tragedy.

**Keywords:** Family History; Humor and Tragedy; Jonathan Safran Foer; Memory Reconstruction; Meta-Narrative; Postmodern Holocaust Narrative.

**Week 11 (June 13): Memory, Reconciliation, and the Graphic Memoir – Miriam Katin, *Letting It Go***

**Required reading:** Miriam Katin, *Letting It Go* (2013)

**Session Tasks:** Explore the graphic memoir as a medium for post-Holocaust reflection; discuss Katin's personal narrative of reconciliation and identity; analyze visual storytelling in relation to trauma.

**Keywords:** Graphic Memoir; Memory and Reconciliation; Miriam Katin; Personal Testimony; Post-Holocaust Identity; Visual Storytelling.



**Week 12 (June 20): Preparation of the Final Paper**

**Session Tasks:** Discussing research methodologies, including research questions and thesis design; preparing for the final paper by understanding requirements, selecting topics, and setting word count and deadline expectations.

**Keywords:** Academic Research; Paper Structure; Research Methodology; Thesis Design; Scholarly Writing; Topic Selection.

**Week 13 (June 27): Final Paper Workshop and Feedback**

**Session Tasks:** Conducting small-group workshops for final paper projects, providing constructive feedback and identifying areas for improvement; discussing paper structure and content, emphasizing clear introductions, well-structured body paragraphs, and concise conclusions; feedback from peers and the instructor.

**Important! Bring a revised version of your research proposal to this session!**

DEADLINE FINAL PAPER:

MONDAY, 14 JULY 2025



DUE DATE  
RESEARCH PROPOSAL