The course will investigate the changing ways in which the Holocaust has been represented through various discourses in American culture, from cinema and television to memoirs, novels, essays and the fine arts. We will examine both the political and ideological aspects of the Holocaust in American art as a historical event, a subjective or collective experience, a source for artistic making, and a pedagogical and spiritual exercise.

What ethical problems are linked to the negotiation of a catastrophe of such scope that some have considered it to be, by definition, «unrepresentable»? How do Holocaust texts address such questions as the limitations of language, the nature of memory, and constructions of authenticity and the «truth of experience»? Are there limits to how the Holocaust should be represented and by whom? What distinctive claims, needs, and agendas can be found in different generations' approaches to the Holocaust?

A major focus will be on representations of the Holocaust in Hollywood cinema, which has produced several important films about the destruction of European Jewry, examples being George Stevens’s *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959), Bob Fosse’s *Cabaret* (1972) and Fred Zinnemann’s *Julia* (1977) Although our emphasis will be on artifacts of American culture, we will also examine for purposes of contrast foreign films such as *Life is Beautiful* (1998) and *The Pianist* (2002). The seminar is a follow-up to a seminar taught in the winter term by Susanne Rohr from the department of literature.

Credit requirements: Regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class (25%), an oral presentation as part of an expert group (20%), and a final paper (40%). There will also be a few quizzes meant as an encouragement to keep track with the assigned reading (15%).

Required work: You are expected to watch all (!) of the movies we discuss in class, either in the extra screenings, in the video room in the library or at home. DVDs and videos can be checked out over the weekend from 4:30 pm Fridays to 11 am on Mondays. There is also a course reader with required texts available in the copy-shop at Königin-Luise-Str.

Seminar papers: The seminar paper will be 17 to 20 pages long. It will make an original argument about one or more of the texts we've been reading, present this argument coherently and logically, and use both close readings of the text(s) and secondary sources to support it. Every paper should include a «works cited» list of at least six secondary sources and make an effort to consult mostly material published after 1980.

- The paper is due September 30, 2005 -
- *Note: There is no extension of this deadline. Late essays will not be accepted!!!* -
Syllabus:

15. April 2004: Introduction: The Holocaust in American Film


22. April 2004: Hollywood and the Holocaust

Screening & discussion


16-18: Extra screening

29. April 2004: The Third Reich as Satire

Watch and prepare: THE GREAT DICTATOR (Charlie Chaplin, 1940)


16-19: Extra screening


Watch and prepare: THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (George Stevens, 1959)


14-17
Screening: THE JUDGMENT OF NUREMBERG (Stanley Kramer 1961) (178 min)

27. May 2004: Nazis on Trial: Narratives of Persecution in the American 1960s

Watch and prepare: THE JUDGMENT OF NUREMBERG (Stanley Kramer, 1961)

Extra screening: CABARET (Bob Fosse, 1972) (128 min.)

03. June 2004: Cabaret’s Kit-Kat Club as a Microcosm of Pre-Nazi Germany

Watch and prepare: CABARET (Bob Fosse, 1972)
Extra text: Annette Insdorf, from Indelible Shadows (1983), 42-44
Judith E. Doneson, from The Holocaust in American Film (1987), 121-127.

Extra screening: 4th episode from the television series Holocaust (1977)


Watch and prepare: Final episode from the TV-series Holocaust (1977)

17. June 2004: The Boys from Brazil

Screening THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1978) (123 min.)


Watch and prepare: THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1978)

Extra screening: SCHINDLER’S LIST (Steven Spielberg, 1993) (195 min.)

Watch and prepare: SCHINDLER’S LIST (Steven Spielberg, 1993)


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08. July 2004: **Selling the Holocaust: The US Holocaust Memorial Museum**


16-18:30
Extra screening: THE PIANIST (Roman Polanski, 2002) (143 min.)

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15. July 2004: **Final discussion: The Holocaust as Thriller**

Watch and prepare: THE PIANIST (Roman Polanski, 2002)

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— **Final Paper due September 30, 2005 —**

*Note: There is no extension of this deadline. Late essays will not be accepted!*